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**A Contextual Study of
Guji-Oromo Proverbs:
functions in Focus**

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FUNCTIONS IN FOCUS**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my original work, has not been presented for a degree in another university and that all sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name _____

Signature _____

Place _____

Date _____

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Operational Definition of Terms

Context: The situation, point of discussion or event in which a proverb naturally occurs.

For example, issues in a meeting, speeches in rituals, ceremonies, etc.

Occasion: A circumstance, occurrence or state of affairs that brings two or more people

together and provides a reason for discussions. For example, meetings, rituals, ceremonies, mealtimes, coffee-mornings, etc.

Custom: The inherited practices, belief and common experiences of the Guji society.

Tradition: All inherited elements in a society (i.e. customs, values such as *sufuu* and norms like

seeraa of the Guji people). Tradition is broad in its range and includes custom.

Performance: The citation (use) of a proverb in a social or cultural context. For example, use

of proverbs in blessing sessions, dispute resolutions, advising sessions, etc.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: The collection

Appendix B: List of informants

Appendix C: Interview questions for informants

Appendix D: Photos of some informants and occasions

A KEY TO OROMO SCRIPT (QUBEE)

Oromo Script

Phonetic Presentation

A. Vowels

a	a
e	E
i	I
o	O
u	U
double	long (as in aadaa)

B. Consonants:

a	Ba
c	Ča
d	Da
f	Fa
g	Ga
h	Ha
j	Ja
k	Ka
l	La
m	Ma
n	Na
p	Pa
q	Qa
r	Ra
s	Sa
t	Ta
w	Wa
x	A
y	Ya
z	Za
ny	Ńa
dh	Đa
ph	p'a
ch	t a
sh	Ša
double	stressed (as in abbaa)

ABSTRACT

The major goal of the study is understanding functions of Guji-Oromo proverbs within contexts of their use. To achieve this goal, an attempt was made to collect proverbs from two types of occasion, namely, *Ebbisaa* (blessing session) and *Gumi Ganda* (local meetings of elders). The first type of occasion embodies cultural contexts such as traditional prayers, blessings, enumeration of cultural values and ways of life, whereas, the second one undertakes social contexts like ridiculing of misbehaving people, settlement of social problems, reconciliation of disagreements and advising and prompting of people mainly the youth.

The study shows that proverbs which are used in *Ebbisaa* serve reflective function, while, those employed in *Gumi Ganda* are important in their corrective and reinforcing functions. More specifically, in *Ebbisaa*, proverbs reflect the customary practices, the values of morality and the strictness of Guji social laws. In *Gumi Ganda*, some proverbs function as means of correcting disorders such as poverty, misbehaviour and interpersonal disagreements. The others serve as instruments of reinforcing intra-tribal solidarity and conformity with environmental situations.

Thus, the Guji-Oromo proverbs play great roles in strengthening tribal solidarity and creating public responses to social, cultural and economic obstacles. Furthermore, the study has attempted to show that proverbs can be used for building up a community, maintaining culture and producing responsible people.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to show the major functions of proverbs in the social and cultural contexts of the Guji society. It consists of five chapters in which relevant methods and theories in the study of folklore are discussed and the major functions of Guji-Oromo proverbs are presented.

This introductory chapter includes the statement of the problem, the objectives, significance, scope and limitations of the study, the methodology of the study, transcription, translation and classifications of data. Description of the major socio-cultural realities of the people on whom the study focuses and explanation of contexts from which proverbs have been collected are also incorporated.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Folklore is one of the significant aspects of people's socio-cultural life. It is an important part of people's customs, traditions, and institutions. In a preliterate society, it serves as the storehouse of culture and history (Dorson, 1972: 35; Boswell, 1962:11). Therefore, studying folklore can strongly serve as a means of studying the people it belongs to. By closely examining its folkloric forms, it is possible to learn the political, cultural and social ideals as well as the economic realities of a society (Ibid).

The study of folklore in Ethiopia seems to be a recent development. Although the attempt to collect Ethiopian oral literature can be traced from the period when

missionaries appeared in the country, the participation of Ethiopians in folklore research had been limited until the second half of the twentieth century. It was in the 1970s that the study of Ethiopian folklore by Ethiopians themselves was given a considerable attention (Fekade, 2001). In the 1970s, Fekade Azeze who has been exerting a great effort in encouraging and developing researches in Ethiopian folklore, produced a bibliographical review of the works done on Ethiopian folklore and cleared the ground for students and other people interested in conducting studies in the discipline. Thus, since then a considerable number of BA and MA theses have been produced in folkloric forms of Ethiopian ethnic groups although the number of the works is still insignificant when seen from the folkloric potential of the country. The folkloric treasure of the various ethnic groups has not been studied and publicized widely. It seems that the folklore's potential contribution to social, political, and economic development has not been clearly understood in the country. It also seems that the range, complexity and variety of information contained in folklore has not been realized by researchers and administrators of the country (Fekade, 1991: 46)*.

The study at hand is initiated by such tempting situations and attempts to tackle the problem with its focus on oral culture of Guji society.

The cultural life of the Guji deserves a close study for two important reasons. The first is that the original Oromo socio-cultural values are still maintained and functional in the life of the Guji society. The second is that the Guji tend to remain distinct from other Oromo tribal groups. They have their own Gada system and their own dialect. Their contact with alien cultures seems to be little (Tadesse, 1984; Tadesse, 1995; Tedecha, 1988).

* Fekade (1991) is ፊ.ቲ.ደ. (1991) in bibliography and the year is in E.C.

Similar to that of the other Ethiopian ethnic groups, the social and cultural lives of the Guji society embody a rich folklore tradition. The life and day-to-day activities and their ritual practices are characterized by oral poems, proverbs and folktales. However, such verbal treasures of the society seem to have been given little attention by researchers. This paper aims to fill this gap by making a contextual study of their proverbs.

As stated above, the Guji culture has different genres of folklore. Among these, proverbs are more popular in the day-to-day life of the society. They seem to be the most numerous and frequently used forms of the verbal arts. During his two years stay in the society as a teacher, the researcher observed that the people, mainly the elders, use proverbs in several speech occasions and noticed that although riddles, oral poems, and folktales are available, proverbs make the central part of their day-to-day socio-cultural expressions. Through their *Mamaaksa* (proverb): *Dubbiin mamaaksa hinqanne, ittoo soda hinqanne*, (a talk without a proverb is like food without salt), the people indicate that a conversation or a discussion in which there are no proverbs will not have flavour or will not be impressive and touching. Thus, there is a frequent employment of proverbs in speeches at rituals, local assemblies, and other different kinds of gatherings. The beginning and end of prayers, blessings and reconciliation are enriched with proverbs. It appears that in the Guji verbal culture, the frequent use of proverbs in discussions or conversations seems to be perceived as a mark of wisdom. Therefore, the manner in which the proverbs function and are applied to specific situations calls for attention. What a speaker tries to do with proverbs in a specific context of conversation becomes an intriguing problem tempting one to conduct a study. Thus, a study of functions becomes important. To study function, it is essential to examine the actual occasions in which proverbs are used, what people discuss in such occasions and how the proverbs

relate to issues raised in the occasions. In other words, questions such as: when and where do the Guji people use proverbs? Who usually uses proverbs? For what purpose do the people use proverbs need consideration. As a result, the study of the functions of Guji Oromo proverbs within the socio-cultural contexts of their use seems to be important and appropriate. They need to be studied contextually in order to demonstrate the socio-cultural realities and world outlooks of the people. Furthermore, as stated by Grzybek (1994:91), "The close interrelationship of proverb context and proverb function has long been neglected." To fill these gaps, this study focuses on contextual analysis of functions of some Guji Oromo proverbs.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

As stated earlier, proverbs seem to be central to the Guji-Oromo folk culture. However, they have not been studied in such a way that they reflect the contemporary realities of the life of the people. The general objective of this study, therefore, is to collect and examine some Guji Oromo proverbs and find out what important functions they serve in the society. In other words, the study aims at discovering the contextual functions of Guji Oromo proverbs by examining them within the socio-cultural realities and showing how they characterize the life of the Guji people. The assumption is that by studying the proverbs within the context of their use, it would be possible to understand and state their functions. In short, the study sets out with the following specific objectives.

1. To identify and describe the function of Guji proverbs in cultural and social contexts.
2. To demonstrate the relationship between the meaning of a proverb and the particular situation in which the proverb is used.

3. To show how Guji people apply proverbs to interpret situation and state who usually uses proverbs in speech occasions.
4. To show the extent to which the proverbs portray the socio -cultural realities of the Guji society.

1.3 Methodology

The study derives its methodology from the theory of contextual approach to the study of folklore as this theory is the major guideline for the collection and analysis of the proverbs. Thus, the instruments of data collection and procedures of the study discussed below are employed inline with the principles of this approach.

1.3.1 Methods of Data Collection

In this paper, two folklore data collecting methods have been used. These two methods are observation and interview. According to Goldestein (1964) and Fekade (1991) observation and interview are effective methods of obtaining data for a folkloric study, especially for the one that involves contextual approach. Since this study also uses contextual approach, observation and interview have been thought to help the researcher as better methods of data collection. By these methods, 310 proverbs (250 by observation and 60 by interview) have been collected and recorded along with speech situations that give rise to them.

1.3.1.1 Observation

A contextual study of a folkloric form compels a researcher to stay in a target society for a considerable period of time. It demands him/her to closely observe the day-to-day

cultural, political, social and economic life of a society under study. It also requires the researcher to go down into remote villages, meet elders in the community and generate adequate information about the unobservable past and present traditions, cultural practices, social relations and norms of the society. As folkloric forms originate from such social structures, paying close attention to the examination of the socio-cultural realities of a society helps the researcher understand the forms of folklore under study (Okpehewo, 1991; Fekade, 1991).

The fieldwork of this study also involved the stated complexity of contextual study of folklore. The irregular occurrence of occasions did not allow the fieldworker to complete the fieldwork within a short period of time. It was necessary sometimes to wait for a week for an occasion to occur. Besides, in a single occasion it was possible to hear and record only 7-15 proverbs. Thus, the researcher moved in the area to search for occasions and observe them closely to collect a significant number of proverbs. As a result, the fieldwork took two months. During the fieldwork (July 1, August 31, 2002), the major activities performed were selection of sample *Woredas* (districts), and *Kebeles* (villages), selection of field assistants from the localities, contacting some members of the identified villages, identification of occasions in which proverbs are supposed to be used frequently, and continuous observation of the occasions to obtain a significant number of proverbs. In such a way, names and relationships of individuals, their roles in a speech occasion, topic of discussion in an occasion, the rule that governs the speeches and practices in an occasion, methods of encouragement or disapproval in an occasion and other situations that may exist in a speech occasion were closely observed. Recording proverbs and their contexts was done on index cards prepared earlier for this purpose. In some occasions, it was possible to use a tape recorder in

addition to index cards. But in many occasions, this was not possible for the people didn't want their voices to be recorded. Therefore, recording of the proverbs and their contexts was by and large carried out on index cards and notebooks.

The recording of proverbs on index cards included writing of a proverb, giving it its contextual meaning with the help of elders and description of the context briefly. In most contexts, the meaning of a proverb was obtained from a person who uttered it in that context. Whenever it was found impossible to do so, other elderly persons who participated in the occasion provided the meaning of the proverb in relation to that situation. Observation was used as the main method of data collection.

1.3.1.2 Interview

Interview, as stated earlier, was used as another instrument of data collection. The interview was used for collection of some proverbs, for obtaining of meanings and contexts for the proverbs collected through interview, and for eliciting of contemporary information about the Guji society and their socio-cultural realities and traditional values. The interview was carried out with eleven elders (jarolee) who were selected with the help of the local people on the basis of their deep knowledge of the socio-cultural realities and oral tradition of the society. The elders were Wataa Shedo who acts as the currnet *Qallu* (the cultural and religious leader) of the Guji people, Elemaa Marsaa, the companion of Wataa, Barbare Ballii, the other companion, Elemaa Duyyoo, the elder in *Qarssa*, Dursee Waaqoo, the elder In *Tooree*, Miiraa Bari, the other elder in *Tooree*, *Alchaye Darra*, Tariku Mijuu, Hundessaa Wataa, Damake Foshaa and Galana Goba. Among the Guji society, these elders are regarded as the relevant and authorized bodies to release important information about the cultural and social practices and

realities of the society to an external person. Thus, they were interviewed about Guji socio-cultural realities and traditional values. They provided detailed information on the *safuu* (moral codes), *seeraa* (social laws) and *aadaa* (custom) of the Guji; the current state of Guji traditional values, and the prevalent social problems among the people. Knowledge of such situations or familiarity with such information has helped the researcher to understand the contexts, meanings and functions of the proverbs.

Durse Waqaa, Elemaa Duyyoo, Miiraa Bari, Galana Goba, Tariku Mijuu, Hundessa Wataa and Damake Fosha can tell proverbs with their contexts (situations in which proverbs are used) and contextual meanings by virtue of their age and experience. Thus, they were interviewed and provided about sixty proverbs together with their contexts and their meanings in the contexts. The proverbs and their contextual meanings provided by the people were recorded on index cards and then matched with (grouped under) *Ebbisaa* (blessing sessions) and *Gumi Ganda* (local meetings). Thus, among the proverbs collected by interview, 21 of them appear to come in the contexts of *Ebbisaa* while 39 of them fall in the contexts of *Gumi Ganda*.

1.3.2 Procedures of the Study

The following procedures have been used in this study. First, the related literatures, both published and unpublished, have been reviewed. Reviewing of the related literature was believed to help the researcher establish the possible theoretical basis for the study, select the appropriate methodology and other relevant field procedures and activities.

Then, preparation for fieldwork was done. The preparation for field work included intensive reading of folklore fieldwork manuals, preparing index cards, organizing of

interview items, preparing tape recorder, photo camera, paper, pens and pencils. Procuring money for the fieldwork was also considered as an important aspect of readiness for the fieldwork.

The fieldwork focused on the activities discussed under 6.1 and 6.2. The data obtained during the fieldwork i.e., the proverbs and their contexts were transcribed and then translated into English. The proverbs were, then classified according to their contextual functions. Finally, some proverbs were selected and analyzed along with the situations that gave rise to them.

Analysis of each proverb begins with the description of the specific situation or element of culture where a proverb comes from and then it goes on to the interpretation of the meaning and description of the function of the proverb in the context of that specific situation or element of culture. It follows the situation → proverb → interpretation procedure. A number that has been put in front of each sample proverb shows the number of index card on which the proverb is found.

1.4 Significance of the Study

As a form of folklore, proverbs manifest the cultural practices, wisdom and philosophies of a society. To be understood well and get publicity, they need to be collected and studied. In other words, collecting and analyzing proverbs of a society make the proverbs assist others to know what the society looks like in terms of its tradition, culture, philosophy and other ways of life (Boswell, 1962; Dundes, 1965). The study of Guji proverbs would also be significant for it may serve the stated purpose and add another dimension of knowledge about function of folklore in general and proverbs in

particular. It may shed light on Guji people's active traditional values, current socio-cultural problems and prevalent moral and cultural codes. It can also help other people who are not familiar with the culture of the society to get access to the knowledge of the cultural, traditional and social wisdoms as well as artistic talents of the Guji society. Besides, the study is believed to provide other researchers and students of literature with current information about the functions of Guji proverbs and, also, serve them as a springboard for further study on Guji folklore.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study will not take other forms of Guji folklore into consideration. It deals with the contextual study of proverbs with its focus on functions. However, as meanings and functions are interrelated (Bascom, 1965), the contextual meanings of the proverbs have been considered in the course of the analysis of functions. Since the form of a proverb is hardly related to its context (Krappe, 1964), analysis of the forms of proverbs has not been included in the thesis. The study is limited to the Guji people of two *Woredas*, namely, *Galana* and *Abaya*, for a large population of the Guji people and the culturally important elders (culture-bearers) live here. The study, therefore, is limited to proverbs collected from the occasions observed in these areas during the fieldwork.

When conducting the research, especially during collection of proverbs, the researcher came across some problems. One of the problems was the difficulty of finding several occasions in which the proverbs are often used. The researcher has solved the problem by extending the period of data collection from one month to two months. It was due to time and financial constraint, that the period of data collection was limited to two months.

Since only those occasions that appeared during the period were observed and proverbs occurred in these occasions were collected, the researcher does not feel that the collection is exhaustive.

The reader may notice that some proverbs in the collection are similar to proverbs used among the Borena, Arsi and Bale Oromos. This can be attributed to the fact that elements of oral literature mainly proverbs can exist across cultures and localities (Boswell, 1962). Furthermore, the meanings and functions of proverbs discussed in the thesis may be shared by proverbs of other people in Africa and else where in the world. This is to be expected because there are cultural and social phenomena that are universal to human beings (Ibid).

1.6 Transcription, Translation and Classification

Transcription of the tape-recorded information was carried out in two ways. On some tapes (tapes on which the interview with elders was recorded), the whole information was transcribed. This is because the whole information on these tapes is important for the study. On the other tapes, only the required elements (proverbs and their situations) in the recorded conversation were transcribed on index cards. In other words, from the tape, proverbs and the speech situations that gave rise to them were recorded on index cards in the same way for proverbs from the direct contexts.

Then, the collected proverbs were translated. Most of the proverbs seem to originate from cultural elements. In the same way, they seem to emerge from the perception of a resemblance between two phenomena, which of course, creates a meaningful image that brings about emotive effect. Therefore, the majority of them are metaphorical.

The appropriate approach to translation for metaphorical and cultural texts, as Newmark (1982: 50) ascertains, is communicative translation. The communicative approach to translation seeks to make a translated text communicable to a reader. It gives a chance for a translator to make the text smoother, lighter, and easier to understand. The translator tries in the target language to write a little better than the original and to make the text more communicable. According to Newmark (1982: 50), "The approach gives him/her the right to correct or improve the logic, to replace the clumsy words, to remove obscurities, to eliminate repetition, to exclude the less likely interpretations of ambiguity, and to clarify the highly cultural terms". In this approach, it is possible to remodel the syntax and use commoner collocations and more familiar words.

Thus, Newmark (Ibid) indicates that the communicative approach to translation is a better way of translation for metaphorical texts. Similarly, he suggests that texts that are characterized by cultural elements and local jargons should be translated communicatively. When translating metaphorical texts, the translator can translate the text by metaphor using the same or similar image in the target language. Therefore, words in the target language don't lose their meanings in the original language.

Due to the above stated merits of it, the communicative approach to translation has been employed for translation of proverbs in this thesis. The proverbs were translated from the original language (i.e. Oromo language) into the target language (i.e. English) in a way that they give an image or tell something to the reader in English. In this way of translation, those texts, which are metaphorical in the original language, remain metaphorical in the target language. However, the researcher doesn't think that he has avoided all problems in his translation of the proverbs. He admits that there could be

losses of the poetic quality of the original texts since problems of translation of oral literature mainly of proverbs are common.

After being translated into English, the proverbs were closely examined and grouped into two on the basis of the context in which they were performed. Then the groups were further divided into classes based on their functions in the contexts.

As it is difficult to include all of the collected proverbs in the analysis, sample proverbs have been taken from each category and are discussed along with situations, which gave rise to them. Sometimes, proverbs that are used in particular context of an occasion have been taken together as samples. The assumption is that by focusing on proverbs that are used in a particular context, it is possible to show how Guji people use proverbs when they deliberate on a particular issue. In other words, it seems that by such way of sampling it is possible to demonstrate the way people in a particular occasion apply proverbs to emphasize a topic of discussion or to show how proverbs uttered by different people in an occasion are related to a topic of discussion.

1.7 Socio–Cultural Background

Knowledge of some socio-cultural realities of the Guji people is supposed to accelerate better understanding of their proverbs. This is because folkloric forms of the society i.e. its poetry, proverb, prose narrative, riddle etc. emerge from its socio-cultural life. As Miruka (1994) asserts oral literature, especially proverbs are strongly related to the social realities and traditional practices of a society; therefore, familiarity with these situations can help a reader understand a folkloric form of the society.

The Guji-Oromo proverbs also flourish from the social and cultural life of the people. One can come to the meaning and function of the proverbs when he/she gets familiar with the major elements of the socio-cultural realities of the society. As stated by Propp (1984) for the clear understanding of a folkloric form the knowledge of not only cultural and social phenomenon, but also that of the lineage and tribal composition of the people is important. A reader may wonder to know who the Guji people are and description of the people may help such a reader have some knowledge about the people. To these goals, this sub-section undertakes the description of the Guji people and their common traditional ways of life, which include the Gada system and its rituals, traditional belief occupational practices and oral traditions.

1.7.1 The Guji People

The Guji people belong to the Oromo ethnic group. They speak Oromo language and practice the original Oromo culture. They are, even, considered to be the ones who have sustained the original Oromo traditions. In other words, the original Oromo traditions are still active in practices of the Guji society. In their ways of life and dialect, the Guji Oromo seem to be distinct from Oromos of other parts of the country with the exception of the Borana Oromo. With the Borana Oromo, they share some ways of life and speak a relatively similar dialect (Van De Loo, 1991).

The Guji live in a large territory found in South Ethiopia at approximately, 450 k.ms. away from Addis Ababa. The area is bordering with Borana in the South, Walayta and Gamo Gofa in the West, Sidama and Gedeo in the North, and Bale and Arsi in the East. Therefore, the Guji are neighbours with the Borana, the Walayta, the Gamo, the Gedeo, the Sidama, the Aris and the Bale people. The Guji have not been restricted to Guji

territory, but have been diffused in the adjacent areas occupied by other ethnic groups. Some of them live mixed with the Gedeo and Sidama people in Gedeo and Sidama *Woredas* (districts) and *Kebeles* (villages). In the same way, they live with the Borana people in Borana dominated areas. However, they sometimes, come into conflict with their neighbours such as Walayta, Gedeo and Borana peoples mainly on account of the possession of farmland (Ibid).

According to an informant (Bahrbare Balli), the Guji tribe embraces three sub-tribes. These sub-tribes are called Huraga, Mati and Hokku. Such sub-division, of the tribe is told in Guji oral traditions. The tribal father of the Guji was known as Gujo. It seems that it was from this name that the present name of the tribe had originated. It is said that Gujo had three sons from his first wife. He named the sons Huraga, Mati and Hokku. The sons, after coming of age, married wives and begot children. As a result, the three Guji sub-tribes emerged.

Besides, the three sons of Gujo moved to a large unoccupied area and divided it among themselves. The sub-divisions were agreed upon to be called by their owners. Accordingly, the sub division that was taken by *Huraga* was called *Huraga*, that owned by Mati was called Mati and the third Hokku. Eventually, the Guji sub-areas have been called as Huraga, Mati and Hokku. However, there are no clear cultural and linguistic distinctions among the people of these areas (the same informant).

The Guji sub –tribes could also be further divided into clans (Balbala). For example, the Hurga sub-tribe consists of seven clans: Gola, Sorbortu, Agamtu, Hallo, Darartu, Zoysut, and Galalcha. The Hokku sub-tribe includes Obborra, Bala, Buditu, Micille and Kino;

whereas, the Mati Sub-tribe comprises only three clans: Hirkatu, Insale and Handoa. All the clans live scattered on the large territory of the Guji as well as adjoining lands, for example, in Gedeo and Sidama areas. There are no cultural and dialectical elements that distinguish one clan from another. All members of the tribe live mixed and scattered on the large territory without any conflict and cultural or political differences among them. They consider each other as brothers and sisters, act together in times of war and practice Gada rituals together (Van De Loo 1991, Tadesse, 1995; the same informant).

1.7.2 The Guji People's Ways of Life

1.7.2.1 The Gada System

The old aged and peculiar Oromo tradition, the Gada system, is still functional and practiced by the Guji Oromo. The Oromo Gada system seems to be uncommon among Oromo in other parts of the country. However, the Gada institution and its rituals have been kept fresh with its flavor by the Guji and Borana Oromos. In these people, it has been serving as an institution that regulates the social, political, cultural and economic norms and events (Ibid).

The Gada institution of the Guji people involves a system of age-set and generation-set that form and enforce the social, political and cultural norms by which individuals and their collective lives are governed (Asmeron, 1973; Hinnant, 1984; Van De Loo, 1991). In other words, the Guji Gada institution is concerned with formulation of the social, political, cultural and economic orders among the people by creating sets of ritual status based on age and generation. It serves as a ritual through which each member of the Guji society is supposed to pass as well as the organization that regulates this ritual.

Each member of the people is conscious of the power and authority vested on the Gada institution and is highly obedient to its directives. Among Guji society, the Gada institution seems to be the ex-genesis of the prevalent social structures and common cultural codes (Hinnant, Ibid). Thus, it is possible to note that the Gada institution of the Guji people is a complex system of ranking, authorizing and decision making for the people. It is made up of ten successive classes that rotate every eight years. These classes are called: *Dabballe, Qarre, Kuusa, Raaba, Doori, Gadaa, Baatuu, Yuuba, Jaarsa Guduru, and Jaarsa Qulullu* (Van De Loo, Ibid). The classes contain two series of five successive grades. Each grade is again supposed to go through eight years of activity. The system assigns special rights and duties for each grade or class in the period of its activity. In the system, each male member of the society is promoted to next grade once in every eight years (Ibid). In the Gada system of administration, elders were given a great responsibility. They resolve local disputes, disapprove malpractices, advise and guide the youth and mobilize the people to strengthen their solidarity.

In short, in the Guji people, the Gada institution seems to be an authorized body that generates the social, cultural and political codes, and governs the day-to-day life of the people. Van de Loo (Ibid:35) asserts "...that in the Guji , the Gada institution is the top and authorized body that governs the spiritual and material lives of the people". Thus, all aspects of the traditional life of the Guji people are governed by laws of the Gada institution (Ibid).

1.7.2.2 Traditional Belief

The Guji people, mainly the elders, practice traditional belief that was believed to be common to most Africans in the earlier times. The majority of the people are still carrying out traditional belief that was also regarded to be the earlier and native belief of the Oromo people. The Guji traditional belief is, presently, called *Waqafanna*, which has been defined as a belief in one God who has created everything and above all in his power. The belief is led by Qallu who is a significant body in the Gada institution (Wataa Shedo).

In the Guji people, the *Qallu* is perceived as a messenger of *Waaqaa* (God). Every time he appears, the people pay him homage and receive his blessings. The *qallu* with his companions (*jarroole*) serves as facilitator of peace and conformity among the people. He gives blessing and says prayers moving here and there in the Guji villages. He also serves as an agent that promotes, and reinforces the *aadaa* (culture), *safuu* (morals) and *seeraa* (laws) of the people. This influential person is regarded as the leader and enforcer of the Guji traditional belief (*waaqafanna*) as well as regulator of the social and cultural lives of the society (Wataa Shedo).

Waqafanna, as stated above is a belief in one God; the God of creation, peace and life; the God who created and guides everything; the God who created river, therefore, God of river; the God who created tree; therefore, God of trees; the God who is manifested in the form of *ayanaa* (kind spirit). The God who comes down to a man in the form of *ayanaa* (kind spirit) and helps and guides him. Therefore, a Guji father says "*Ayana Abbaakoo na gargaari*, i.e., God of my father help me" whenever he leaves his home to

his farmland. He is praying to the God who helped and guided his forefathers. Thus, the *waqafanna* involves the belief in and prayer to the God who created the world and its dwellers (the same informant).

1.7.2.3 Oral Traditions

The Guji are predominately non-literate. Therefore, in all aspects of their life, orality prevails. Historical, cultural, and political pieces of information go across generations and among the people mainly orally. Information is transmitted from father to son and from person to person in common sayings, folktales, proverbs, oral poetry, riddles etc. Proverbs, the focus of this thesis, are also used as a medium of transmission of socio-cultural information (Customs, beliefs, norms, moral codes etc.) from elders to the youth and among the people in the present times (Van De Loo, op. cit).

1.7.2.4 Traditional Occupation

The Guji territory consists of highland and lowland areas. The people living in highland areas live on mixed farming. They cultivate crops such as barley, wheat and bean; and rear cattle. Most of the time, they, use oxen for ploughing and like working in groups. These people, besides herding cattle and planting crops, are engaged in traditional ways of bee farming. They prepare traditional beehives and put them on big trees. In this way, the Guji farmers produce honey, sell it and generate a little amount of income (Ibid).

The Guji people who dwell in the lowland areas make their living by animal rearing. They rear goats, cattle and camels. They, mainly, live on milk and other animal products. To

some extent, they, produce crops like maze and *teff*. Most of them lead a hand-to-mouth kind of life. As Wataa Shedo and Elemaa Marsa indicated and as it was learnt during the fieldwork, the Guji people seem to live in a poor economic condition. They explained that even though they toil hard, they couldn't overcome poverty.

In general, the social and cultural structure of the Guji people is governed by the Gada system in which the Qallu is a supreme cultural and religious leader. It is possible to consider the Guji territory as the ancestral cradle of the Oromo traditional values since such values and their original features are still functional in the Guji society (Tadesse, 2000). These socio-cultural elements embody the occasions and contexts in which Guji-Oromo proverbs function. In other words, they are important for understanding of the cultural and social contexts in which the proverbs are used.

1.8 Contexts of Performance

Description of the context in which proverbs are used by the Guji is important to enable readers understand the cultural and social realities associated with the meaning and function of the proverbs included in the thesis since meaning and function of proverbs are rooted in the social and cultural contexts characterizing the everyday life of the people. Thus, the attempt to analyze the Guji-Oromo proverbs in their contexts of performance must look to the cultural and social occasions in which the frequent use of proverbs is observable. In other words, the question of meaning, use and function of proverbs in the social and cultural contexts should address the nature and feature of occasions in which proverbs are performed. To this goal, this subsection is aimed at introducing the common cultural and social occasions in which proverbs are performed

frequently. The components of performance such as participants, the occasions in which they participate, and the local ideas and practices related to them are described briefly.

The concept of proverb performance involves the use of proverbs in verbal communication that consist in the assumption of responsibility to listener(s) for a display of communicative competence. It emphasizes on the part of a speaker an assumption of accountability for a listener for the context in which the speech is carried out. It calls for special attention to an act of expression. Thus, the study of proverb performance relies on the concept that we can know more about proverbs when we examine them within contexts in which they are used (Bauman, 1992).

As stated in Okpewho (1992: 65) proverbs come in contexts of any social and cultural occasions. There is no a special occasion for proverb usage. They come in discussions in rituals, in coffee ceremonies, and in different forms of social gatherings as well as in conversations between two persons. This implies that the collection and analysis of proverbs are to focus on these contexts of use. However, it is hardly possible for a researcher to get access to the all possible occasions and observe each day –to-day life of a society in a particular period of time. This reality holds true in the case of Guji people also. Even though the use of proverbs is believed to be part of the everyday social and cultural practices of the society, the chance to observe all occasions in a specific period of time is limited. For example, during the fieldwork, the researcher came across only two funeral ceremonies and one marriage ceremony.

However, there are occasions, which are supposed to be important parts of the social and cultural practices of the Guji society and are more accessible in a specific period of

time. These occasions are known by the society as *Ebbisaa* (blessing session) and *Gumi Ganda* (local meetings). They occur at least once a week on holidays and embody discussions that call for proverb application. Both occasions are described as follows.

Ebbisaa: *Ebbisaa* (blessing session) is a formal and ceremonial occasion in which Qallu (the cultural and religious leader of the Guji) gives blessings, says prayers, and delivers speech for Guji People. The Qallu, occasionally, visits each village of the Guji people. During the visit, he holds meetings with elders, says prayers to *waaqaa* and *lafaa* (the God and the earth), gives blessings and discusses with elders on norms and traditional values of the Guji society.

In *Ebbisaa*, Qallu and his companions enunciate and enumerate the *aadaa* (custom), *safuu* (morality), and *seeraa* (social laws) of the Guji and remind the elders to care for these traditional values of the society. Elders attending the occasion raise different issues about the *aadaa*, *safuu*, and *seeraa* of the society and discuss them carefully. They focus mainly on the specific elements of these cultural practices and argue for the continuation of their values. In this occasion, most of the time, elders deliberate on issues about the role of elders in transmitting the traditional values to the young, values of each aspect of morality (i.e. truthfulness, purity, charity, respectfulness etc.), and the importance of social laws by which the people are governed. The purpose of such discussion as stated by Wataa Shedoo, Barbare Balli, Elemaa Marsaa, and Tariku Mijuu is to activate elders in a village so that they acquaint the young with the socio-cultural values of the Guji people and help them conform to them (See also pp. 56-57).

Gumi Ganda: *Gumi Ganda* (local meeting of elders) is a social occasion in which elders in a Guji village discuss about a social disorder and search solution to it, advise a strange person, promote and encourage a person who is in a difficult situation, admonish a misbehaving person and reinforce the young to learn the socio-cultural norms of their society.

In the Gadaa system, elders shoulder the responsibility of resolving local disputes, correcting misbehaviours, advising the young to learn the Guji socio-cultural norms and conform to them. The elders carry out these responsibilities by coming together in a village usually on holidays. They call a misbehaving person, disputing people and a strange person as well as boys and girls to the meeting and censure and teach them. The number of elders to participate in a *Gumi* is not determined. It depends on the number of available elderly people in an area on a day of meeting. Sometimes two elders can hold such a meeting and other times six to eight elders can participate in a specific *Gumi*. The elders forward their critical, advisory, appeasing and affirming views turn by turn. The most senior one begins discussions by introducing the agenda of their meeting and then the others continue deliberating on the case.

Cases that are usually deliberated on by local elders (as indicated above) are resolutions of conflicts between households, among family members, between individuals; admonishing of someone who behaves strangely or violates the established norms, and teaching the youth and a stranger to be able to conform to the social and cultural realities of the Guji people. Thus, it is possible to note that the important role of *Gumi Ganda* is socialization of people in a Guji village. It aims at conducting, shaping, harmonizing and guiding the social and personal life of the Guji people.

Proverb performances in the contexts of these occasions are mainly done by elderly people. This is because, among the Guji society, proverbs are considered to be the wit and wisdom of elderly people. They are mainly uttered by elders. In other words, conversations among elders in any occasion are rich in proverbial sayings. Thus, the use of proverbs is more frequent in social and cultural occasions where participants are elderly people.

In the contexts of *Ebbisaa*, elders utter proverbs to each other. Two or more elders may use proverbs in a rapid succession in conversations. In such contexts, the speaker may not give elaborations or explanations of the meanings of proverbs. This is because, all participants in such conversations are elderly people; therefore, are expected to be conversant with the linguistic and cultural information required to understand the meanings of the proverbs. Sometimes, an elder calls attention of listeners (attendants) to a proverb performance by using phrases like *mee nadhagay* (listen to me), *Kun dhuga* (this is true) e.t.c and another elder validates the performance by restating the proverb or quoting another proverb with similar meaning.

However, in the contexts of *Gumii Ganda*, elders utter proverbs to those younger than them. Here, two or more elderly people speak to a younger person with the purpose of informing, admonishing, encouraging, praising criticizing, advising him/her. In this situation, proverbs appear at widely separated intervals; their meanings and their relevance to a topic of discussion are usually made clear. It is in the contexts of such occasions that the meaning and function of the Guji-Oromo proverbs are going to be analyzed.

Based on Bauman's (1983: 93) and Bascom (1965: 365) observations of folkloric contexts (see 2.1.5), it is possible to note that these occasions are embodiments of cultural and social contexts respectively. This is because, in the first type of occasion (*Ebbisaa*), cultural elements such as people's ways of life, norms, beliefs and other forms of traditional values are enumerated and praised, whereas, in the second (*Gumi Ganda*), the social and personal cases like ridiculing of abnormal behaviour and practices, reconciliation of people at variance, advising of the young or strange persons to adapt themselves to Guji traditional ways of life etc. are considered. Majority of the proverbs (about 250) are collected from these occasions: about 110 from *Ebbisaa* and 140 from the *Gumi Ganda*. The proverbs have been analyzed on the basis of the theoretical background discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In chapter one, the research problem, its purpose and methodology have been introduced. The purpose of this chapter is to give the thesis a theoretical basis by reviewing materials on the contextual study of folklore in general and proverbs in particular and to consider studies done in the area in the Ethiopian context. A careful reading of the available works in the research area is important for establishment of theoretical background that may direct the line of argument in the main body of the research (Bailey: op. cit). Thus, the first section of this chapter presents a review of published works with its focus on the concept of folklore, the source of folklore, the contextual study of proverbs and the functions of proverbs. The second section will review studies on proverbs in Ethiopian context. The stock of MA and BA theses written on other Ethiopian folkloric forms has not been touched upon, as it seems too large to be accommodated in this part of the thesis.

2.1 Review of Published Works

2.1.1 Folklore

Different scholars have attempted to give their own definitions to the term folklore. To begin with, Waterman (As cited in Boswell, et. al. 1962:1) defines folklore as, "a form of art comprising different types of stories, proverbs, sayings, spells, songs, incantations and other formulas which employ spoken language as their medium". This definition tends to present folklore as an embodiment of verbal arts only. In the definition, the

stated forms of folklore are indicated as forms of art preserved, transmitted and expressed orally. Utley (1965: 13) also defines folk literature as, "orally transmitted literature whenever found." This definition identifies folklore as verbal arts similar to that of Waterman (ibid).

Similarly, Leach (1948: 398) defines folklore as, "the generic term to designate the handcrafts, customs, beliefs, traditions, tales, magical practices proverbs, songs etc; in short, the accumulated knowledge of a homogenous unsophisticated people". Leach's definition of folklore is broader in its range than that of Utley and Waterman. In the case of Leach, (ibid) folklore includes not only oral treasure of people but also other forms of cultural practices which involve not only sense of hearing and speaking but also that of seeing and touching. The other scholar who attempts to define folklore is Aurelio N. Espinosa. For Espinosa (as cited in Boswell, et. al., ibid) folklore is accumulated store of what people have experienced, learned and practiced across the ages as popular and traditional knowledge as distinguished from scientific knowledge. Espinosa further argues that folklore is the sum of the stored knowledge and experience of mankind. In this view man's traditional verbal and material art, his belief and customs, his rituals and ceremonies are all elements of folklore.

Dorson's (1972: 2-3) explanation of folklore also goes in line with Espinosa's (ibid) definition of folklore. Dorson (ibid) emphasizes that folklore embraces people's verbal and material arts, customs and other forms of culture. Dorson (ibid) classifies the elements of folklore into four broad categories. These categories are stated as: verbal arts (oral literature) such as folktales, proverbs, riddles, myths, fairy tales, etc; material culture that may refer to traditional tools used by the people; performing folk arts that

include traditional drama, song and dance, and social folk custom that embraces people's traditional belief, wearing, and other ways of life (ibid).

Similarly, Dundes (1965: 12) gives a broad explanation to the term folklore. According to Dundes, folklore refers to "people's manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, proverbs etc. Dundes (ibid: 6) further states that folklore stands for the wide concept that includes "myths, legends, tales, jokes, proverbs, riddles, chants, charms, blessing, curses, deaths, insults ... teases, greetings, ...customs, folk dances, folk drama, folk art, folk beliefs, folk medicine, folk music etc". Dundes's explanation of folklore is close to that of Dorson, for it is possible to classify Dundes's elements of folklore into four broad aspects of people's socio-cultural life as: folk art, folk custom, oral tradition and performing folk art. In generalizing his idea, Dundes (Ibid: 3) argues "these materials and the study of them are both referred to us as folklore".

Proverbs, although they share the above stated nature of folklore, need to be defined in their own rights for they possess characteristics that distinguish them from the other forms of folklore. They are defined in Coyle (1991: 80) as, "short and pithy sentences forming a popular saying, and expressing some result of the experienced life in a keen, and lively fashion". Proverbs are brief, subtle and impressive popular expressions appealing to nature and various aspects of the human life. They are metaphorical, (if not all in all) brief and sententious folk wisdoms distilled from the experience of the many. As Krappe (1965: 143) argues, "proverbs are folkloric elements representing some homely truth expressed in a concise and terse manner so as to recommend itself to a more or less extended circle". In the same way, Holman (1980: 365) describes a proverb as:

A sentence or a phrase, which briefly and strikingly expresses some recognized truth or shrewd observations about practical life and which has been preserved by oral tradition, though it may be preserved and transmitted in written literature as well.

As stated above, proverbs are brief, and sententious expressions that voice the sum of everyday experience, and are the common treasure of a society. Similarly, Miruka (1994:36) and Dundes (1994: 35) conceive a proverb as a short, or brief, obscure or gnomic statement expressing a supposed wisdom, truth or moral lesson. It contains folk wisdom, popularly accepted truth, and is frequent in the day-to-day communication of people.

In general, it is possible to note that the points entertained above rotate on a similar pivot: they all ascertain that folklore exists in a society as a social treasure embodying its customs, beliefs, cultures, challenges, sorrows, happiness, wisdoms, history, shortcomings and other details of life.

In the Ethiopian context, folklore seems to be understood in a similar way. Fekade Azeze, who produced a bibliographic review of works on Ethiopian folklore for the first time, has formulated a practical contextual explanation of folklore. Fekade (1991) explains folklore as the embodiment of human material and spiritual culture. Fekade's (Ibid) definition of folklore is in line with the definitions of the scholars stated above. Rather it uses the views of the scholars as a pillar and forwards the definition of folklore that seems to operate in Ethiopian context. According to Fekade (Ibid), folklore refers to what the various Ethiopian ethnic groups perceive and perform as their local or universal cultural treasure. Therefore, each ethnic group may have its own cultural treasure and,

also, all ethnic groups can have universal cultural practices, which give rise to Ethiopian culture. This shows, in the Ethiopian context, that the concept of folklore includes the local and common material culture (handcrafts, house, tools, food etc) and spiritual culture (oral poems, tales, myths, proverbs, legends, beliefs etc). In other words, folklore may refer to the oral treasures, folk arts, social folk customs, etc that portrays the local material and spiritual culture or the long aged, popular and common Ethiopian culture. In short, folklore embodies the skills, recipes, beliefs, observances, values, music, dance, proverbs, folktales, legends and myths that a society regards as its mark of identity (Fekade, Ibid).

2.1.2 The Source of Folklore

The primary source of folklore is believed to be the creative ideas of humankind. Uteley (1965: 11) explains this notion as follows:

The primary materials [elements] of folklore must be certain categories of creative ideas which have become traditional among the people of any society and which may be categorized as their common property. Such ideas are those relating to the universe, the supernatural wisdom, heroism, beauty, desirability, and propriety and their opposites.

As indicated in the quotation, the materials or ideas, which are considered as elements of folklore, were once upon a time, the philosophical and artistic creations of humankind. It seems that they were coined or shaped by an individual, became familiarized, popularized, and disseminated across generations to become universal.

The human mind is triggered by certain situations and responds to such situations artistically. In other words, human beings act in their social and natural environments literally as well as artistically. Such action of people happens to be inherited by decedents and becomes a cultural heritage. Thus, it is possible to note that folklore emerges out of different aspects of human life and also, reveals the ups and downs in a society (Ben Amos, 1982; Okpewho, 1992). With reference to Africa, Courlander (1975:1) emphasizes the fact that different elements of folklore have been developed out of human experiences.

They [elements of folklore] are products of long reflections about the relations among humans, between man and woman, between human kind and animal world; response to the challenges of the unknown, and to the universal need to create order and reason out of chaos and accident.

According to this observation, African folklore as elsewhere in the world, emerged from Africans acts to relate the past to the present, assert the courage and worth of mankind, forward what is just and unjust, what is moral and immoral, what is sensible and ridiculous etc. The people's religious attitudes, standards of behaviour, social establishments are all situations from which folkloric elements often flourish. After forwarding such idea, Courlander (ibid: 3) comes to generalization that "folklore is an enormous resident of human experience and a treasury of social values and literary creations".

2.1.3 Contextual Approach to the Study of Folklore

Dorson (1972) states twelve approaches to the study of folklore. These approaches are historical-geographical, historical-reconstructional, ideological, functional, psychological, structural, oral-formulaic, cross-cultural, folk-cultural, mass-cultural, hemispheric and contextual.

Among these approaches, this researcher has employed the contextual approach and examined functions of some Guji-Oromo proverbs in their contexts of use. The researcher employed this approach for it considers the interrelationship of context, meaning and function.

The contextual approach to the study of folklore was developed in the second half of the 20th century by folklorists such as Roger Abrahams, Dan Ben –Amos, Alan Dundes, Robert Georges and Kenneth Goldstein. They took the concepts of “verbal behavior” from linguistics, “functionalism” from anthropology and linguistics, “ego mechanisms” from psychology and applied them in the study of folklore. In the study of folklore, thus, “they object to the text being extrapolated from its context in language, behavior, communication, expression and performance (Ibid: 45).

The contextual approach shares some features with the functional approach. Similar to the functional approach, it focuses on functions of folklore in a socio-cultural setting in a society. It calls attention to the function of a folkloric form in its context of use. Thus, a folklorist searches for not only text but also context (Dorson, 1972; Fennegan, 1992).

What distinguishes this approach from the other approaches except the functional approach is that it views folklore not as a text but as a context in which it is performed. It focuses on the social and cultural environments in which a folkloric text is used. Dorson (1972: 15) puts this idea as:

What distinguishes these folklorists (folklorist who developed contextual approach) is their insistence that the folkloric concept apply not to a text but to an event in time in which a tradition is performed or communicated. Hence, the whole performance or communicative act must be recorded. The collector can no longer simply write down or tape-record a text, the text is only part of each event.

Thus, in this approach, a dynamics of human interaction become a central focus. It is important to note who speaks a particular folkloric form, how it is spoken, to whom it is spoken and the response of the listener to that item. The notion that much of the meanings and functions of proverbs come from the contexts in which they are used, therefore, understanding the meaning and function of proverbs is possible when a context (Situation) of a folklore (proverb) is studied is the basis of the approach. It also involves the idea that folkloric forms are mirrors by which researchers could gather information about the values, beliefs, and ideals of a particular society.

Arewa and Dundes (as cited in Gossen, 1994: 387) also emphasized that the contextual approach to the study of folklore in general and proverbs in particular focuses on contexts of use. Here are their words.

One needs to ask not only for proverbs...but also for information as to the other components of the situations in which proverbs are used. What are the rules governing who can use proverbs and to whom? Upon what occasion? In what places, with what other persons present and do the proverb relate with particular topic?

This observation indicates that the contextual approach to the study of folklore underscores the interrelationship of context, meaning and function of a folkloric form, which is proverb in this case. In other words, the contextual approach to the study of folklore emphasizes a description of a meaning and function of a particular folkloric text (e.g. a particular proverb) in specific context and then comes up to the identification of meaning and function of a folkloric form in a society in general (White, 1986).

Peter Seitel (as quoted in Miruka, 1994: 38) also argues that contextual approach to the study of proverbs involves the following questions:

What are the rules governing who can use proverbs, or particular proverbs? Upon what occasions? In what places?... Do the use of proverbs... have to do with particular topics? ... What exactly are the contributing contextual factors which make the use of proverbs or particular proverb possible or not possible, appropriate or inappropriate?

Depending on this observation it is possible to note that who uses proverb, when and where of the usage and the why of the usage are some important elements of contexts that one should focus on contextual approach.

Thus, Dorson (1971: 45) asserts that a folklorist who follows this approach "... resides in it (a society) over protracted period as participant-observer-collector, and gathers information on the occasions of tale-telling, audience reactions, and conversations". The

main interest of such researcher is not as much question of function of proverbs in general but description of function of a proverb in a specific speech situation. Arewa and Dundes (as cited in Grzybek, 1994: 35) observe this theoretical assertion as:

Such a study of context is not the same as the more general study of functions of folklore. One can say that proverbs sum up a situation, pass judgment, recommend a course of action; but, this doesn't tell us what the particular function of a particular proverb used by a particular individual in a particular setting is.

Thus, in the contextual approach to the study of proverbs, a researcher seeks for function of a specific proverb in a specific context of speech occasion.

The study at hand makes use of these theoretical notions and presents the social and cultural contexts of Guji-Oromo proverbs in analytical description along with each proverbial text.

2.1.3.1 Contexts of Proverb Performance

In the above sub-section, general points about what a contextual approach to the study folklore in general and proverbs in particular suggests a folklorist to do have be presented. In this sub-section, the nature and importance of contexts in parameology (the study of proverbs) have been discussed briefly.

In this paper context can be explained as a situation, event or action in which a proverb is used or performed. Such context could be cultural, or social discourses, rituals, ceremonies, etc of a society (Furniss, et. al. 1995).

With a primary focus on verbal folklore, Bauman (1983: 363) deals with aspects of proverbial contexts that are accessible through fieldwork. These are cultural context and social context. The cultural context, according to Bauman (ibid) involves systems of meanings and symbolic interrelationships. It includes the aspects of customary practices and people's ways of life represented and projected in a folkloric element. It also encompasses institutions like religion, kinship, neighboring, initiating, celebrating, praising prayer etc, and the communicative system of the community that includes the relative position of the interactants and the conversational styles of them.

The other aspect of folkloric context, the social context, as stated in Bauman (ibid) has to do with matters of social structure and social interaction. It is based on the notion that proverbs are collective expressions of a social group as well as personal expressions of individuals. Therefore, it is where affairs of social groups and those of individuals are entertained through proverbs. Social context may appear in occasions like women's rap sessions, family gatherings, telephone conversation etc.

Bascom (1965: 365) also argues that folklore in general and proverbs in particular come into use in social and cultural contexts. As stated in Bascom (ibid), social context involves the relations of proverbs to social matters such as advising, ridiculing, reconciliation, prompting, disapproving etc of people. In such context, the investigation of who used the proverb and why he used it seems important. The cultural context involves the relationships between proverbs and other aspects of culture. The study of proverbs in this aspect of context concerns the extent to which proverbs are mirrors of culture and incorporates descriptions of the details of ceremonies, institutions as well as the expression of beliefs and attitudes.

Different scholars argue that these contexts should be considered for attainment of reliable and reasonable study of proverbs. To begin with, Malinowski (as cited in Bascom, 1965:281) clarifies that "the [folkloric] text is extremely important but without the context it remains lifeless". This implies that proverbs should be examined in their contexts of performance for the fact that not merely knowledge of them but total understanding of them is possible if they are studied within their contexts of performance. In the same way, Messenger (1965) emphasizes that failure of a researcher to record the text with context makes a collection have a limited value. Coyle (1991: 984) also ascertains the fact that a contextual study of folkloric forms considers not only the text but also the context in which the text has been used. He observes, "The importance of context determines that the student of folk literature considers not simply the text qua text but the text as it functions in cultures". From this quotation, it is clear that the cultural phenomenon in which folkloric forms are often used can contribute a lot to the proper understanding of them.

Similarly, Gryzybek, 1994: 33-35 and Norrick (1994: 149-151) assert that it is impossible to understand functions of proverbs out of the contexts, as their function and content are always associated with contexts. According to the observation of these scholars, it is by contextual study of proverbs that one can come across the fact that the function of proverbs may vary across societies with different levels of cultural civilization. In a more civilized or relatively dominant culture, a proverb functions, mostly, as a means of expression of nostalgic feeling. People of such culture remember and sympathize with the past form of their cultural life by recalling folkloric elements such as tales, proverbs, and oral poems. But in a society with a "primitive" culture, a proverb functions as a mirror of the real aspects of life. Thus, it is evident that the change in context may

change the function of a living folklore. In the same way, it is possible to learn that the connection between actual life and proverb is very close as the persistence of actual life in proverb is strong.

Bascom (op. cit: 365) also argues that contexts must be recorded together with proverbs. In other words, besides the accurate recording of proverbs, a fieldworker is expected to collect evidence of traditions as they are reflected in the personality, locale and antecedents of the informant. This indicates that a proverbial saying that is removed from its actual context deprives a researcher of an opportunity to understand its content and function. Therefore, facts such as the place where and the manner in which proverbs are used; users and their ways of using proverbs, participation of audience, and their attitudes and procedures of performance should be recorded (Miruka, 1994; Chesaina, 1997).

In the case of Africa, Finnegan (1970) strongly asserts the importance of context in the study of African oral literature, particularly, African proverbs. Finnegan (Ibid: 464) argues that "since the actual importance [of proverbs] depends on the context of use, it is in fact impossible to give any definitive treatment of the allusive content and function of proverbs without studying their situations". According to this idea, it is often impossible to grasp the point or attraction of a given proverb without some knowledge of the cultural background and of what the thing mentioned means to those who utter it. Finnegan (ibid) further emphasized the importance of context in understanding of functions of proverbs as follows:

It is particularly true of proverbs whose use and application depends so crucially on their context that no full understanding can be reached without some knowledge of the occasions and purposes of their actual use.

She attempts to illustrate this idea by giving an example from Zulu proverb: "*No proud girls ever had the better of the skin skirt*".

According to Finnegan (ibid), this proverb can not be understood unless we know that it is customary for only married women to wear skin-skirts and that the proverb, therefore, refers to the tonic effect of marriage on girls. That is why she strongly argues for the necessity of studying proverbs within the culture and experience of a particular society. She generalizes her statements by pointing out court cases, local law cases, or disputes, counseling and advising occasions as some of the common sources of contexts in which proverbs are often used in Africa.

In short, as discussed above, various scholars agree on the fact that consideration of contexts for the study of proverbs results in a good understanding of their functions.

2.1.4 Functions of Folklore

As stated previously, folklore is a giant element of a prevailing societal culture. It reflects the popular social, cultural, political, economic and traditional practices. Thus, in a society it belongs to, folklore serves valuable functions. It serves for multiple contemporary purposes that directly or indirectly refer to different aspects of human life (Simiyu, 1994). In witnessing the diverse functions of folklore, Bascom (1965: 277) states the following:

Some of the most important functions of folklore include aiding in the education of the young, promoting a group feeling of solidarity, providing socially sanctioned ways for individuals, serving as a vehicle for social protest, offering an enjoyable escape from reality and converting dull work into play.

The quoted idea shows that folkloric elements play substantial roles in educating, advising the young, encouraging good behaviour and discouraging the evil ones; creating social conformity among peoples, promoting moral purity and strengthening cultural belongingness.

Coyle (1991), Miruka (1994) Chesaina (1997) and Fekade (1991) also state that folklore, in general, is conventionally held to serve four main functions: to entertain, to educate, to validate culture and to maintain conformity to accepted patterns of behaviour, with the individual elements all carrying their own sets of functions in addition. Such wide range of functions of folklore becomes clear when it is examined within a particular context in which folkloric elements are brought into use.

To know some potential functions of Ethiopian folklore, it is essential to observe the ideas raised by the Ethiopian notable scholar, Fekade Azeze. Fekade who has been exerting a great effort in encouraging, facilitating and conducting studies in Ethiopian folklore, has continuously emphasized the significant functions of folkloric elements in his successive works on Ethiopian folklore.

Among his pertinent works, Fekade (1991: 41) indicates the potential functions that Ethiopian folklore, may serve in the political, social, cultural and economic development practices that the country has been promoting presently.

According to Fekade (ibid), the studied folkloric elements help NGO's and government policy makers to know the need, attitude and philosophy of the peasant society who are considered to be the pivotal figures in the development activities, to formulate social, political, cultural and economic development strategies in such a way that they fit in to the immediate and crucial needs of the society. Thus, folkloric elements can serve as means of investigating the appropriate and effective development strategies.

Fekade (Ibid), in generalizing his idea, has put the significant and major potential importance of folklore under four categories. These are the importance of folklore in preserving heritage, in formulation of rural development strategies, in conceptualization of formal education and in enrichment of literary works. These categories are elaborated as follows.

Folklore is a popular heritage that bridges the life style, philosophy and attitude of a generation to its succeeding one. In other words, the present generation gets access to learning the social, cultural, political and economic lives of the past generation from the existing folkloric forms. Thus, it is possible to say that the available forms of folklore can help someone observe people across generations. They preserve the earlier tradition, customs and philosophical views across generations (Ibid).

Besides, folklore depicts the need, philosophy, attitude, problems visions and dislikes of a society. The unlettered rural community, usually, reveals its problems, desires and dislikes in folktales, proverbs, oral poems and other elements of folklore. Thus, folkloric forms can portray the problems and needs of the rural community and serve as strategies for the formulation of the appropriate rural development plans (Ibid).

The other function of folklore is enrichment of literary works. The infusion of folkloric forms, especially proverbs, enrich a literary work and enable it portray its message in a more touching language. It seems that it is because of such function of folklore that African novelists often exploit proverbs in their literary works (ibid).

In short, according to Fekade (op. cit), the study of folklore of Ethiopian people, can contribute a lot to the rural development plans.

2.1.4.1 Functions of Proverbs

Different elements of folklore can share similar functions. Accordingly, proverbs seem to serve functions that can be given by other forms of folklore. They have also got their own sets of functions that come to existence in their contexts of performance. Thus, this sub-section, deals with some common functions of proverbs as stated in different books.

To begin with, Bascom (1965), Finnegan (1992), Miruka (1994) and Chesaina (1997) state that proverbs mainly serve two important functions: didactic and aesthetic. Each of these functions is discussed as follows.

2.1.4.1.1 Didactic Function

The common function of proverbs is that they operate as didactic devices in a society. The function they serve as instruments to introduce and transmit the socio-cultural realities of a society can be stated as didactic function (Bascom, 1965: 26). In relation to this idea, Malinowski (as stated in Bascom, ibid) also emphasized that proverbs serve as warrant, charter and practical guide. They often express, promote and identify beliefs

and customs, protect and reinforce morality, and strengthen tradition by endowing value to them. Whenever dissatisfaction or skepticism happens to an accepted pattern, proverbs are used to validate them. Such reinforcement and validation of cultural values can be noted as significant function of proverbial sayings. Thus, they play their role as means of affirming people's valuable cultural, social, economic and political practices.

Bascom (1965: 293) also argues that proverbs are expressions of society's values. Thus, its art both material and moral, inspirations and frustrations, customary practices, social norms, in short, the sum total of its realities of life can be observed and learnt through proverbs. In doing so, proverbs play the role of bridging the past socio-cultural values to the present ones.

Similarly, Miruka (1994: 47) expresses that proverbs function as means of learning people's values and wisdoms. He writes:

Proverbs present us with a codified wisdom of a society accumulated over many years of happy and bitter experiences. In them, we see the society's perception of life; such perceptions have developed as a result of observation and reflection on the nature of life.

As indicated in the quotation, proverbs portray the wise thoughts and observations of bitter and happy experiences of people as well as their perceptions or outlooks of life. In other words, people's accumulated experience of life and their understanding of life itself can be noticed through their proverbial sayings. Thus, for anthropologists and folklorists who are keen to study of cultural life of a society, proverbs can give proper information. In other words, the close examination of proverbs may help someone understand people's active cultural practices (Krappe 1964; Abraham 1972).

The other didactic function of proverbs as stated by Finnegan (1992: 37) and Miruka (1994: 38) is the role they play in education particularly in non-literate society. In a traditional society, the information embodied in proverbs is considered as a didactic substance. It is regarded as a dependable rule that guides human beings in their day-to-day life. Therefore, proverbs teach morals, diligences, and purity, and ridicule laziness, snobbishness, immorality, rebelliousness and other forms of wicked behavior. In such community, folkloric forms in general and proverbs in particular are regarded as guidance of behavior, beliefs, rituals and accepted norms on the basis of which a person should behave or act. In an unlettered society, folkloric forms mainly proverbs happen to be the common means of educating children. A father or grandfather often teaches children the badness of theft, lie, mischief, quarrel, and the goodness of love, honesty, obedience, truthfulness, faithfulness by telling them proverbs, myth, folktales, fairy tales, fables etc.

Elders often advise the youth to have successful social and cultural roles in a society, usually, through proverbs. In the same way, people encourage or praise others on good achievements in their life mostly through proverbs. As a result, the didactic function of proverbs is prevalent in the formal and informal learning system of a traditional society (Delanq, 1966; Hirdog, 1936; Lindfors, 1973).

The didactic function of proverbs also includes maintenance of conformity to the accepted norms of behaviour. It deals with the function that proverbs serve as means of reinforcing social harmony and exercising social and cultural life. In short, they enforce behaviour, manners, and practices to fit to the established social and cultural norms. In

other words, proverbs put pressure on individuals' acts, and behaviour so that they get on with the accepted norms of a society (Bascom, 1965: 27; Boswell, 1962: 29).

2.1.4.1.2 Aesthetic Function

Aesthetic function of proverbs has to do with the role of proverbs in embellishing the verbal and written forms of communications. The giant African writer, Chinua Achebe has witnessed the aesthetic function of proverbs by saying: "Proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten". This expression underlines that proverbs facilitate speech and make it sweet, attractive and understandable (Kalu, 2000).

The aesthetic quality of proverbs, as stated in White (1987: 152), lies partly in their peculiar form of indirection and partly in their communicative effectiveness. White (ibid) argues that proverbs "combine a cognitive economy of reasoning with pragmatic force aimed at influencing other people". Bascom (1965:26) also states that proverbs are used to give point and add colour to ordinary conversation. When they use proverbs in their speeches, people can get attentions from others. This shows that proverbs have power to make discussions attractive and influence people to listen (Damme, 2000:65).

Proverbs enrich and give elegance for not only oral discourses but also the written ones. African writer, as stated in Kalu (op.cit), give their attention to infuse proverbs and the other forms of oral literature into their novels with the aim of adding local colour and evoking the cultural milieu in which actions in their novels takes place. Chinua Achebe, for example, is one of the African writers who often use proverbs in their novels with the aim of communicating to their readers in idioms that are Africans and reflecting African traditional oral art. Lindfors (1973b: 77) strengthens this idea as follows.

Achebe, a skillful artist, achieves an appropriate language for each of his novels... through the use of proverbs. Indeed, Achebe's proverbs can serve as keys to an understanding of his novels because he uses them to add touches of local colour, sound and reiterate themes, sharpen characterization, clarify conflict and focus on the values of the society he is portraying.

Thus, in Achebe's novels, proverbs function as instruments of adding colour and beauty in narrative discourses. In short, proverbs give elegance and communicative effectiveness not only to oral discussions but also to the written form of discourses.

In general, in the above arguments, it is shown that proverbs serve as stabilizers of culture. They function in society as means of promoting conformity to the common norms and to ensure their continuity across generations. Bascom (op.cit: 289) further states that proverbs are used to inculcate the customs and ethical standards in people and provide them with rationalizations when the institutions and norms are challenged.

Thus, proverbs commonly serve as means of transmitting, maintaining and promoting cultural institutions, and enforcing individual's behaviour to conform with the established socio-cultural standard.

2.2 Review of Local Studies

In the study of Ethiopian folklore Fekade Azeze of the Addis Ababa University seems to come first. He has exerted a great effort to introduce the state of research in oral literature and to facilitate and encourage it towards a more scientific and applicable position. His substantial and preliminary work, (Fekade, 1984) clearly witnesses his endeavor in promoting scientific studies in Ethiopian folklore. Fekade (Ibid) forwards a

clear and highly suggestive review and exhaustive bibliography of the produced works in Ethiopian folklore until 1976. In this review, he asserts that it was in the second half of the 19th century that Ethiopian folklore began to be collected and recorded by Europeans. In the period, some European journals and magazines came up with some Ethiopian oral literary materials. However, as could be noted from the review, the collected and recorded oral items of the period were deprived of their social and cultural contexts, and hence, fail to display the contemporary social and cultural patterns, and appear incapable to manifest their peculiar features.

Fekade (1984) and Fekade (2001) group the works attempted on promotion and development of studies in Ethiopian folklore under three categories. These categories are titled as *the amateur endeavor*, *senior essays at the department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature*, and the "*Oral Literature Research Unit*" of the Language Academy. In the first category, the sources introduced Ethiopians who were, without any training in the collection and study of oral literature, contributed a lot to the collecting and recording activities of Ethiopian folklore. According to the sources, the collection and publication of Ethiopian oral literature by Ethiopians began by *Belaten Geta Heruy's Mesehafa Qene* (Book of Qene). The other collection of Ethiopian folklore was done by Haji Yesuf Abdurahaman and came up with title *yamareña Mert Mesalena Tarat* (selected Amharic proverbs) after twenty years. Fekade states Mahetama Sellasse's *Yabatoch Qers* (Heritage of the fathers), *Amareña Qene* (Amharic Qene) and *Enqlef Lamene*; Teklay Zeweld's *Wagi Qadamot*, Mengistu Lema's *Yabatochi Chawata*, and Abebe Ayehe's two collections of folktales and proverbs as some of the early developments in Ethiopian folklore.

In summarizing his ideas, Fekade ascertains that even though the collection and publications of oral literary heritages by the above stated Ethiopians clearly marks the beginning and development of interest in Ethiopian folklore, the methodology applied and the resulting works are not much different from those of the 19th century Europeans. In addition, except for two works in Ge'ez and three in Tigrengna, according to Fekade (ibid), other works of the period were in Amharic or dominantly focused on Amhairc oral literature.

Under the second category, Fekade (ibid) explains the extent to which the graduating students of the Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature put their focus on writing their senior essays on Ethiopian oral literature from 1958 to 1976. During this period, more than one hundred senior essays were written on topics related to oral literature. According to the review, these senior essays "break from one language dominated tradition of the amateur oral literature collections". In other words, besides Amharic, studies on folkloric forms in other Ethiopian languages such as *Oromo*, *Kambatiña*, *Siltiña*, *Hadiyiña* began to appear. Most of the works focused on the analyses of the content and functions of folkloric elements.

The methodology employed by the students and the amateurs were more or less similar. These studies didn't give attention to the contexts in which the people perform the folkloric elements. Fekade (1984: 7) asserts this pitfall as follows:

Most of them [the students] collect their material from books through correspondences with friends who live in the area of research target, and by asking few people whom they are told are knowledgeable. Very few went to the relevant locality and made tape recordings of oral literature and took note of the performance as a whole and its place in the lives of the people.

As it is possible to learn from the above quotation, the undergraduate students were limited to the textual analysis of the collected folkloric elements; therefore, fail to relate the elements to the actual social and cultural lives of the contemporary society. Fekade (Ibid) indicates that this problem was attributed to the students' lack of training in the collection and study of folklore.

However, the 1970s, as stated by Fekade (Ibid), appeared with a promising development in oral literary study by Ethiopians. This was due to the growing interest of students and the establishment of a unit for the study of oral literature in the Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature. In this period, the aforementioned problems in collecting folkloric elements seem to be realized. Some of the student researchers attempted to collect folkloric elements along with the contemporary social, political and cultural contexts and focus on the contextual analysis of the folklore. However, the number of such works and the depth of the contextual analysis of the works were still insignificant.

The third category deals with the contribution of the then newly established body i.e. "*The oral literature Research Unit*" of the Language Academy, established in 1970. According to Fekade (ibid), the unit was established with the aim of collecting, recording, translating and analyzing the folkloric forms of various Ethiopian nationalities. Accordingly, many folkloric elements of the Ethiopian nationalities were collected and tape-recorded for future studies. Thus, this could be regarded as a progressive attempt towards the enhancement and realization of interest for studies in Ethiopian oral literature. Furthermore, the two conferences held in 1973 and 1976 on issues in

Ethiopian oral literature contributed a lot to the development of awareness in the methods and significance of studies in Ethiopian folklore.

In concluding his review, Fekade (ibid) argues that although there is a gradual but visible progress in understanding of the aims and significances of research in Ethiopian oral literature, the awareness for the significance of actual context in the collection and analysis of oral literature is still neglected. That is why the researchers don't seem to realize the fact that the printed words alone don't let the correct understanding of the content, and function of a folkloric element. According to Fekade, (Ibid) this was the still untouched problem requiring the close attention of the young researchers. These works (Fekade 1984 and Fekade 2001) seem to strengthen the significance of this thesis by showing that much attention was not given to contexts in the study of Ethiopian Folklore in previous times.

Fekade's argument appears to be true when we survey some of the B.A theses written on diverse elements of Ethiopian folklore. Focusing on the senior essays written on proverbs, for it in the concern of this thesis, it is possible to support Fekade's argument. To begin with, **ፀጋዬ** (Tsegaye) a senior essay entitled: **የጉጅ ተረትና ምሳሌዎች** (*Yeguji teretina misalawoch*) (1972) contains analyses of some Guji-Oromo proverbs. The effort of Tsegaye to collect and analyze the Guji-Oromo proverbs in that relatively early time (1972 E.C) is really appreciable. His attempt to identify the textual form of some two hundred Guji proverbs was an important beginning. The paper emphasizes description of the recurrent images in the proverbs and concludes that the Guji proverbs draw their imagery from the social and cultural environment of the people. It also touches upon contents of some proverbs in its small section. However, in the analysis of content of the

proverbs, Tsegaye's paper seems to focus on the proverbs (the texts) without considering the contexts in which they are employed. It focuses on the text and analyzes the content of some proverbs without stating or describing when, where and how they are uttered by the people. It seems that due to this problem, his analyses don't reflect the actual social and cultural life of the Guji people. His analyses of the following proverbs are taken as examples.

Qawwee dhufe dubbin dhufe
When an Amhara came, a problem came.

Tsegaye argues that this proverb is showing the existence of social class (i.e. upper class and lower class) in the Guji society. According to this argument the proverb indicates that the Amhara people assumed the upper class, and suppressed or humiliated the native Guji people since the Guji are poor and lower in their social class. However, the existence of social class, even in that time, was not common and visible among the Guji people. Even though the existence of the Amharas among the Guji people is true, the upper position they assumed was not visible. In fact, there was no agreement between such people and the native ones. The proverb, thus, is spoken to ascertain such inter ethnic conflict. In other words the proverb tends to portray the conflict between the Amhara settlers and the Guji people rather than the existence of class in Guji society. The analysis of the following proverb also reflects the extent to which the paper ignored context, therefore, fails to reflect the social realities of the Guji.

Yaraadha jennaan kan nadheen dhiitu.
A bad man is he who kicks a woman.

The paper concludes that this proverb shows the permanence of male's pride in the Guji people. But in the context of the social realities of the people the meaning of the proverb

goes beyond pride of men. The proverb is employed by both males and females and shows that a male who kicks or harasses a female is considered to be a bad man. The people use the proverb to witness the delicate, weak and harmless nature of women. In short the proverb indicates that females are respected among the Guji people.

Thus, the proverb reflects not males' pride but the females' position in the Guji people's socio-cultural structure. In short, these proverbs witness the extent to which Tsegaye's (ibid) analyses fail to address the Guji realities of life.

Some of the other BA these concerned with the study of proverbs of Ethiopian ethnic groups are Mengesha* (1973 E.C) Kotera* (1975 E.C) Shimelis* (1965 E.C) and Desta* (1963). Mengesha* (Ibid) is concerned with the study of Walayta proverbs with its focus on their functions. After analyzing the proverbs, it has concluded that Walayta proverbs have got didactic and affirmative functions. Kotera (Ibid), in the same way, presents the analysis of some Hadiya proverbs. It considers the examination of the contents and functions of the proverbs and generalized that in most cases, Hadiya proverbs seem to originate from the cumulative experiences of the people. Desta (1963), also, analyzed some Kambata proverbs and arrived at a conclusion that Kambata proverbs serve functions such as praising, ridiculing, guiding, encouraging, empowering and affirming. Apart from these, Shemelis (Ibid) presents Sidama proverbs with its focus on their contents and functions. The study indicates that Sidama proverbs possess meanings and functions that may exist in the proverbs in other languages such as Amharic, Gedeo and Oromo.

** in the referred works the names are written in Amharic scripts*

These works are appreciable for the fact that they have brought the proverbs of the different Ethiopian linguistic groups to light. However, they didn't give attention to natural contexts in which the proverbs are employed by the people. In other words, as Fekade (op. cit) states, the student researchers didn't do much in recording and using of the social and cultural contexts in the study of the proverbs. The senior essays are related to the work at hand in that they emphasize functions of the proverbs and are different in that they don't employ principles of contextual approach in folklore studies.

As of the recent time, there has been a better concern for the study of folklore at graduate level. In the Institute of Language Studies of the Addis Ababa University up to the year 2000, 17 M.A theses on oral literature were written by graduate students of Literature. Although, the total number of the theses produced is still important, the number of MA theses on proverbs is not significant. Among the 17 MA theses, only two are concerned with proverbs.

The first M.A thesis entertaining proverbs is Berhanu (1986). It is devoted to the analysis of Kambata proverbs with main emphasis on their content, occasions and functions, and forms and styles. The thesis states that the Kambata people are rich in proverbs and that their proverbs portray the social experiences of the people. It considers the actual day-to-day life of the people and relates the content, function and other features of the proverbs to the cultural, social and economic realities of the people. It further shows that the Kambata proverbs have historical, ethical and educational functions and that there are no special times set for their use. This thesis is a substantial work that clearly indicates how people's different aspects of life could be reflected in proverbs. Since it considers the function of proverbs of the society who lead relatively traditional ways of

life, the present researcher has gained from it some strategies for interpreting the Guji proverbs.

The second MA thesis, Teferi (2000) has presented the forms and contents of Awgn proverbs. The thesis tends to be rather textual in its approach in the analysis of the proverbs. In the thesis, Awgn proverbs are presented as instructive and rhetorical tools that foreground persuasion.

To sum up, discussions in this chapter show that social and cultural contexts are important in the study of functions of proverbs and that proverbs serve mainly didactic and aesthetic functions. As it is possible to note from the review of local studies, researches conducted on proverbs of Ethiopian ethnic groups seem to be limited in number even though the attempt was promising. Furthermore, the contextual approach to the study of folklore has not been applied, as the researchers seem to lack training in it. In the next three chapters, an attempt has been made to bridge this gap by examining functions of Guji-Oromo proverbs in the social and cultural contexts in *Ebbisaa* and *Gumi Ganda*.

CHAPTER THREE

REFLECTIVE FUNCTION OF GUJI PROVERBS

This chapter focuses on analysis of proverbs used in *Ebbisaa* observed during the fieldwork (July 1- August 31, 2002). The proverbs were collected mainly from the *Ebbisaa* held in Tooree, Guangua, Jirmee and Baritwaccu *Kebeles* (*villages*) on different days during the period. As stated in chapter one (see 1.8), the discussions and practices in *Ebbisaa* are concerned with prayers, blessings, and enumerating as well as activating of Guji customs, moral codes and values. The proverbs, are thus, used to forward ideas that reflect this socio-cultural life of the society. They are intricately related to this cultural environment and portray the values, beliefs, and traditions etc of the people. Therefore, the reflective function of the proverbs becomes more important. The reflective function of proverbs, in this case, involves the roles proverbs play in portraying cultural elements of the society and justifying its cultural practices and institutions. It refers to the use of proverbs to reflect the common ways of life, customs, and beliefs etc of the society and ensure that the *aadaa* (custom) *safuu* (morality) and *seeraa* (social laws) of the society are valuable. Hence, this chapter takes up the examination of proverbs portraying the social and cultural realities of the people. However, for touching upon meanings is inevitable in the course of analysis of functions, the contextual meanings of the proverbs have also been discussed briefly. Twenty-seven sample proverbs are selected from the collection, and included in the analysis.

As an understanding of background is necessary for a clear exposition of the contexts in which the proverbs are employed (White, 1987), the chapter begins by giving a brief

description of the socio-cultural roles of the Qallu and his companions in the Guji society, and then proceeds to examine the major social and cultural practices and beliefs reflected through Guji proverbs in the contexts of *Ebbisaa*.

The Qallu of the Guji people assumes a leading position in shaping the social, cultural, and religious practices. He works day and night for the survival of Guji traditional life. He along with *jarolle* (the elders who accompany him), moves in the villages of the Guji people and motivates elders as well as family heads to teach the young about the historical and social values of Guji customs, traditional laws and codes of morality.

To discharge this responsibility, the Qallu holds *Ebbisaa* with elders, occasionally, in different villages. The meetings are irregular as well as ceremonial. In other words, the meetings are ritualistic and are not held at constant time and place. Some times they occur once a week and at other times they take place twice a week.

During the fieldwork, it was learned that such meetings focus, mainly, on the praising of the Guji norms of life. Prayer to *Waaqaa* and *Lafaa* (the God and the earth) is made and blessings for the Guji people are performed by Qallu who usually leads the ceremonial practices of the meetings. The Qallu opens the ceremonial practices in *Ebbisaa* with a prayers and invites his companions (the *jarole*) to say similar prayers turn by turn. After the prayers, he begins discussion by introducing the purpose of the meeting and invites his companions to present their ideas. Then, each participant at the meeting contributes issues one after the other for deliberation. The Qallu reaffirms repeatedly the value of Guji traditional laws, customs and moral codes. The current status of Guji laws of

marriage, kinship, neighborhood, religion and other forms of social relations are deliberated upon.

In *Ebbisaa*, the use of proverbs is common and is closely related to the art of speech. Elders use proverbs to show off their oratory skills and stress a point; while, the listeners are expected to be able to understand the proverb. To this end, each person delivers speeches and emphasizes them through proverbs. Thus, the debate and discussions in such occasion are enriched in proverbs.

Most of the proverbs employed in such discussions (about 128) dwell upon three points: aspects of Guji customary practices, the social value of morality and the power of social laws. The subsequent sub-sections will examine proverbs that reflect these points.

3.1 Proverbs Reflecting Aspects of Customary Practices (*aadaa*)

Guji proverbs reflect upon the recurrent and more popular customs of the people in sensible, and lucid ways. Through the proverbs, young members of the society understand and evaluate the customs and values of the old generations. The people's traditional beliefs and day-to-day activities are activated and realized through proverbs. Thus, proverbs transmit customary actions and beliefs of the older generation to the younger ones. They widely portray the diversified aspects of prevailing customary practices, attitudes and beliefs. Here are samples of such proverbs and speech situations that give rise to them.

When he summons elders and holds discussions with them in *Ebbisaa*, the Qallu of the Guji people uses proverbs in his speech to inform the elders that they are the leaders of

their people. He often employs proverbs to convey a message that elders are responsible to care for the social and cultural values of the Guji people.

Among the *Ebbisaas* in which the Qallu and other elders of the Guji people deliberated on the social responsibilities of elders, the one held in Tooree village in the third week of the fieldwork is used as an example in this paper because of its length and enrichment in proverbs. The meeting was attended by elders from Tooree and Qarsaa villages and was led by the Qallu and his companions who assisted him in delivering speeches about social positions and duties of elders. In their speech, they asserted that elders deserve sincere respect and shoulder great responsibilities in Guji custom. They emphasized that elders are culture-bearers and leaders of the society. The following seven proverbs are analyzed in the context of this discussion.

To begin with, after saying traditional prayers and giving blessings, the Qallu stated that elders are always expected to deliberate upon the social and cultural life of their people. He emphasized that they (the elders) should reflect on the customs and values of the society so as to transmit them to the young generation because in Guji custom elders are leaders of their people. One of the proverbs he employed to depict this custom is quoted below. The proverb has its origin in the past traditional practice (warfare practices) of the Guji people.

1. *Abbaan waraanaa dubbii waaraana dubbata. (4)*
A leader of war talks about war

The proverb alludes to warfare, which was supposed to be the common practice of the Guji people in the earlier times. In the past (approximately before 1990) as reported by Wataa Shedo (the acting Qallu of the Guji and one of the major informants in this study),

a child was trained by his father to become a good warrior in his adulthood. Such a tradition, according to the informant, made many members of the community good warriors. As a result, war often broke out between the Guji and their neighbours like the Borana, and the Walayta. The warrior group of the people was led by a person who was physically strong, wise and an excellent fighter. The leader was usually responsible for collecting information about the enemy and encourage the warriors, design the effective way of attacking the enemy and lead the warriors in the fight against the enemy. The proverb stated above seems to originate from such tradition. In the context of the discussion, it shows the custom that the responsibility of activating and guiding people towards some purpose falls in the hands of the elders.

From the proverb, elders, who are considered to be the leaders of their people, learn that they are in the forefront of the struggle to keep the Guji customs, laws and moral values functional. The proverb reflects the custom that in the life of the Guji the responsibility of encouraging and reinforcing the cultural values and social laws of the people is shouldered by the Qallu and the elders (jarolle); therefore, that they are concerned with deliberating on it.

The other person in the meeting (one of the Qallu companions) takes his turn and expressed that he has an idea to forward. Then, he uttered the following proverb.

2. Mamaaks tokko dubbii fida tokko dubbii fixa. (62)

One proverb gives rise to a point of discussion and another ends it.

Using this proverb, the speaker refers to the proverb, which was already uttered by the Qallu (proverb 1). This proverb conveys a meaning that a proverb brings an idea to

human mind as well as helps a speaker to present an idea shortly. The man, therefore, used the proverb to assure that the proverb, which has been uttered earlier, has triggered an idea in his mind and initiated him to speak. Thus, the proverb shows that the use of proverbs is considered as a customary practice in conversations among the Guji people. Further, the person advances his ideas through another proverb. Before uttering the proverb quoted below, the man stated that the traditional values of the Guji are exposed to challenges from exotic cultures and religions. According to the man and as it was learnt during the fieldwork, Christianity has posed a danger on the traditional values of the Guji, thus, the young members of the tribe have rejected and forgotten the traditional practices of their forefathers, and live in conformity with the demands of protestant Christianity. The elders asserted the importance of caring for traditional values of the Guji and their ways of life today. This is to ensure the existence of these values in future. The following is one of the proverb they cited to reflect this concern.

3. Olkaa'an fuudhan malee olka'an hinfudhan. (79)
One takes tomorrow what he/she puts by today.

In this context, the proverb projects the necessity of maintaining the traditional values of the Guji today to ensure their existence tomorrow. The proverb further indicates that the power of the rapidly expanding Christianity can expose the Guji traditional practices to destruction; therefore, that attention should be given to saving them. Thus, the proverb reflects the fact that the Guji traditional ways of life are found in a state of change as a result of the expansion of Christianity in the area.

The other elderly man in the meeting emphasized that without the guidance, leadership and advice of elders, the young may not be conscious of the worth of traditional values and care for their preservation. He said, for example:

4. *Mataa malee balbala hinbaan. (57)*

Head goes through a door before the other parts of the body.

The proverb alludes to the doors of the traditional houses of the Guji people. Since the doors of Guji traditional houses are short, one has to bend his head down to enter the houses. When someone bends his head down at a door and tries to go out, it is the head of the person that first passes through the open door. And, then, the whole body follows the head. The proverb originates from such ordinary observation. In this context, "Head" represents the elders; and "Other parts of the body" stands for the Guji people, mainly the youth. Thus, the proverb portrays that elders or the more experienced people are supposed to guide, encourage and activate the youth so that they will be aware of the worth of the customary practices of their society.

Another elderly person further explains that the heads of a society usually the elders work to meet the expectations of their people and that they shoulder light as well as heavy responsibilities in the society. The elder expressed this custom in the following proverb:

5. *Mana ofii dhakaa itti baatan. (59)*

One carries a stone in his home.

The "stone" in this proverb signifies the responsibility that a head of a community may shoulder. In this context, the proverb refers to elders as heads of the community. It expresses the tradition that elders are supposed to shoulder great responsibilities in their community. The man who used the proverb in this context, also, says "we (the elders) have to materialize our responsibility of caring for our traditional values."

Similarly, one of the companions of the Qallu reveals the social status and responsibility of the elders in the proverb quoted below.

6. *Malli garaa sijira bokkuun arka sijira. (56)*
Wisdom is in your mind, "bokkuu" is in your hand.

Bokku is a long, elegantly shaped and decorated stick held by the Guji and Borana elders who are in their *lubaa* stage (above 40 years). It is a mark of respect and knowledgibility in the Guji culture. Elders with *bookuu* in their hands are supposed to be rich in experiences; and, are honoured by every member of the society. Since they have gone through the ups and downs of life, they are considered to be wise and well experienced people. The proverb reflects such social position of the elders among the Guji people. It shows the customary belief that elders are considered to be wise and great among the society.

The elder used the proverb to evoke the participants to remember the potential power of the senior people to influence the whole community. In other words, he quoted the proverb to point out that elders have wisdom to inspire and evoke all members of the community, especially the youth, to uphold the Guji traditional values. Therefore, it is possible to note that the proverb indicates the great concern that the elders have for Guji traditional ways of life.

Similarly, it has been possible to learn that elders are seen as storehouses of experience in Guji society. As Wataa Shedo, Barbare Balli and Elemaa Marsa explain, showing a higher social position and respect to elders have been central to the prevailing customs of the people. They emphasize that the Guji people have inherited,

from their ancestors, the custom of having respect for elders and accepting the elderly persons as "all-knowing" figures in the society. In affirming such custom, the people say:

7. Nama duloometu waa hima. (72)

It is an elderly person who tells something.

The proverb reflects the elevated position of elderly persons in the social structure of the Guji society. It indicates that an elderly person is taken as a "book" that contains a large stock of information and is respected for the quality of his advice and his traditional knowledge.

In this situation, the proverb is used to express the stated custom and call upon the participants of the meeting to encourage the youth to learn the tradition of giving better care and position for elders.

The other customary practice reflected through Guji proverbs is silent protest against something. As it was learnt during the observation, being silent is the prevailing customary practice of the Guji people. They don't talk much and don't want to waste their time arguing about something. Their request for or response to something is brief and clear. When someone speaks exasperating words (i.e. words of insult, flattery, trickery, curse etc) to a Guji (male or female), his/her response, most of the time, is to remain silent. Remaining silent in such situation, according to Wataa Shedo, is a common custom of the Guji people. He asserts that among the Guji people, silence implies disapproval to somebody or something. Thus, the one who keeps silent reflects that he/she disapproves of the person who has spoken vituperative words to him/her. It is also treated as wisdom and a good personality of someone. The people perceive that

silent reaction is more communicative than words. The following proverbs reflect such custom of the Guji people.

8. *Nama dubbiin nama dhibe cal'dhisan dhiban. (70)*

When a person troubles you with a disappointing word, trouble him with silence.

9. *Beekaan afaan cufata malee balbala hincufatu. (14)*

A wise man shuts his mouth, but not his door.

In this context, the users of the proverbs (elders attending the *Ebbisaa* held in Gungua village) were presenting a solution to a problem under discussion in the meeting. The problem was the conflict between the Gedeo and the Guji peoples on the ownership of farmland. From the discussion, it was noted that some people from Gedeo community were trying to create a problem to the Guji people in the border villages. The speakers employed the proverbs to propose a solution to the problem. Through the proverbs, they emphasized that the Guji people should keep on remaining silent to the troublemakers from Gedeo people. The proverbs underline the fact that paying a deaf ear to an enemy thereby defeating the enemy by silence is a custom of the Guji people. They indicate that the Guji people believe in the fact that silence is golden. Thus, it is possible to note that the elders use the proverbs to propose or reinforce silence against a counterpart as a better solution and means of obtaining peace.

Similarly, a Guji person is careful whenever he/she goes somewhere. He/she carefully observes his/her way and his/her environment to save himself/herself from an unexpected problem. Such customary practice is expressed through proverbs. These proverbs seem to emanate from the common experience that someone saves himself/herself from a danger when he/she is careful and slow in his/her actions. The proverb stated below is taken as an example:

10. *Kan suuta deemu qoraatiin suuta seent. (39)*

A thorn slowly gets into the body of a person who walks slowly.

A "thorn" in this proverb signifies a problem that someone may face when he/she acts carelessly. The proverb, thus, indicates that a person can save himself/herself from a problem when he/she is careful and slow in his/her actions. In other words, the proverb implies that hastiness leads someone into a danger and frustrated life. It reflects that slowness and carefulness are aspects of Guji custom. In the meetings, the speaker employed the proverb to assert that a hasty measure is alien to the customary life of Guji society.

Proverbs with such meanings show carefulness, and slowness to actions as an important characteristic of the Gujis. They reflect that these types of traditions are perceived as common customary practices that should be kept active in the present as well as the future generations.

Among Guji people, cattle rearing is the major activity on which the majority of the people depend. Most of the people, especially those who have been living in lowland areas, rear cattle and live on their products. The people love their cattle very much and care for them regularly. Prosperity is measured by the number of heads of cattle a person has and respect is shown to people who own a large number of cattle. Thus, it is not only a popular economic practice but also a measure of social standing of individuals among the Guji people. The Guji hereditary custom in which prosperity and social reputability are marked by the number of cattle that an individual owns is reflected in proverbs. The following proverbs are taken as examples:

11. *Kan Loon qabu gosa gaba. (38)*

A person who has cattle has supporters.

12. *Loon abbaa midhagsa. (48)*

Cattle make their owner respectable.

The first proverb (proverb 11) portrays the fact that among the Guji people, a person who owns cattle has many supporters and friends. He who owns large number of cattle, according to the proverb, is recognized and respected by the people. The proverb seems to emerge from the above stated popular customary practice and tends to reflect and transmit it across generations.

Similarly, the second proverb (proverb 12) shows that someone who owns cattle is a respected and important person in the society. It reflects that cattle rearing is a practice by which people achieve social recognition in the society.

Most of the time, the Guji people use such proverbs in contexts where traditions of cattle rearing are points of discussion. In such contexts, the people use proverbs to assert the customary attitude that cattle rearing is perceived and treated as a basis for economic status and social recognition. Such proverbs are useful in that they may keep this traditional value alive across generations and indicate the great love the people have for cattle and the due concern they give to rearing them.

Work is treated as a mandatory practice among the Guji people. The people believe that someone should work to live. They attribute the origin of work to *waaqa uuma* (The God of creation) by asserting that God created people to work and live on the fruits of their work. They, also, argue that the natural right to work and live on one's own effort has been bestowed upon humankind only. They believe that they can't expect blessings

from God if they don't work and that work is the only way of yielding fruits. The people when they assert that work is indispensable often reflect their views through proverbs such as the following:

13. Hudduun teessu waa hinbaattu. (28)

He who sits carries nothing.

14. Harki taa'u galata hinqabu. (27)

An idle hand deserves no thanks.

Proverb 13 indicates that sitting idle is perceived as a sign of unproductivity and laziness in Guji society. In other words, the proverb reveals the fact that engaging one's self in work always is a prevailing custom among the people. The people use the proverb to assure that working day and night is a popular customary practice of their society. They use the proverb in contexts in which work is mentioned as an important tradition that should be encouraged and sustained in the society.

Proverb 14, also, shows that idleness is condemned in the Guji society. It shows that they always devote themselves to work and believe in that engaging one's self in any work is far better than idleness.

The Guji Oromo believe in that there is one supernatural power (*waaqaa*) who is capable of destroying or saving the world with its dwellers. The Guji name their religion as *waqafanna*. This traditional belief is headed by *Qallu* who also leads all ritual practices of the people. The superiority and greatness of God as well as His relation to human beings is expressed through their proverbs. The following proverbs are examples:

15. *Waaqi utubaa malee dhaabate lafa dhisaa malee diriirsee. (86)*

God supports himself without poles and stretched the earth without pegs.

16. *Waan waaqi roobe laft hindiddu.*

The earth doesn't refuse to bear anything comes down from God. (83)

Proverb 15 indicates that God doesn't need support for himself, i.e. He stands without a pole (support) but supports and governs everything. It reflects the fact that the Guji people believe in almightiness and greatness of God; that they perceive Him as a large space seen when one looks upwards from the earth. It implies that the people relate God to the sky. Thus, the people claim that God is observable. If one looks upward, he/she finds or observes only one God that stands above without any support.

Similarly, proverb 16 indicates that God is a super power and above in his position. The phrase "comes down from God" implies that the people perceive that He is a body above and from which phenomenon like rain comes down to the earth. The proverb, thus, shows that the Guji conceive that God is above the earth and governs everything on it.

Furthermore, the Guji people assert that the God in which they believe is black. They justify the blackness of God by referring to the colour of the sky since they perceive it as black.

Thus, the Guji people consider black creatures (snakes, birds, cattle etc) as kins of God and give homage to them whenever they appear. They don't kill a black snake and don't slaughter black cattle. They believe that these animals are similar to God, in their colour therefore, deserve homage. Such belief of the people, i.e., the blackness of God is reflected through proverbs such as the following:

17. *Waan waaqa gurracharraa lafarraa hinaftu. (84)*

Something from the black God is bound to be held by the earth.

18. *Waaquu Guraacha, jedhan. (87)*

Even God is black, they said.

In these proverbs, the blackness of God is expressed directly. The phrases "black God" in proverb 17 and the sentence "God is black" in proverb 18 show how the Guji customary outlook about God is reflected through proverbs. They also further imply that the Guji people consider God as the sky, which is observable from above.

In general, as demonstrated above, in the contexts of *Ebbisaas*, some of the Guji Oromo proverbs express the common customary practices of the society. In other words, In the contexts of these occasions, the proverbs reflect the various aspects of the prevailing customs of the society. The cultural roles and positions of elderly persons, the customary beliefs, religious views and traditional practices of the people are communicated through the proverbs.

3.2 Proverbs Expressing the Social Values of Morality (*Safuu*)

In the previous section, an attempt was made to demonstrate the extent to which the Guji customary practices are contained in and reflected through their proverbs. In this section, proverbs that project the prevailing moral codes (*safuu*) of the Guji people are presented along with the contexts in which they are used. With the aim of establishing a wider context through which the topic has to be observed, the section begins by forwarding a brief explanation of the concept of morality (*safuu*) as perceived by the Guji people as follows.

In the context of this study, *safuu*, (morality) refers to the common moral perception that guides the individual and collective behavior or acts inherited and used in the day-to-day life of the Guji people. The *safuu* codifies some behaviors or acts as shameful, immoral or sinful and warns members of the society to abstain from them. It seems to be a psychological force that dictates a person to remain conscious of the decadent practices in order to avoid them and command respect among the people. It emphasizes commitment to the truth and is devoted to shaping behaviours and acts of individuals in line with the respect, understanding and love that the society puts upon its social laws, religious practices, and rituals.

In the Guji society, one of the devices through which *safuu* is remembered, taught or empowered is a proverb. The people employ the appropriate proverbs to acquaint others with the elements of *safuu*, thereby activating and strengthening the traditional and valuable codes of behavior and calling the people to refrain from unchaste acts. Samples of such proverbs are discussed along with their contexts of performance below.

In the *Ebbisaa* performed in Toree Kebele (village), Elders employed proverbs to depict the established moral notion that truth is a guiding principle for the Guji society. In their speeches they asserted that in truth there is no failure and that it is strong and that it is the winner in the end. The men further elaborated that a person with a grain of truth will not fail although he is challenged temporarily. According to them, a person may conceal truth for a short period of time but it is impossible for him to conceal it forever. Truth is bound to reveal itself after a period of time. The following are taken as samples for proverbs they used to emphasize this moral view:

19. *Dhugaan ganama huqqattee galgala gabbatti. (98)*

Truth looks thin in the morning but grows fat in the evening.

20. *Dhugaan niqallatti malee hincabdu. (99)*

Although it is thin, truth doesn't break.

The phenomena referred to as "morning" and "evening" in proverb 19 represent the beginning and the end of a day respectively. Thus, the proverb reflects that truth, even though it appears concealed in the beginning, will be visible in the end. Even if it is suppressed at the beginning it will never be destroyed. Proverb 20 also reflects that truth survives and becomes the winner in the end. The elders employed the proverbs in their speech about a person (one of the Guji farmers) who considered the Guji traditional system of administration backward but has now recognized the power and value of the Guji traditional ways of life. One of the elders elaborated that even the Oromiya regional government officials have recognized and upheld the values of the Guji traditional ways of life. The proverbs, thus, reflect the people's perception of truth or that the people believe in that their values and ways of life originate from truth, therefore, are bound to survive. Such proverbs seem to exist in the minds of many members of the society and inform them that there is no flinching in truth. They show that truth, as an element of morality, is valuable in the social interactions and communal life of the people.

The Guji elders have witnessed that the Guji people perceive theft, selfishness, bribery, mischief, and untruthfulness, snobbery as sinful acts of a person. If a person lies, deceives others, does mischief, takes a bribe, ill-treats cattle, breaks a promise, and covets others' property, he is considered sinful. It is sinful for any member of the Guji society to obtain wealth at the expense of other members. When they express such moralistic views, they often use proverbs. Through proverbs, they assert that every

judicious member of the Guji retreats or keeps himself away from *Cubbu* (sin). Proverbs, thus, are used to rectify the fact that failure is inevitable for a life that emerged from sin. The following proverb is considered as an example:

21. Cubbuun dura furdifte booda qallisti. (96)

Sin makes someone plump at first and emaciated later.

The user of the proverb, in the observed context, was narrating about an old person who was a local judge but was detained for taking bribe and doing injustice to people. According to the speaker, the person became rich by taking bribes from poor farmers and was imprisoned when this act was discovered. The metaphorical images in the proverb, "plump" and "emaciated" express success and failure respectively. Thus, the proverb asserts that the eventual fate of a person who gained success through sinful acts is a shameful failure. Based on the message of the proverb, the participants in the meeting deliberated a lot on the necessity of abstention from sin and the importance of searching for purity. Purity, which is the other important element of morality, is considered essential among the Guji people.

Furthermore, the Guji elders assert that a person who commits a sin is bound to fail. They argue that the evil effect of a moral fault may not be visible immediately after it is committed. It becomes observable sometime in the life of the person. In other words they emphasize that failure is inevitable for a sinful person. They underscore this moral notion through proverbs. The following is taken as an example.

22. Cubbuun takka tratii takka dhaqabdi. (97)

Sin goes slowly but reaches timely.

The proverb tells that even though sin goes slowly, its evil effect is bound to be seen on a sinful person sometime. It reflects that failure is inevitable for a sinful person. In the same way as proverb 21, this proverb indicates the value of abstinence from sin. It portrays that holding one's self back from something immoral is perceived as a good personality of someone.

In Guji culture, sincerity and respect for people is strongly encouraged. A *Jaala* (friend) is always respected, and also if one considers a person as his/her father or relative he/she doesn't perceive him as somebody else (brother, friend etc) or as a stranger or a distantly related person. Once he/she happens to be a friend of someone, he/she is expected to be a friend forever; no one perceives him/her as an enemy. It is possible to note such moral values of the people from this proverb:

23. Nama abbaa jedhaniin obboo hinjedhan. (106)

One doesn't call someone "brother" after he has called him "father".

One of the targets of the context in which the proverb has been used was to give blessing to the above stated aspect of morality. The speaker (one of the participants in the *Ebbisaa* held in Qarsaa) employed the proverb to underline that sincerity, and long-lasting respect for people, especially for elders, are important. The words in the proverb, "brother" and "father" signify the degrees of respect or relation that prevails among people. "Father" implies formal and more respectful kind of relation between two persons, whereas, "brother" indicates informal and less respectful kind of relations. The proverb, thus, says once one owes someone higher respect, it is immoral to deprive him of it. In other words, once one establishes a formal and respectful relationship with a person, or once one accepts someone as a kinsman, it is immoral for him to convert the relationship to informal and less respectful one. The proverb shows that sincerity,

trustfulness and genuine respect are elements of the prevailing moral codes of the Guji people and are valuable forces in holding the society united.

The following is an example of proverbs that reflect a similar concern for this aspect of morality.

24. Nama sobatanu hinsobanu. (105)

One doesn't lie to a person he/she likes.

This proverb shows that someone is expected to remain faithful to his/her friend, colleague or family. In other words, it depicts that a person is not expected to do something harmful to his/her friend.

In the proverbs analyzed in this section, some of the common elements of morality like genuine and consistent relationship with people, truthfulness, and purity are reflected as valuable and obligatory aspects of the socio-cultural life of the Guji society. In this manner, the Guji people use proverbs to reflect the courage and worth of their moral values and capsule the learning of centuries about their society.

3.3 Proverbs Reflecting the Power of Social Laws (Seeraa)

This sub-section attempts to show the extent to which Guji proverbs depict the strictness of the social laws (*seeraa*) of the society. As the number of the proverbs dealing with this aspect of the Guji socio-cultural life is not large in the collection, only three sample proverbs dealing with different elements of the social laws of the people are considered for analysis. In the same way as the previous sections, this section begins by forwarding explanations on the nature and purpose of the social laws of the Guji people.

In order to survive, it is necessary for human beings to develop a sort of social contract. To establish social contract and maintain a satisfactory conformity with their social and natural environment, human beings employ elements of traditional devices, i.e. their own rules and regulations appealing to their culture, religion, belief and custom (Propp, 1986).

The Guji society has got *seeraa* (social laws), which they have formulated or inherited from their forefathers and are obliged to obey. The social laws are in most cases formulated by *Gumii Abbaa Gada* (the Gada council), which usually is summoned once or twice a year. The Gadaa council shoulders the responsibility of formulating *seeraa* that may govern the individual and collective lives of the society. Therefore, *seeraa* is a code of conduct in which individuals and groups are expected to act/ behave.

The formation and reinforcement of *seeraa*, in general, is aimed at the creation of peace and orderly life in the society. Thus, the *seeraa* is wide in its scope and strict in its effect. It touches upon the social, political, economic and cultural practices of the people. As stated by informants, the social and individual life of the people is controlled by *seeraa* and every specific activity is bound by a *seeraa* relevant to it. Killing a Guji, theft, harassing someone, abusing a girl or someone's wife, destruction of natural forests etc, are kinds of the practices that call for the immediate application of *seeraa*.

The transgression of *seeraa*, most of the time, results in whipping and strong excommunication of a transgressor. When a person fails to obey the active *seeraas* or found violating them, he is whipped many times by the *Ayyu* (the delegate of Abba Gada) in public. If a Guji kills another Guji, the killer faces a serious public

excommunication. He will be discriminated, and leads a solitary life. Such power of the social laws is inherited through proverbs. Three of such proverbs are discussed below.

As an element of its focus, the *seeraa* of the Guji (as confirmed from informants) promulgate that a girl should be pure until she is married. This social law is accepted and obeyed throughout the Guji society. As a result, a Guji boy don't make love with a girl. However, if a boy violates the *seeraa* and attempts to do it to a girl, he submits himself to strong punishment. The punishment could be receiving whipping in public and giving seven cows to the girl's family. The following proverb reflects such traditional law of the society.

25. Durba qaban qabaa qaddi. (118)

Abusing a girl is calling for a problem.

It indicates that trying to force or seduce a girl for sexual intercourse leads someone into hard times. In other words, the proverb shows that giving due respect to the purity of a girl is one aspect of the common social laws of the people. Such proverbs are employed in contexts where formulation, reinforcement or teaching of *seeraa* is the topic of discussion. In such contexts, the proverb functions as means of depicting and reminding the fact that a girl is respectable and expected to be virgin until she gets married and that if a man seduces her breaking the law, he faces a serious punishment.

The Guji people seem to have good knowledge of the advantage of trees. Because of this, they have a law, which forbids cutting of big trees. The Abbaa Gada, the Qallu as well as elders in villages often proclaim that trees shouldn't be cut down. If a person cuts down a tree without the consent of the Qallu or Abbaa Gadaa, he undergoes punishment in the form of beating in public or payment in cattle. Thus, they perceive that

cutting down of trees is comparable to killing a person. It is possible to learn such active laws of the people from the proverb presented below.

26. Mukiti Lubbu, lubbuu hinuban. (125)

Trees are life, one doesn't harm life.

In this proverb, a tree is compared to life to indicate that as one is afraid of harming (killing) a life, he should be afraid of cutting down a tree. The proverb is employed frequently in discussions about care for forests in general and big trees in particular. The people quote the proverb to reflect that their social law compares trees to life, and enforces everybody to care for them.

Besides, Mirraa Balli (one of the informants) witnessed the strictness of the Guji social laws. He explained that before three years he cut down a big tree near his home, therefore, was beaten up in public and paid a cow as punishment. He further ascertained that from then onwards he has been careful not to transgress the *seeraa* (social laws) of his society. He employed the following proverb in his speech.

27. Qoosa ilaa jettee ballan. (126)

Don't be careless to an eye said a blind person.

In this context, the proverb, indirectly, refers to the *seeraa* of the Guji people. It expresses the *seeraa* in terms of eyes and warns everybody not to transgress it. It reflects that any member of the society is forced to obey the *seeraa* and that there is no mercy for a transgressor.

Thus, it is possible to note that some of the Guji proverbs show that the social laws of the people are strict and powerful in their effects. They depict the common norm that

any one who transgresses the active social laws of the people is subjected to strong punishment such as public excommunication, beating and payment in cattle.

In general, the analyses in this chapter show that in the contexts of *Ebbissa*, the Guji-Oromo proverbs reflect some of the customary practices, belief as well as social and moral values of the society. They permit someone to learn that the people are respectful for their traditional values such as *aadaa*, *safuu*, and *seeraa*. The next chapter is concerned with another function of proverbs in the contexts of *Gumi Ganda*.

CHAPTER FOUR

CORRECTIVE FUNCTION OF GUJI PROVERBS

In chapter three, the function of Guji proverbs in *Ebbisaa* has been presented. This chapter, on the other hand, sets out to investigate the corrective function that some Guji proverbs serve in the contexts of *Gumi Ganda* (local meetings). The proverbs were collected from the local meetings held in different villages of the Guji people during the fieldwork.

In this context, the corrective function of proverbs refers to the use of proverbs to reorder any social, cultural or moral disorder. It deals with function of proverbs as instruments to express social disapproval, criticism or caution to those who deviate from conventions, and warn a person when he/she does an action, which may lead to social friction.

One of the recurrent purposes of the *Gumi* (meetings) is to resolve, settle or correct social disorders, which occur in villages of the Guji people. Since the proverbs are employed to serve as vehicles for effecting this purpose, their corrective function attracts attention. However, as it is difficult to examine their function as different from meaning, meanings of the sample proverbs have also been discussed along with their functions.

Broadly speaking, the proverbs serve three aspects of corrective function: divulging the effect of poverty, censuring misbehaviour, and reprehension of inter-personal disagreements. With the aim of providing the reader with background information that

may facilitate the understanding of the contexts in which the proverbs are analyzed, the chapter begins by giving a short elaboration of the concept of social disorder as understood in the local meetings of elders.

Social disorder that usually comes up in discussions in *Gumi Ganda* comprises deviant people's behaviors, poverty, and disagreements among individuals. For example, it may refer to a disorder that may be created when people act in aberrant ways from the institutionalized norms of the society. It also includes conflicts that may occur between wives and husbands or among family members, and among people in different villages. It may also refer to social problems such as death of cattle, shortage of things (food, money, etc) for daily life, and drought.

When any aspect of social disorder appears in a family or in a village, the Guji apply a traditional way of problem solving in most cases. Whenever a problem occurs, elders who are available in the area where the problem occurred come together, discuss the problem and suggest solutions. Such tradition of problem solving is an important element of the active customary practices of the Guji society.

Similar to that of *Ebbisaa*, discussions in the *Gumi Ganda* are rich in proverbs. The elders in a *Gumi* often use proverbs when they contribute important ideas to a topic of discussion. They often employ proverbs to express their views that emend a problem and suggest a possible solution to it. Therefore, proverbs that elders quote in such occasions serve for correcting the existing social disorders and for implying a possible way of avoiding them.

In the contexts of *Gumi Ganda* (local meetings), as stated earlier, the proverbs are concerned with correcting the three aspects of social disorders: the effects of poverty, misbehavior, and inter-personal disagreements. In the following sub-sections of this chapter, an attempt is made to help the reader observe the ways the proverbs serve these functions.

4.1 Divulging Effects of Poverty

The Guji people lead a poor, traditional life. The ways in which they produce crops and rear cattle are backward. Therefore, they hardly obtain sufficient crops and enough animal products that enable them to help themselves as well as members of their families. The basic requirements of life such as food and money are scarce. To overcome such hardships and obtain the basic necessities of their life, the people toil a lot. They work day and night in order to overcome the challenges of daily life and maintain survival.

Informants explained that the other people (members of the other tribes living in the surrounding areas of the Guji people often appreciate the Guji people for their ability to work day and night and endure hardships. The Guji people, however, do not accept the appreciations from the observers (i.e. people who appreciate their strength) because they need people to appreciate their problems rather than their strength. They reveal their disgust towards such gratuitous appreciation through their proverbs. For example, in the *Gumi* held in Qarsa village, an elder depicted the existence of such feeling in the following proverb:

28. *Garibicha lubbuuf dheechu, Ormi jabina jaja. (143)*

While a slave runs to save his life, observers appreciate his strength.

The proverb expresses the response of the Guji people towards irrelevant appreciation of external (non-Guji) individuals. It conveys the meaning that while the poor work hard to save their lives or to overcome their problems, the external observers or outsiders who are not familiar with their real problems often appreciate their ability or strength to work. Through the proverb, the people reveal that the external people consider the Guji strong and enduring without realizing the challenges that have given them endurance. Thus, the proverb is used as a means of expressing disgust and correcting the misunderstanding of other people. The people assert the fact that external observers do not know the internal problems of the Guji people. They claim that it is only the concerned person who knows the disguised challenges of his/her life.

In the local meeting held in Tooree village, an elder explained that the Guji society has been facing difficulties in life since time immemorial. He assured that even today, the Guji are left to chance to overcome their problems. The man emphasized the intensity of the internal problems of the Guji by quoting the following proverb:

29. *Bultiin bultuma akka itti bule abbaatu beeka. (142)*

Life appears to be similar, but only individuals know how they live.

The proverb strengthens what the man is arguing for. It conveys the message that for an external observer, individuals' appear similar in their life and that, only the individual knows the difficulties in his/her life. The elder, therefore, employed the proverb to shed light on the intensive but disguised problems of the Guji society and reveal that no government or non-government organization has noticed them. The proverb has also

been used by other elders in *Gumi Ganda* (local meetings) that were observed during the fieldwork. On the one hand, the frequent appearance of the proverb indicates the Guji people's sense of being marginalized or the lack of a genuine observer of their poor life. On the other hand, the fact that the proverb is recurrent reflects the depth of poverty that characterizes the life of the Guji society.

As informants have witnessed, and as it was also learnt during the fieldwork, poverty has made the Guji society unstable. They move from place to place to make ends meet as a result of which their interests conflict with that of their neighbours. This nature of the day-to-day life of the society is reflected in their proverbs. The following is taken as an example.

30. Namni iyyoome takka lafa reeba, takka nama reeba. (163)

A poor person, sometimes beats the ground, and at other times persons.

In the proverb, the man divulges that it is poverty that has made the Guji unstable and aggressive. As it can be noted from the proverb, the aggressiveness and unstable behavior of a traditional society like the Guji can be attributed to the abject poverty characterizing the social and individual lives of the people. Thus, the person employed the proverb to express the fact that their dire economic poverty has forced the Guji to be aggressive towards other people and be unstable in their lives. The participants of the *Gumi* in Tooree village often reflect their threatened feelings whenever they discuss matters concerning their individual as well as family lives. They often blame external observers for their failure to notice the hardships that challenge the dwellers in each home in Guji villages. The following is taken as a sample of proverbs that project the disgust of the people.

31. *Okkoteen Waaqa hinbeekne eelee bishan kadhatti. (164)*

A pot that doesn't know God, begs "eelee" for water.*

The words in the proverb, "*okkotee* (pot) and *eelee* (baking pan) are related to contrasting phenomena: water and fire respectively. In the traditional life of the Guji society, a pot is used to hold water; therefore, is associated with a wet situation. A pan, which is used for baking bread and *enjera* exists in a burning situation. Similarly, the phrase 'doesn't know God' indicates one's selfishness and inconsiderate behaviour. As it can be possible to note from the literal sense of the proverb, the pot is inconsiderate and doesn't know that the pan is in burning situation, and considers that it holds some water. In the context of the discussion, the proverb indicates that someone who is in a comfortable condition and inconsiderate doesn't know that others are in a challenging condition. The Guji people, thus, use the proverb to metaphorically express their disgust and cynicism towards those external bodies (people, government and non-government organizations) who, with naivety, fail to recognize that a Guji family is in a threatening condition. From the proverb and its context, it is possible to note that the people feel they have been marginalized (left helpless) and their problems have gone unnoticed, so far, by all governments that came to power at different times and non-government organizations as well as their own neighbors.

When they discussed the currently painful economic and social problems of the Guji people, elders cited proverbs. The following is an example.

32. *Madaan hiyyeessaa madaa bineensaati. (160)*

The wound of a poor person is the wound of a beast.

* a baking pan made of clay

"Wound", in this proverb is an image signifying a problem. Through such an image, the proverb states that poverty makes someone friendless and helpless. In other words, it says that a poor person does not have people who sympathize with him/her and share his/her problems. According to the proverb, a severe problem of a poor person may not seem so serious to others. The elders use the proverb to assert that the problems of the Gujis have not been understood and taken seriously by people outside the Guji society. Another elderly man revealed his threatened sense through the following proverb.

33. *"Maali maqnee" jette sareen jaamaa sagal dhalte. (161)*

"What's our sin" said a bitch after giving birth to nine blind pups.

In this proverb, the phrase "nine blind pups" is an expression of a severe problem. Through the proverb the man uncovers his confused and troubled life caused by the continual strike of poverty. He quoted the proverb in a troubled and depressed voice. The other participant of the conversation justified the troubled sense of this person in the following proverb:

34. *Garaan gadde imimmaan hinqusatu. (144)*

A sad heart never lacks tear.

In the context of the discussion on the poverty of the Guji, "heart" represents a person, thus, the proverb indicates that a troubled person is always unhappy and seems disturbed. The user of the proverb ascertains that the person is unhappy for he has suffered from grinding poverty. Because he is poor, as indicated through the proverb, he is sad and mentally unstable.

In general, the proverbs discussed above divulge that poverty is a serious problem among the Guji and is threatening the survival of the Guji people. They uncover the

situation that even though the Guji are leading poverty-stricken life, outsiders or non-Guji people have turned a deaf ear to their problems. In other words, the elders have employed the proverbs to reveal their poverty and helplessness thinking that they may win the immediate attention of organizations that may help them. In this case, it is possible to note that the proverbs function as vehicles for correcting erroneous views of outsiders by revealing the real conditions of the people.

4.2 Censuring Misbehaviour/ Malpractices

As discussed in chapter three, the Guji people often use proverbs to promote and encourage the continuation and survival of their moral codes, social laws and customary practices. Through their proverbs, they teach these socio-cultural elements to the young and influence them to remain obedient to the institutionalized norms of the society. On the other hand, when members of the community transgress the norms reflected through the proverbs presented in chapter three, the people mainly the elders again use proverbs to ridicule the transgressors and correct their deviant acts. Thus, it is possible to say that proverbs are the popular tools of censuring misbehaviour and malpractices.

In Qarsaa village, when they came together to admonish a young person who insulted his mother and his elder brother, elders stated that once someone rejects advice and acts abnormally, he is left to his own devices but bound to face the consequence of his actions. The following is one of the proverbs used in this context.

35. Manni abbaan gube abbaa hube. (193)

A house burnt by its owner harms the owner himself.

The elders of the Guji often use this proverb whenever they want to criticize a Guji individual who engages himself in an activity that deviates from the common socio-

cultural norms of the society. The two phrases in the proverb, "a house" and "the owner" represent individuals (the owner) and their behaviour (the house). Someone who burns his own house harms himself. Similarly, as the man indicated someone who behaves abnormally harms himself. Thus, the proverb conveys the message that individuals who misbehave harm, first, themselves. The Guji, therefore, use such proverbs to warn misbehaving people that bad manners and activities lead the concerned person to failure and harmful life. In this context, the proverb functions as means of telling everybody to look into his/her day-to-day activities and hold himself/herself back from deviant behaviour.

The Guji people perceive that a misbehaving person in a family or in a village often influences others and attracts them to share his abnormal acts. They understand that if there is a person with abnormal behaviour in a group or in family members of the group or the family learns to behave wrongly. They express their perception through proverbs such as the following:

36. Dhibeen finyaan qabe hidhii hinanqatu. (177)

A disease that has infected the nose doesn't fail to reach the lips.

The images in the proverb, "nose" and "lips", refer to friends or people who live in close relationships with each other. In the same way, in this context, "disease" is used as an indirect expression of bad behaviour and activities of individuals. Through such images, the proverb projects the idea that someone who is ill mannered can inevitably infect his friend or one closer to him and make him/her demonstrate similar manners.

Elders employ such proverbs to suggest that admonishing and punishing misbehaving people before they mislead others is indispensable. Through the proverbs, they

emphasize the idea that one can pass his bad manners to his friends easily. To prevent this kind of social disorder, it is essential to closely observe life of individuals in a village and a family and criticize them when they behave abnormally.

In the contexts where individuals' misbehaviour and bad activities are criticized, the evils of immorality appear frequently. People who are participants of such discussion proposed that engaging one's self in immoral practices should be banned. They often use proverbs to stress this assertion. One example is:

37. Nama gurraan du'erra nama lubbuun du'e wayya. (196)

A person who lost his life is better than a person whose name is spoiled.

"Name" among the Guji signifies the respectable and good personality of individuals. It is given to people whose different aspects of life are vibrating in the socio-cultural norms of the society. Any act or behaviour that transcends the established norm of the people is taken as abnormal act or behavior that results in the spoilage of one's "name". Such persons (persons whose names are spoiled) are considered as useless and are degraded by every member of the society. Elders use this proverb to ridicule a misbehaving person and correct his or her socially unacceptable behavior and activities. The proverb reflects the extent to which bad name is disapproved in the socio-cultural norms of the Guji society. It compares bad names to death (destruction of soul) and concludes that death is better than bad names. In conveying such an important message, the proverb intimidates a delinquent person and forces him/her to stick to the right socio-cultural line of the society. It is due to such function of the proverb that the people often use it in the contexts of censuring misbehaviour.

Rudeness is the other aspect of abnormal behaviour, which is often censured through proverbs in *Gumi Gandas*. Rudeness, in this context, is the individual's act of refusing to show proper respect to others. It is hammered out by elders and family heads. The following is one of the proverbs employed in this context:

38. Namin ulfina hinbenne ulfina hinfedhu. (199)

A person who doesn't know the value of respect doesn't need respect.

The proverb indicates that a person should know respect and give respect to others to gain respect from them. In other words, it conveys the message that it is the respectable person who knows the value of respect and becomes willing to show it to others. In the context, the elders use the proverb to criticize a person who often denies people their due respect and tends to display rudeness among people. They assert that as a member of the society one should sustain his/her respect and in order to achieve that he/she should respect others properly.

A boastful person is also criticized in Guji society. Someone who boasts by his power, lineage, prosperity, physical appearance etc couldn't gain acceptance among the people. The elders use the following proverb to ridicule such behaviour.

39. Of beektuun sooda lagatti. (203)

A boastful person abstains from salt.

The proverb shows that going beyond the familiar and conventional social practices may make individuals be considered as boastful. The expression in the proverb, "to abstain from salt", indicates people's behavior that deviates from the lines of socio-cultural norms, and thus, surprises others. The bearers of such behavior are perceived as boastful and are often disapproved of by elders and other people. Using such proverbs,

the Gujis reflect the unacceptability of boasting and self-appreciation in the society and attempt to minimize such behaviour through ridicule.

Similarly, the Guji don't like much talk. As the informants indicate and the data reveals, much talk is perceived as an abnormal behaviour. A person who talks about everything here and there to people he/she encounters is considered as talkative (*odeessaa*), therefore, is given a lower regard. Such people are criticized through proverbs. Here is an example:

40. Odeessaan oduu yakka dhuufuun hirriba yakka. (201)
A talkative person distorts information as fart disrupts sleep.

The proverb compares a talkative person (*odeessaa*) to fart (*dhuufuu*) and expresses that such behaviour of a person is as awful as fart. By comparing talkativeness with fart, the proverb censures talkative people so that they hold themselves back from such degrading behaviour that makes someone unable to gain acceptance among the people. In other words, elders use the proverb to disapprove of talkative people and discourage talkativeness.

Besides, in the Guji society, an adult who is not self-restraint is treated as a valueless person. No one expects care and assistance from him/her and also no one accords the appropriate social status to him in the society. Such people are criticized through proverbs. The following is an example:

41. Namin ofiif hintolle ormaaf hintolu. (198)
A person who can't help himself can't help others.

The Guji people, use this proverb to disapprove of those individuals who tend to be dependent on others in their adulthood. Through the proverb, they make the individuals

know that they should avoid dependency and make every attempt to help themselves so that they can be considered as important and self-reliant persons in the society. The proverb evokes persons whose life is tied up with dependence to become independent and self-reliant.

Furthermore, prudence is considered to be an important principle of life among the Guji people. The people often advise the young to be prudent and take care of their life. They (elders) claim that a successful member of the society is the one who is always conscious of everything and the one who is able to differentiate a useful situation from a harmful one. They often assert that a careless and an unthoughtful person, most of the time, submerges himself into problems suddenly. They express this idea in the following proverb:

42. Odoo kolfatuu ulfoofttee gaafa daya booche. (202)
She conceived while laughing and cried during labour.

The proverb tells that lack of prudence in life can expose someone to suffering and unhappy life. In the context of censuring misbehaviour the two contrastive words "laugh" and "cry" signify imprudent happiness and suffering respectively. Thus, the proverb indicates that happiness of an imprudent person results in suffering. "Laughter" which represents imprudent happiness, has led the woman into unexpected pregnancy. On the other hand, "cry" designates a suffering of the woman caused by the painful delivery. Using this proverb, the Guji elders and family heads advise their people, mainly the young ones, to avoid carelessness and become prudent in every action of their life so that they can save themselves from unexpected danger.

In short, in the contexts of reforming social disorders, these proverbs hold the meanings that malpractices and abnormal behaviour of individuals can bring about social disorders which, in turn, result in poor social life. Doing so, they function as instruments of censuring misbehaviours. They point out and disapprove unacceptable social or individual practices and behaviours by implying the possible social dangers that follow them. Thus, they serve a clear corrective function in the areas of human behaviour and practices.

4.3 Reprehension of Inter-Personal Disagreements

The other concern of the *Gumi Ganda* (Local meetings) of the Guji elders is resolution of inter-personal disagreements. When a disagreement exists between two persons or among members of a group, elders come together at some place (usually under big trees) in the area. Then, they summon the people who are in disagreement with each other and discuss the problem with them and present suggestions to settle the disagreement and create a peaceful relationship between them. The attendants of the meetings underline the key points in their speeches of reconciliation by using proverbs. For example, in the *Gumi* held in Tooree village, there was a discussion to settle a case between two individuals who were in conflict on the question of the possession of farmland. In the discussion, Mirraa Duyyo (one of the elders in the *Gumi*) began forwarding his view via a proverb and then elaborated that the two persons (the disagreeing persons) should tolerate each other. He said:

43. "*Waan hinjirree hinjirtu,"jedhan. (247)*

It is said, "nothing is new".

Using this proverb, the man asserts that conflict can occur among people at any time and that the occurrence of such problem is not a strange situation. It is usual that as there are good relationships there can also be bad relationships among people. The person is trying to mean that any kind of disagreement can be resolved with tolerance and that the disagreeing persons should tolerate each other. He employed the proverb as a means of reproaching the people to forget their disagreements and feel at ease with each other.

Another elderly person in the discussion voiced his support to Mirra Duyyo and emphasized that tolerance and mutual understandings are important to overcome a disagreement that can exist among members of a clan or a family. He asserted that people who don't have tolerance and understandings for each other usually get their friendly relation weakened by conflicts. He underscored this idea in the following proverb:

44. Warri Badu Walhinbadadu. (256)

A discordant family doesn't care for its members.

"Family", in this context, refers to people who live in the same village as neighbours, or those who live in the same home. The proverb, thus, suggests that if there is no tolerance and mutual understanding among such people, their good relationship would be destroyed and their disagreement aggravates.

The same person further emphasized the importance of agreement and mutual understanding through the following proverb:

45. Warri horu wallirra hingoru. (255)

Members of a concordant family care for each other.

The first proverb, as indicated above, projects the undesirable consequence of conflict, whereas, this proverb attempts to reflect the good side of the existence of agreement and mutual understanding among people. It indicates that people who agree with each other can develop their bond of relation and strengthen their kinship. The person uses the proverb to point out the significance of tolerance and agreement among the people. In doing so, the man admonishes the disagreeing people to forget their difference and establish smooth relationships where tolerance and mutual understanding prevail.

To avoid disagreement, Guji elders advise their people not to retort in the same way to a person who does something bad or harmful to them. They render such advice in their proverbs such as the following:

46. Dubbiin dubbii fida. (219)

A vicious word gives rise to another vicious word.

The proverb indicates that responding to a vicious word in a similar way results in disagreement. Thus, it suggests that one should respond in kind words to the unkind ones to avoid a disagreement. The people employ the proverb to suggest a good response to an evil stimulus so that social friction can be avoided. They, further, inform the consequence of vituperative words in the following proverb.

47. Madaa hamtuu fayyan malee jecha hamtuu hinfayyan. (237)

Bad wound does heal but bad word doesn't.

The proverb points out the fact that one can recover from pain of a bad wound after a time but the harm of bad words stays in one's mind for a long period of time. The Guji elders use the proverb to warn persons who are in disagreement with each other not to speak bad words to each other for such act worsens their conflicts. They suggest a careful use of language (words) as a solution to inter-personal conflicts.

Elders further express that hurling insult elevates social distance and friction. They assert this view through proverbs. Here is an example:

48. Namin nama abaaru nama hinfaarsu. (241)
A person with scoffing tongue doesn't praise.

The proverb projects contrasting concepts: "scoffing tongue" and "praising" which may create conflict and resolve it respectively. Most of the time, scoffing tongue causes a disagreement; whereas, praise is believed to be the antidote to it. In this context, the proverb holds the meaning that scolding which comes from scoffing tongue should be replaced by praising. Guji elders employ the proverb to suggest avoidance of scold and employment of praise in social interactions to prevent the occurrence of conflicts among the people.

Above all, the Guji people understand that individuals stand in conflict with each other in vain. They become greedy and full of jealousy and enter into dispute with each other on account of something in their control. In the context of resolving inter-personal disagreements, the elders express this idea through proverbs. The following is an example:

49. Allaatiin waan lafaaf lafatti waliloolt. (218)
Hawks quarrel on the ground for something on the ground.

In its literal sense, the proverb refers to hawks, which are brought down from the sky by greed and fight with each other on the ground for something adequate to all of them. In the context of conflict resolution, it expresses indirectly that most of the time people become greedy and quarrel with each other for something in their control and plenty in their environment. In this context, the word "hawks" is used as an image that expresses

people who are greedy and in conflict with each other for something available to all of them. The Guji elders usually use the proverb in the contexts of reconciling people who are in conflict with each other on the ownership of farmland. Through the proverb, they express that a Guji shouldn't quarrel with another Guji on possession of farmland for greed is a roof of destruction. Therefore, they assert that the people quarrel with each other while there is no shortage of farmland in Guji territory. Through this proverb, they attempt to advise and influence the disputing people to realize that they quarrel with each other in vain and that they should avoid their disagreement caused by such unwise practices.

As demonstrated above, the proverbs, which have been included in this section, contain ideas that reflect the social disorders created by inter-personal disagreements. Therefore, they are used as instruments to reprehend them. The proverbs indicate that inter-personal conflicts result in social disorders, and, thus should be avoided. Because the proverbs convey such messages, the elders employ them in the discussion of resolving inter-personal disagreements. Similar to the proverbs discussed in the other two sub-sections of this chapter, the proverbs analyzed above function as means of correcting social disorders.

In short, this chapter depicts that, in the contexts of *Gumi Ganda*, some of the Guji-Oromo proverbs serve as vehicles of warning against dangerous course of action, correcting behaviour through satire and revealing the frustrated feelings bred by poverty. The next chapter deals with the other function of Guji-Oromo proverbs in the contexts of *Gumi Ganda*.

CHAPTER FIVE

REINFORCING FUNCTION OF GUJI PROVERBS

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the reinforcing function of Guji proverbs. Reinforcing function, in this context, refers to the use of proverbs as vehicles for prompting and encouraging self-adjustment to social and cultural environment. It has to do with the use of proverbs in helping someone to accustom himself/herself to environmental challenges and established ways of life. The discussions in *Gumi Ganda* (local meetings of the Guji elders) embody not only rectification of social disorders but also encouragement of people, mainly the youth to be conformist in order to have successful social lives in their environment. Out of 179 proverbs collected from sessions of the local meetings, 53 deal with reinforcement of self-adjustment to environmental situations as well as solidarity among members of the society. As an attempt to depict the cultural background in which the proverbs are used to encourage self-adjustment and intra-tribal harmony in the contexts of *Gumi Ganda*, the belief that affirms the necessity of these conditions has been explained briefly. Similarly, a specific context that gives rise to the proverbs in a specific *Gumi* (meeting) is described, then, the function of each sample proverb is analyzed on the basis of the specific context it is used in.

To begin with, in the traditional life of the Guji society, social harmony operates with the belief that Guji people should be obedient to *Waaqaa* (God), respect the Guji traditional values and live with each other as brothers and sisters in love and peace. The Guji believe in that if one fails to conform to customs of the society and other environmental situations (environmental hardships and social expectations), quarrels and endless

problems will follow. The individuals' neglect of harmony with *fira* (members of a clan) and the Guji tradition is believed to bring out lack of peace, infertility, death of cattle, death of people, loss of crop production and occurrence of epidemic diseases. Hence, agreement and mutual understandings among clans or relatives (*fira*) are proposed for maintenance of peace and orderly life in the society.

The necessity of harmony among members of the Guji society and self-adjustment to Guji traditional environment is expressed through proverbs that are used in the contexts of local meetings. When elders advise and teach their people to live together in peace and love with each other, they often, use proverbs to strengthen their messages. In the same way, heads of households employ proverbs in their speeches to teach members of their family, mainly the young, the value of compliance with tradition and the existing situations as well as the importance of having fraternal feelings for each other.

Broadly speaking, proverbs that are categorized under this section, as stated in the beginning of this chapter, reinforce two conditions: self-adjustment to environmental situations (environmental hardships, social expectations, ways of life etc) and tribal solidarity. In the following sub sections, examples of such proverbs will be discussed along with their contexts.

5.1 The Reinforcement of Self-Adjustment to Environmental Situations

In the Guji society, self-adjustment to situations in one's environment is considered as a means of survival. Such socializing practice is expressed through proverbs. Elders of the society often use proverbs when they advise someone to adjust himself/herself to a hard situation and live through it. As Wataa Shedo points out, the occurrences of

famine, death and epidemic disease are examples of the situations that give someone hard times. When such situations occur to a person, elders and sometimes Qallu and his companions visit the person to give him/her confidence so that he/she can handle it. When they encourage a person to acclimate to a problematic situation, visitors often use proverbs to present their prompting views and pieces of advice. Thus, encouraging or promoting someone to cope up with a difficult situation is one kind of context in which proverbs are employed. For example, elders when they visited a man who lives in Qarsaa village and whose cattle often die employed proverbs to support him to pass through the situation. They told the man that in such difficult situation patience and self-adjustment are important and that if only he is patient enough and be able to adjust himself to the situation, he can easily survive through it. After raising such issue an elder said:

50. Bubbeef bara hamaa guguufan bayani (261)

One goes by wind and hard time by bowing down.

In this proverb, hard time is compared to wind in a destructive effect that it causes to an inflexible person. To go by wind that blows hard, one has to bow down. In the same way, a person has to bow to get through a hard time. "to bow down", thus, signifies adapting oneself to a difficult situation to save one's life from its danger. In this context, it is possible to note that the proverb conveys the informative account that in order to resist the pain of a distressing situation or hard time, one has to be pliable and be able to adjust himself to it. In this particular context, what the people want to suggest is that adjusting one's self to a problematic situation is a better way of handling it. They were prompting the man to be tolerant, and flexible in order to manage the situation. The

proverb is thus, serving as a means of promoting self-adjustment to hard times or disturbing situations so as to obtain peace and orderly life.

Similarly, elders and other people expressed their sympathy to a man whose wife and children were sick and gave him hard time. The people asserted that if one examines a situation closely and patiently, he/she can understand it fully and adapt him/herself to it easily. They encouraged him to serve the God of his father (Ayyaana Abbaa) by fulfilling His needs and conforming to Guji traditional belief. One of them used the following proverb to emphasize the idea.

51. Baraaf furgugoo gadijedhan dabarfatan. (259)

One lets the passage of time and furgugoo (a thrown stick) by bowing down.

In this proverb, time is compared to *furgugoo*, which refers to a shortly-cut stick thrown at someone. It is familiar that to save oneself from being hit by the stick, one has to bow down. The proverb, therefore, shows that as it is possible to save oneself from the danger of a thrown stick by bowing down, it is feasible to rescue one's self from the perils of hard times by having endurance and being flexible to it. As in the former proverb (proverb 50), "to bow down" here suggests flexibility to problematic situations in order to adjust oneself to them. Therefore, the people employed the proverb to emphasize that tolerance and conforming of self to a situation can help someone maintain survival and peaceful life.

In the same discussion an elderly person, still, stressed that to be hopeless and frustrated by the challenge of hard times is unnecessary. Being patient, having

endurance, praying to *Waaqaa* and waiting for a better time to come are the advisable ways of survival in hard times. He used the following proverb in the end of his utterance.

52. Bara Baraan dabarsan. (258)

A time passes after a time.

The proverb indicates that hard times don't always last long and that better times are bound to follow. The people employ the proverb to dispatch this message (that there is a limit to hard time) to people in such problem and encourage them to be patient. In this case, the proverb is used as a means of prompting people to have endurance and be able to cope up with a difficult situation in order to get through it.

The other situation that calls for usage of proverbs is elders' advice to a guest or a new comer. In the Guji society, a new comer is usually advised to adjust himself to Guji ways of life and situations in their environment. In line with this customary practice whenever they welcome a new comer and prompt him/her to learn the socio-cultural norms of the Guji society and live accordingly the Guji often employ proverbs. In Toore village, Ganno Baati and his companions (the elders with him) used the following proverbs when they advised Habtamu Sharuma who was a development worker and assigned to the area recently. First, Ganno advised Habtamu to do what the Guji do and adjust himself to their ways of life. The following is one of the proverbs the people employed in the discussion.

53. Keessummaan akka warri bulutti bulti. (269)

A guest sleeps in a manner the host sleeps.

The proverb suggests that a guest should act in the way the host acts so that he/she can feel at ease and establish friendship in the home of the host. The "guest" and "host" in this particular context represent a new-comer (for example, Habtamu) and Guji people

(for example, the Guji people in Tooree *Woreda*) respectively. Thus, the men used such proverbs to encourage Habtamu to learn the socio-cultural norms of the Guji and adjust himself to them to lead a successful life among the society.

Similarly, one of the elders along with Ganno offered his advice to Habtamu by stating that he shouldn't be afraid of the traditional life of the Guji people or should not condescend on it. He emphasized his view through the following proverb:

54. Madda bu'anii Jiidha hinlagatan. (276)

After coming to stream, exposing oneself to damp is inevitable.

In this proverb, "stream" represents the area where the Guji people live, while, "damp" refers to the traditional life of the Guji people. The proverb literally shows that after coming to a stream, undergoing damp is inevitable. In this particular context, the proverb bears the meaning that after coming to the Guji land, it is not possible for someone to live out of the established norms of the people. The person used this proverb to suggest conformity to Guji traditional ways of life as a better means of obtaining a successful life among them.

The other elderly person affirms that an alien in Guji society is expected to closely observe the Guji ways of life and accord his/ her ways of life to them. He said:

55. Lafa ilaalanii muka dhaabani. (272)

One plants a tree after observing the ground.

The words "tree" and "ground" refer to a new comer and the Guji people respectively. Thus, the proverb conveys the message that a strange person should establish his life style in accordance with norms and expectations of the Guji society. The person used

the proverb to encourage the alien (Habtamu) to learn the Guji social and cultural norms and adjust his ways of life to them in order to get a genuine acceptance from the society.

Furthermore, the Guji people use proverbs to express that someone, to get on with his/her social environment and maintain peaceful existence, should refrain himself or herself from speaking bad words or doing evil deeds. He/she should hold himself/herself back from individuals who speak disappointing words or do harmful deeds. In relation to this, an elder told Habtamu that there could be people who may try to disappoint him by speaking bad words to him and that he shouldn't respond to such people in the same way. He emphasized this idea through the following proverb.

56. Karaaf dubbii arganuu dhiisan. (268)

One turns back from road and dubbii (abnormal speech) observing them.

The proverb indicates that as it is tiresome to go on a road up to its end, it is painful or futile to go further into the detail of abnormal speech (dubbii). It compares abnormal speech (dubbii) of somebody with a road and reflects that both of them are causing pain to someone who attempts to go far in them. The better solution, as the man states, is to stop going further in to them or to refrain from them. The man used the proverb to reflect this notion and suggest Habtamu and the other people there to hold themselves back from bad words and evil deeds of someone in order to obtain harmony with their social environment.

In the Guji society, not only refraining from bad words and evil deeds but also approaching a hard situation wisely is advocated as a strategy of establishing self-adjustment to it. The people often quote proverbs to suggest approaching situations in an appropriate and wise way as a better strategy of handling them. In context of such

discussions, they often assert that if they are wise in approaching a strange situation in their environment, people can easily get on with it and that it is the individuals' wrong way of approaching such situation that makes them unable to live through it. In the meeting of elders held in Tooree village, the importance of approaching difficult conditions wisely in order to handle them was discussed widely. An elder who was participant of the meeting asserted the advantage of approaching hard situations wisely and quoted the following proverb:

57. Karaa malee deemuun laga nama bulcha. (267)

Going on a wrong way makes someone face a problem.

The proverb literally tells that a person who goes somewhere on a wrong way cannot arrive at his destination on time. It indicates that while he is looking for a right way, he faces a problem and fails to achieve his goal. In the context of conformity, the proverb holds the meaning that someone who tries to approach a problematic situation unwisely or inappropriately does not protect himself from its danger. Indirectly, the proverb indicates the necessity of wise and appropriate way of approaching a situation in order to cope up with it. The elder used the proverb to suggest a wise way of approaching problematic situations as a better strategy of handling them.

Another elder in the discussion strengthens the views of the above speakers in the following proverb:

58. Sareen qaroon untee qadaaddi. (280)

A wise dog covers a container after drinking what it contains.

The proverb in the context of the discussion refers to human beings rather than to a dog. The dog's wisdom of hiding its wrong deeds to remain peaceful with its master has been

suggested to be used by human beings so that they can remain strong in difficult situations. The people used such proverbs to assert that in order to have better harmony with a hard situation in one's social environment, a wise way of hiding one's mistakes or wrong deeds is important. They further explain that one should hide his wrong behaviour or deeds wisely in order to get on with the dominant social expectations in the society.

The other strategy of achieving self-adjustment to situations in one's social environment is to create kinship with a recognized elder among the Guji society. After creation of kinship, one can be considered a member of a Guji family and is allowed to join the society as *fira* (kinsman). After raising this social reality, an elder uttered the following proverb:

59. Waraana jannatti dheessanii dubbii qarootti dheessanii. (281)

As war is prevented by a patriot; a problematic case is solved by a wise man.

The proverb literally indicates that to save oneself from war and a problematic case, one should come under the protection of a patriot and a wise man respectively. In the above stated context, the man employs the proverb to reveal that in order to accustom himself to his social environment, one has to attach himself to or come under the protection of a socially recognized elderly in the people. By establishing such relationship with a recognized elder, a person, becomes a member of the family of the elder, therefore, can be accepted as kinsman among the people. Thus, the proverb is used as a means of suggesting attachment to an elder as a strategy of establishing good relations with situations in one's social environment.

Another elder in the discussion suggested prudence as a means of adjusting oneself to a hard situation. He asserted that one has to preserve important things so that he can use them in difficult situations. He further argued that one should not lean on one thing; he/she should have alternatives that can help him/her in strange situations. To strengthen his idea and present it clearly, the elder employed the following proverb:

60. Hantuunni boolla lamaa daftee hinduutu. (262)

A rat, which has two holes, lives long.

The proverb reflects that a rat that has two holes can save itself from dangers of a suddenly appearing enemy. It implies that when its enemy waits for it at one of its holes, it can run in to the other hole and escape from its danger. In this context, the person used the proverb to indicate that the rat's wise experience should be used by the people (the listeners) so that they can safely adapt themselves to situations in their social environment. In using the proverb, the elder indicates that in order to adjust themselves to a strange or a difficult situation, the Guji people should have alternative ways of life that may enable them to manage situations.

People in a discussion ascertained that making use of anything available as a substitute for something unavailable is important to cope up with a situation characterized by scarcity. In scarcity, according to the people, a person who gets satisfied with what is obtainable rather than longing for something unobtainable can easily comply with the situation. One of the people emphasized that utilization of the available opportunity is a better way of survival and used the following proverb at the end of his explanation.

61. Kan farade dhabe harreen garmaama. (265)

Someone who doesn't have a horse rides on a donkey.

The proverb, literally, projects the possibility of using a donkey as a substitute for horse when there is scarcity of horses. In other words, it shows that if a horse is unavailable, it is possible to ride on a donkey. It reflects the worth of using what is available rather than wishing for something difficult to obtain. Using the proverb, the person remarked the greatness of being satisfied with what is obtainable and indicates that it is a means of going through hard environmental situations.

In general, as it is demonstrated above, the Guji elders use proverbs to enable their people to easily establish conformity with situations in their social environment. Through proverbs, they suggest that in order to lead safe and successful life among the Guji people one should conform to the traditions or socio-cultural norms of the society and adapt him/her self to the hardships in their environment. They also suggest tolerance, moral strength, patience, wisdom, respectfulness, prudence, satisfaction with what is available and creation of kinship with a recognized person as alternative strategies to establish conformity with situations in the areas of the Guji society. In this context, the Guji elders use the proverbs to reinforce the stated means of maintaining conformity with situations in their localities. Thus, it is possible to note that the proverbs serve reinforcing functions.

5.2 Reinforcement of Tribal Solidarity

Tribal solidarity (the solidarity among the different clans of the Guji tribe) is widely proposed by elders of the Guji society. As Wataa Shedo explained, the Guji people have a great sense of unity therefore need the existence of strong harmony among their people. They sense that the Guji society, without any distinction among the clans,

should live in harmony with each other as a family in love, peace and mutual understandings.

For example, in the local gatherings held in Qarsa village, it was emphasized that Guji clans should have harmony and brotherly relationships with each other. The people often assert that members of the tribe (the *fira*) are expected to help each other and to remain close to each other on good as well as evil days. When forwarding this notion, the people employed proverbs. The following is an example.

62. Aanaan reeffatti aana. (282)

A person stays close to a dead body of his relative.

The proverb validates the ideas forwarded by the elders. It indicates that it is a close relative of a dead person who stays close to the dead body of the person before burial. In the present context the proverb projects the idea that the members of the Guji society should remain helpful to each other in bad days. The people use this proverb to encourage the existence of harmony and peaceful relationships among the Guji people for they are important for each other in difficult situations.

Similarly, the Guji use proverbs to underscore that there should be harmony and peaceful relationships among neighboring villages and also among families in a village. They pointed out that people who live in neighboring villages or in neighboring houses are important for each other. They strengthen this idea through proverbs such as the following.

63. Ollaaf aduutti gadi bahan. (303)

One comes out to the sun and his neighbour.

In the proverb, the sun, in its accessibility to any person, is compared to a neighbour, who is always close to someone. Through such a comparison, the proverb reflects the fact that the Guji believe in the fact that neighbouring people can reach each other quickly during adversity. The Guji used the proverb to explain that the existence of harmony among people who live in the same village in particular and the Guji people, in general, is important to sustain peace and orderly life.

In Guji society, it is also believed that someone who has many friends and relatives can have adequate support during difficulties. As explained by elders, such person, when he/she gets into a troublesome situation, can have help from his/her relatives and be able to handle the situation. One of the elders, in the local meeting held in Tooree village, expressed that to have close relationships with others is essential to gain success in life. He emphasized this view through the following proverb.

64. Ballaan fira qabu ila qaba. (283)

A blind person who has relatives can see.

The word "blind" in the proverb represents someone in a difficult situation. Such person, if he/she has relatives (fira), according to the proverb, can be supported by them and be able to overcome the problem. The proverb shows that to have relatives, friends or supporters is essential to someone to survive in problematic situations. The man used the proverb to suggest the point that any member of the Guji society should agree with other members of the society so that he/she can establish a strong solidarity with them. Besides, the elders and family heads of the Guji people witness the impossibility of attaining survival without formation of a close relationship with other members of the society. They claim that someone can't be successful in life without getting support from

others and teach that no person is self-sufficient and that he/she needs the help of others to survive. They expressed this notion through proverbs such as the following:

65. Kophaa dhiqanii xurii hinbaasan. (294)

By washing alone, one can't avoid dirt.

The word "washing", in the context of discussion on the necessity of mutual support, serves as an indirect expression of activities of life that aim at achieving something. By stating that by washing alone someone can't remove dirt, the proverb manifests that by doing something alone (without help other people), one may not gain success or achieve his goal of life. Through the proverb, the people show that for it is difficult to live alone, it is essential for a family and a clan to make harmonious and intimate relationships with other families and clans of Guji people.

Likewise, the Guji people, mainly the elders, believe that generosity is important for enabling someone to live with others. They often use their proverbs, which propose that any Guji family should be willing to share its property with another Guji family. In the discussion of elders held in Qarsaa village, the people projected this perception through proverb. Here is one example.

66. Kophaa nyaattuun qophaa duuti. (293)

A person who eats alone dies alone.

The proverb shows that someone who is greedy and prefers to use his properties alone does not get along with others and obtain friends, therefore, remains alone in difficult situations. It indicates that being generous to people helps someone establish a friendly relationship with them. This proverb is used to strengthen this idea and prompt the Guji

people to be generous and establish harmony with each other so that they can help each other in hard times.

In that discussion, the people further asserted that through helping each other people can consolidate their relationships and maintain their unity. The following is one of the proverbs they used to strengthen this notion:

67. Harki nyaate nama hinnyaatu. (287)

A hand that has been helped doesn't refuse to help others.

The word "hand" in this proverb is a representation of somebody who usually expresses his gratitude to someone who supported him. Thus, the proverb reflects that someone doesn't want to harm somebody who helped him some days. Through the proverb, the people were forwarding the fact that being generous and helpful to each other can draw people together and make them feel relatives to each other. The people still voiced comment by stating that any Guji person who wants to obtain love, help and care from people should give love, help and care for others. They asserted that one shouldn't expect people to bring him/her things if he/she never give anything in return. The following is one of the proverbs used in this context:

68. Harkaan harka fuudhan. (284)

One receives a hand by his hand.

"Hand", in the context of this proverb, signifies the help, love or care that someone renders others and also receives from them. Bearing such a message, the proverb strengthens the views stated above and presents them in a more touching way. The proverb is used to show that a Guji person, to have something from others, should do

them the same. It asserts that to attain solidarity among the people, all members of the society should remain helpful and brotherly to each other.

Furthermore, in a discussion held in Qarsa village, the elders and other people proposed reciprocal love as a strategy for obtaining interpersonal congruity. They stated that if there is love among people, there is no difficulty to create a strong relationship with each other. They further elaborated that, in love, there is tolerance and mutual understanding. One of the people emphasized the idea by using this proverb:

69. Nama jaalatan bakka rafisan hindhaban. (302)

One doesn't lack a bed for a person whom he loves.

The proverb indicates that in any situation one doesn't fail to host people whom he/she loves. It projects that where there is love there is solidarity and that love is the most effective cementing bond in a society. Thus, the person used the proverb to present his view in a more clear way and to suggest the possession of love as a strategy of establishing tribal unity.

In conclusion of the discussion stated above an elder asserted the necessity of generosity, helpfulness, love, care and mutual understanding to establish cohesive society. He emphasized the significance of the existence of some course of relation or action, which can bring people together and help them get on with each other easily. Finally, he said:

70. Laga malee garaan walittinyaa'u. (296)

Without a course, hearts may not come to each other.

In this context, "course" and "hearts" represent means of relation and solidarity among the people respectively. The proverb, therefore, reflects the belief that to obtain harmony among people, there should be some means of relation that may bring the people together. The person employed the proverb to underline the essentiality of the existence of means of relation such as love, generosity, helpfulness, mutual understanding and care for each other for maintenance of affinity and strong unity among the Guji people.

Besides, in the meeting held to advise a newly elected chairman of Tooree *kebele* (village), elders held that for successful administration, an elected person should create harmony with his people. The elders emphasized, that to attain acceptance from the local people, a nominated person should come to agreement with the people rather than to apply force for administration. One of the elders pointed out this suggestion through the following proverb:

71. Marii' atan malee maraatan biyya hinbulchan. (300)

It is possible to administer people by discussion but not by force.

The proverb stresses the indispensability of discussion as a means of administering people successfully. The elder employed the proverb as a tool of enacting the awareness of the chairman on the value of compliance with the views and interests of the people (people living in the village) to administer them successfully.

In the discussion, the elders further voiced that inter-family agreements in particular and inter-clan agreements in general are important for the maintenance of progressive and peaceful ways of life among the Guji society. They argue for the fact that if there are discussions and agreements among Guji people, there could be a promising social and

economic development in Guji territory. Among the elders, one tried to clarify these ideas through the following proverb.

72. Warri marii qabu dibicha qalata warri marii hinqanne raadaa qalata. (310)

A concordant family slaughter a young bull while a discordant one slaughters a heifer.

For the Guji, a heifer is more important than a young bull as majority of the people, mainly, those living in lowland areas live on milk. Heifer, when it becomes cow, serves the people more than a young bull by giving them milk. Thus, slaughtering a heifer to get meat is perceived as a foolish deed. The above proverb indicates that a discordant family slaughters heifer while a concordant one slaughters a young bull. In other words, it signifies that a disagreeing family does something wrong (slaughtering heifer); whereas, an agreeing one does something right (slaughtering a young bull). The person used the proverb to reflect that if there is a discussion and an agreement among the Guji people, there is always peace, order and unity. Using the proverb, he projected intra tribal conformity as a precondition of obtaining peace, as well as social and economic developments.

Elders concluded the discussion by emphasizing that intra tribal agreement is a pillar for attainment of success in social life. They underlined that if there is an agreement among the Guji people in their villages or in their localities, they can act together and gain success in all aspects of life. One of the elders strengthened this idea using the following proverb:

73. Nama mannatti walii galetuu alaa waliin gala. (301)

People who agree with each other at home can come back home together.

In the context of the discussion, "home" represents one's village or locality; whereas, the phrase "come back home together" signifies attainment of success in an activity. The proverb, thus, indicates that people who are in harmony with each other in their localities or villages can obtain success when they act together on an activity. It is used to depict agreement, which is the important aspect of conformity, as prerequisite to success in social life.

In general, as demonstrated above, the Guji often employ proverbs to promote solidarity among their people. In using proverbs, they emphasize the necessity of forming harmony and reinforce solidarity among the Guji people in order to have peace, progress and fertility in Guji territory. As it can be noted from the discussion above, the affirm project the importance of tribal unity; thus, serve reinforcing functions.

To sum up, in the contexts of *Gumi Ganda*, some of the Guji-Oromo proverbs are used as instruments to reinforce endurance, flexibility and tribal solidarity. It is possible to observe that they serve as anchors that sustain the society in its normal handling of life.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary

In this thesis, an attempt has been made to make a contextual analysis of the functions of Guji-Oromo proverbs. Thus, in line with the theory of contextual approach, observation and interview were used as methods of data collection. Contexts (speech situations) in two types of occasion were observed and proverbs performed in the contexts were collected. The first are cultural contexts in *Ebbisaa* (blessing sessions) and the second are social contexts in *Gumi Ganda* (local meetings of elders). Contexts in these occasions were selected because they were more accessible and were rich in proverbs.

The contextual approach to the study of proverbs (as presented in chapter two) focuses on examination of a meaning and a function of a particular proverb in a particular situation (context). In this approach, questions about who used a proverb, the specific situation in which the proverb is used, why the proverb is used, and the relevance of the proverb in that specific situation are important.

The study shows that proverbial meanings and functions are primarily concerned with the relation between proverbs and the situations in social and cultural occasions. In other words, the speech situations in the occasions (*Ebbisaa* and *Gumi Ganda*) tend to determine the important aspect of functions of the proverbs. Such functions of the Guji proverbs appear similar to what Delanq (1966:11) states about Yaruba proverbs: "Yaruba proverbs emerge from contexts and their meanings and functions are bound by situations in the contexts". In *Ebbisaa* (as shown in chapter three), the reflective function

of proverbs is magnified more than the other aspects of function. In the context of this occasion, proverbs are used as means of enumerating and activating the socio-cultural elements like *aadaa* (custom), *saffu* (morality) and *seeraa* (social laws) of the Guji society.

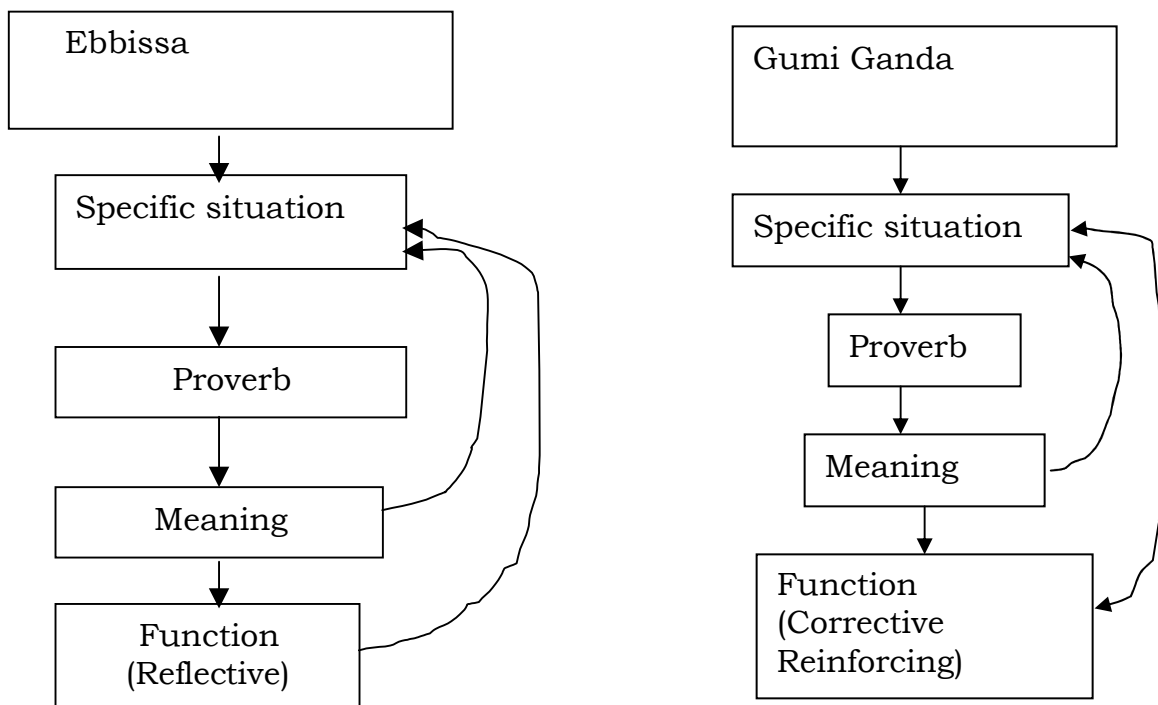
They embody the customary practices, the social values of morality and the power (strictness) of the social laws of the society. In other words, the Guji traditional ways of life, belief, philosophy, the importance of morality in social life and the strictness of the Guji social laws are reflected in the proverbs employed in the *Ebbisaas*. This shows that Guji-Oromo proverbs are a mirror of truth-values, accepted rules of conduct and conventional wisdoms of the society. They reflect the age old and common socio-cultural models and experiences of the people. The higher social position of elders and their big responsibility in maintaining the socio-cultural values, stabilization of social life and socialization of the youth are expressed through the proverbs. Therefore, it is possible to observe that the values and standards of the socio-cultural elements are expressively represented and projected through proverbs.

However, in *Gumi Ganda* (as discussed in chapters four and five) corrective and reinforcing functions of the proverbs are manifested largely. This is because, the speech situations in *Gumi Ganda* are mainly concerned with ridiculing and shaping of behaviors, reprehension of disagreements; advising, encouraging and guiding of people.

In this occasion, the people use proverbs as vehicles of reordering, shaping or protesting against any form of social disorder. They divulge their experience of poverty, censure misbehavior, and disapprove of disagreements by using proverbs. They use

proverbs to ponder on what is unjust, upon what is feeble, what is ridiculous and on what leads someone to grief. In similar occasion, the elder members of the society employ proverbs frequently to advise or encourage their people to get on with each other as well as to the situations in their environment since they believe that this condition is the means of survival and maintenance of peace and orderly life. Thus, proverbs that are used in such contexts are serving corrective and reinforcing functions.

The following diagrams demonstrate how functions of the proverbs come into existence in both *Ebbisaa* and *Gumi Ganda*.



The diagrams show that in both *Ebbisaa* and *Gumi Ganda* proverb meanings and functions are stimulated by specific situations of interaction contained in the wider context of the occasions. A speaker uses a proverb when the proverb is pertinent in a

situation of conversation. Put in other way, a proverb is related to a specific situation and is applied in communication.

In both occasions, proverbs are mainly used by elders or senior members of the community. In other words, the communication through proverbs is usually from an elder to a younger person or among the elderly persons. Thus, it is possible to note that the use of proverbs is the wisdom of adult people mainly of elders. This is because, elders are rich in life experiences and cumulative values from which proverb usage originates.

As indicated in the analyses, proverbs are frequently used in social and cultural occasions, mainly in the meetings of elders in which series of social and cultural issues are entertained in vigorous voices. In short, the study shows that the Guji people:

- give higher social status and responsibility to elders.
- give respect and value to morality and their traditional ways of life.
- have social laws, which are strict in effect.
- feel that they have been marginalized by government and non-government organizations.
- believe that self-adjustment to social environment and solidarity among their people are important for attainment of peace and prosperity in the Guji territory.

Conclusion

As shown in the foregoing analyses and the summary presented above, Guji proverbs are used mainly in association with situations in speech occasions. As Shreve, et. al (1982) states, contexts make communications possible. This is true also in the case of proverbs. They make sense and become clear when they are examined in the contexts

of their application. Their meanings and functions cannot be treated in isolation from the situations in the occasions. Thus, it is possible to note that proverbs are reflectors of thought instigated by contexts. In this regard, Finnegan (1970), Malinowski (1962), Bascom (1962) Norrik (1994) and Gryzbeck (1994) also state that without contexts folkloric elements, mainly proverbs, are lifeless (see: 2.1.3.1).

Likewise, the Guji-Oromo proverbs embody the socio-cultural values of the people and reflect their realities of life. This is true with Awgn proverbs (as indicated in Teferi, 2000), Kambata proverbs (as shown in Birhanu, 1986). Embu and Mbeere proverbs (as stated in Chesaina, 1997) and Yaruba proverbs (as indicated in Delanq, 1996). In these works, it has been concluded that proverbs project the social and cultural realities of the users. This situation implies that proverbs are the cultural elements that empower speech occasions in a society and shows that the Guji-Oromo proverbs are concerned not only with local incidents, traditions, customs and values, but also with universal human experiences rules, norms and ways of life. This situation also indicates that the Guji share practical experiences and wisdoms of survival with other people in Africa.

The Guji use the proverbs to describe the inner thoughts of their hardships and warn against the dangers of life. They give a great respect to the wisdom embodied in their proverbs, therefore, the proverbs are highly effective in exercising social control. They reflect the forms of socialization, and cultural transmission, as well as role relationship, power structure and patterns of social control in the society. Since they express the norms and moral codes of the society, they are convenient instruments for reinforcing, approving or disapproving behaviour, in terms of the established norms.

Above all the proverbs portray the life of the humble, common and conservative society. They also show the life of victimized, poor people who seek conformity with traditional norms of their society and hate discriminations as well as moral and behavioural wickedness. What is reflected in the proverbs shows how poor the Guji people are, what they like and dislike and how they struggle to survive in problematic situations. In this sense, it is possible to note that proverbs function as social documents.

Since they serve these functions, proverbs can be considered as "engines" of social construction and development. They can help government and non-government organizations notice the social problems and needs of the Guji people and plan the appropriate rural development strategies accordingly.

Besides the functions of proverbs stated by Bascom (1965), Chesaina (1997) Miruka (1994) Gryzbek, (1994) and Norrik (1994) (see: 2.1.4.1), promotion of group solidarity, mirroring of the popular details of people's realities of life (customs and beliefs), revealing of social problems and ridiculing of deviant behaviors (misbehaviors) as well as maintenance of self-adjustment to the accepted norms and ensuring of their continuity across generations are manifested in Guji-Oromo proverbs. This shows that the Guji Oromo proverbs do more than the traditional functional statements about what proverbs do (see 2.1.4.1).

In general, proverbs play a great role in creating public responses to social, political and economic problems and help people learn that folklore builds community, maintains culture and produces a responsible society.

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APPENDIX A: The Classified Collection

1. Proverbs from *Ebbisaa*

1.1 Reflective functions

1.1.1 Proverbs Reflecting Customary Practices

1. Aannan ititu dhadhaa baha.
Milk that coagulates gives butter.
2. Abbaan ilma fakkaata.
A father resembles his son.
3. Abbaan kufan ilmaan ka'an.
Someone who was not helped by his father is helped by his son
4. Abban waraana dubbii waraana dubbata.
A leader of war talks about war.
5. Abbaa ofii galetuu qaalluu galata jedhan.
Someone who can lead himself can lead qallu (the priest), it was said.
6. Abbaaf ilma hangafatuu haadha wiliin deema.
It is an elder son and his father who go with a mother.
7. Aki jedhan waa tufan mamaakan waa dubbatan.
One spits by saying "aki" and speaks by saying a proverb.
8. Abbaan ofratti orma hinjaalatu.
A person doesn't like others more than himself.
9. Abbuyyaan Abbaadha
An uncle is a father.
10. Aadaan Qadaada qaddi
Custom has its own cap.
11. Ayyoon dhirra jaalattu dhaba hinjibbitu.
A mother who adores her husband doesn't hate poverty.
12. Bultii abbaatu itti yaaddata.
It is the subject who should care for his life.
13. Baraan barru horan
Prosperity comes through time

14. Beekaan afaan cufata malee balbala hincufatu.
A wise man shuts his mouth but not his door.
15. Baka ili jirtu gurri jirti.
The ear goes to the place where the eye goes.
16. Dubbiin mamaaksa hinqanne sagalee soda hinqanne.
A talk without proverb is like food without salt.
17. Dubbii kalee tarte har'a hingaafatanu.
One doesn't ask today about a case that passed yesterday.
18. Dhaddeen ilmee ofii luuccessa araabdi.
A porcupine licks its offspring deeply
19. Dubbii dheertuuf ijoolee furri abbaa qofatuu jaalata.
A long talk and an untidy child are liked by their owners only.
20. Galaannii ganamaa galgala hingu'u.
A lake that is full in the morning doesn't dry in the evening.
21. Guraaf garaan waliif nyaapha
The ear and the heart are enemies to each other.
22. Gurri abbaa dura deema.
Name goes ahead of its owner.
23. Hammaatullee dubbii jaarsaa hintufatanu.
Whether it is bad or good, elder's idea is not despised.
24. Harree barii bade kokoyni hingalchitu.
A donkey which disappeared in the morning will not be found by quick search.
25. Hanga qaban olqaban.
One shows up what he/she has.
26. Hanga ofii abbaatu beeka.
It is the subject who knows his capability.
27. Harki taa'u galata his qabu.
An idle hand has no respect.
28. Hudduun teessu wan hinbaatu.
Buttock that sits produces nothing.
29. Kan waaqaan badi jedhe ofiifu bada.
Someone who curses God will be cursed.

30. Kan waaqi godhe irriyyaan kolfa godhe.
Someone laughs at his friend because of something done to him by God.
31. Kan waaqaan bulu hagabuu hinbulu.
Someone who believes in God will not be starved.
32. Kan waaqa sodaatu waa hinsodaatu.
Someone who fears God does fear nothing.
33. Kan qocaaf kaa'e cululleen hinfudhattu.
Something reserved for a tortoise will not be taken by an eagle.
34. Karaan karaa muru beekan dubbii muru.
A road ends at another road as a case is concluded by a wise man.
35. Karkaroo biratti booyyeen nibareeda.
A pig is attractive when compared with a peccary.
36. Keessa keessa adalli bineenssa.
Internally, a cut is a beast.
37. Kennan waaqa sokossa hinqabu.
God's gift doesn't have sound.
38. Kan loon qabu gosa qaba.
A person who has cattle has supporters.
39. Kan suuta deemu qoraattiin suuta seenti.
The thorn slowly gets into a body of a person who goes slowly.
40. Kan tufatantuu nama ulfessa.
Someone whom you despise respects you.
41. Karaan ganna bahe bona hinduudu.
A road that has been opened in a summer will not be closed in a winter.
42. Lafa yaadaan bulan bariitu deeman.
In the morning, one goes to a place he thought about in the night.
43. Lafa qalbiin deeman miillan dhaqan.
Legs go to where a mind goes.
44. Lafeen bara baddee bara galt.
A bone that disappeared before a time will be found after a time.
45. Leenci tolfatu malee hin utaaluu.
A lion jumps after preparing itself.

46. Loon argan bishaann itti fuudhan.
Someone, should provide cattle with water.
47. Laga lagaan himan.
A river is labeled in terms of another river.
48. Loon abbaa miidhassa.
Cattle make their owner respected.
49. Loon tinni hingalchu gurrati galcha.
By looking, one can't keep cattle but by hearing.
50. Loon waraana, waraanatti nama geessa.
Cattle are warriors, they lead their owner into war.
51. Lafaaf lafee kee hinirraanfatiin.
Don't forget your bone and your place.
52. Malaan bishaan waadan.
Tactfully, one can fry water.
53. Malaan deeman shawaa gayan
By walking wisely, one can reach Shawa.
54. "Malaan duulan alaa galan" jette lukkuun.
" When he campaigns tactfully, one can gain victory" said a hen.
55. Mala hataan gowwa hinqabu.
Someone who steals tactic is not a fool.
56. Malli garaa sijira, bokkuun harka sijira.
Wisdom is in your mind and "bokku" is in your hand.
57. Mataa malee balbala hinbahan.
The head goes through a door before other parts of the body.
58. Mataan ila qabu lafa hinbadu.
A head that has eyes doesn't face problems.
59. Mana offii dhakaa itti baatan.
One carries stone to his home
60. Manni waaqi ijaaree hinjigu.
A house that has been built by God will never fall down.
61. Mamaaksi beekaaf soorata dhaleef affuura.

- A proverb is meal for a wise person and air for the fool one.
62. Mamaaksi tokko dubbii fida tokko dubbii fixa.
One proverb causes a topic of discussion and the other ends it.
63. Muki darban dhi'o bu'a, gurri darban fagoo bu'a.
If one throws his ear and a stick, his ear goes farther than the stick.
64. Namni dura deemu galaana waata.
A person who goes ahead is like a camel in Wataa .
65. Nama waa sodaatetu lubbuun bula.
A person who fears something can live long.
66. Nama ufata qabuti kabaja qaba.
A well-dressed person is respectable.
67. Namni qara hinqabatu.
A person doesn't touch a tip of sword.
68. Nagaan ooluu malee nagaan buluu waaqati beeka.
Someone knows that he passes a day peacefully but only God knows that he will pass a night peacefully.
69. Nama barii deemetuu karaa kuta.
A person who begins to walk in the morning can go far.
70. Nama dubbiin nama dhibe caldhisaa dhiban.
If someone troubles you with disappointing speech you trouble him in silence.
71. Nageenna malee qabbanti duumessa malee roobni hinjiru.
There is no stable life without peace as there is no rain without cloud.
72. Nama dullometuu waahima.
An old man can tell something.
73. Nama guddaarraa gorsa fudhatan.
Have advice from an elderly person.
74. Niitii ilaan barbaadanirra kan gurraan barbaddant tara.
It is better to search for a wife by ear rather than by eye.
75. Niitii jechuun tailma deetee.
A good wife is the one who gives birth to a son.
76. Niitii nama kiyya hinjedhiin, hudduun nafa kiyya hinjedhiin.

- Don't consider your wife as your person and your buttock as your body.
77. Ogeessa fardi hinbuusu.
A wise person doesn't fall from a horse.
78. Ofumaa marti malee allaatiin duut lafuma.
Even though it flies in the sky, a bird dies on the ground.
79. Olkaa'an fuudhan malee olka'an hinfuudhan.
Someone takes tomorrow what he puts up today.
80. Oriin abbaa malee abbeera hinqabu.
Property doesn't have uncle but father.
81. Qoonqoon okolee waaqaati.
Stomach is a "okolee" (milking pot) for God.
82. Qaroo dura dhawi gowwaa dugda dhawi.
Hit a wise person on the face and a fool one on the back.
83. waan waaqi robe latti hindiddu.
The earth doesn't refuse to bear anything comes down from God.
84. Waan waaqa gurracharra lafarraa hinhaftu.
Something exists in God (the sky) exists on the ground.
85. Waan waaqaaf waan nyaaphaa hintufatan.
Things from God and an opponent are not despised.
86. Waaqi utubaan malee dhaabate lafa dhissa malee diririse.
God supports Himself without poles and extended the earth without pegs.
87. Waaqu Guraacha jedhan.
Even God is black, it is said.

1.1.2 Proverbs Reflecting the Social Values of Morality

88. Abaarsiif dhugaan boodatti.
Curse and truth reveal themselves later on.
89. Abaarri nibaha maqaa hamaan hinbahu.
A curse can be cleansed but a bad name can't.
90. Ayyuuf soddaa hintufatanu.
One doesn't condescend on his in-law and an experienced person.
91. Ani dursa jedhanii hinhimatan.

- One doesn't tell his seniority by himself.
92. Bokkaan jirreenya jireehnyaa hinguufan.
Rain is life, there is no surfeit of life.
93. Bara hinbeekinu mara hinseenu.
We should be reserved for we don't know the future.
94. Baraaf saree his yakkan.
Time and dog are not blamed.
95. Cubbuun niturit malee hinhanqattu.
Sin may stay long but it will not be erased.
96. Cubbuun dura furdistee booda qallisti.
Sin makes someone look fat first and thin later.
97. Cubbuun takka tiratti takka dhaqabdi.
Sin goes slowly but reaches timely.
98. Dhugaan ganama huqattee galgala gabbatti.
Truth looks thin in the morning but becomes fat in the evening.
99. Dhugaan niqallatti malee hincabdu.
Although it is thin, truth doesn't break.
100. Heddu dubachuurra haqa hojechuu wayya.
Doing justice is better than talking much.
101. Kan mattaan arrii mannaa kan garaan arrii wayya.
A person whose heart is gray is better than the one whose hair is gray.
102. Kan waan qabu hinbeekne waan dhabe hinbeeku.
A person who doesn't know what he has does not know what he lacks.
103. Mataa tifikatan maqaa hinba'an.
When the head is looked after, one's name will not be spoiled.
104. Murree balleessina jennan ejersi kudhan ta'ee late.
We cut the tree to destroy it, but it grew again being ten.
105. Nama sobtanu hinsobanu.
One doesn't lie to the person whom he trusts.
106. Nama abbaa jedhanii obbo hinjedhan.
One doesn't call "someone" brother "after he called him "father".
107. Oddo hinguddatiin waa hindubbatiin.

- Don't speak something before you grow up.
108. Odoon hinubtaiin harkaa hingubatiin.
Before you understand, don't get your hand burnt.
109. Qaamaan du'an maqaan hindu'an.
Body dies but not name.
110. Qullaa lafa hindhossan dhugaa waaqa hindhossan.
It is impossible to hide truth from God as it is impossible to hide sex organs from ground.
111. Sa'a ta'eef nyaata hinta'u.
All cattle will not be eaten.
112. Wanti kenna tuffii hinqabdu.
A gift is not despised.

1.1.3 Proverbs Portraying the Power of Social Laws

113. Abbaan warraa boolla, boolla guyyaa bu'an hinbeekan.
A head of a family is like a hole in which one doesn't know the day he/she falls into it.
114. Abbaan warraa dura du'a.
Head of a family dies ahead.
115. Caba affanii dhadhaan hinfayisan.
A break of mouth is not cured by butter.
116. Dalagaan abbuma eeggata.
A task waits for a person who should do it.
117. Dubbiin mattaa hinqaddu fuula qaddi.
A case doesn't have head but face.
118. Durba qaban qabaa qaddi.
Abusing a girl is calling for a problem.
119. Dharaaf cubbuun waa hinsodaatu.
A liar and a sinful person are not afraid of anything.
120. Heega offii abbaati beeka.
It is the subject who determines his fate.
121. Herri mana qaddi, manni abbaa qaddi.

- A law has its home, as a home has its owner.
122. Hidaa walgargaran malee cubbuu walhingargaaran.
One can help the other in shouldering debit but not sin.
123. Heera hamaa abbaa mursiisan.
A strong case is to be judged by the subject.
124. Karaa gabaabaan lubbuu nama gabaabsa.
A short way shortens one's life.
125. Mukta lubbu; lubbuu hinhuban.
Trees are life, one does not hurt life.
126. Qoosaa ilaa jette ballaan.
No joke with eyes said a blind person.
127. Re'eefi qeerransa walitti hin lakkisan.
One does not keep a goat beside a tiger.
128. Seerri laafaan ba'e jabaa hinhanqatu.
A law formulated by a weak person overrules a strong person.
129. Serri yaabbi bifaati
Law is a ladder of appearance.
130. Sibiila sibiilan muran
Cut a metal by a metal.
131. Wanti du'a dide jiraachuu hin didu.
Someone who refuses to die doesn't refuse to live.

2. Proverbs from *Gumi Ganda*

2.1 Corrective Functions

2.1.1 Divulging of Poverty

132. Aa'a jette sareen lukaa cabde.
"Aa" said a dog of which legs have been broken.
133. "Aa'a jedhe jaarsi tamboo dhabee.
"Aa" said an old man when he failed to get tobacco.
134. Abbaa fardaa malee lafoon garmaama hindeemu.
A person who doesn't have horse doesn't go for a gallop.

135. Abiddiif madaan abbaa irra jirtu gubdi.
Fire and wound burns their carrier.
136. Bara leenci name nyaatu curreen nama kajeela.
When a lion attacks a person, a cut wants to do the same.
137. Bara Kaanis moye, tiitichi name sodaachisa.
When a bee becomes a king, a fly tries to follow it .
138. Bara bofi nama nyaate lootuun namaa gama.
When a snake attacks a person, a lizard attempts to do the same.
139. Baraaf malee somb kan sareet.
Unless in a bad time, liver is for dog.
140. Bara namatti jige bishaantu muka namatti darbata.
In the time of one's failure, even water throws a log to him/her.
141. Dubbiin ta waaqaa jedhe qocaan.
Everything is in the hands of God, said a tortoise.
142. Bultiin bultuma akka itti bule abbaatu beeka.
Lives appear similar, but an individual knows how he lives.
143. Garbicha lubbuuf dheechu, ormi jabina jaja.
While a slave runs to save his life, observers appreciate his strength.
144. Garaan gadde imimmaan hinqusatu.
A sad heart never lacks tear.
145. Harreen kan baattu hinnyaatu.
A donkey doesn't eat what it carries.
146. Harreen du'e waraabessa hinsodaatu.
A dead donkey will not be afraid of a hyena.
147. Harree ganama baddee galgala hinagran.
A donkey disappeared in the morning will not be found in the evening.
148. Hantuutaaf lubbuu adurreef tapha.
It is a matter of life for a rat but a play for a cut.
149. Ila baduu geette gowwaan jabuu se'a.
A fool considers a deteriorating eye as a brave one.
150. Kan qabuttuu qabatee fincaa'a.
He who owns something can use it.

151. Kan dhabe waan argatu hinse'u.
A poor person doesn't hope for prosperity.
152. Kan ofii quuffe, kan beelahuuf hinbeekuu.
Someone who is satisfied doesn't sympathize with the one who is starved.
153. Kan dhibame farad, iyyumaaf harree guban.
A poor man burns a donkey, while a horse is sick .
154. Kanuma qabdi kanuma qalt.
She slaughtered the only one she has.
155. Laga darbe hinmaddifatan.
One can't drink from the past river.
156. Leenic jaare tisiisaaf tapha ta'a.
An old lion will be a seat for flies.
157. Leenci yoo ciise waan rafe fakkaata.
A lion appears asleep while it is just lying.
158. Leenca dulloome loontu ija araaba.
In its old age a lion is licked by cattle.
159. Madaan namaa nidiimatti malee hindhukubdu.
For others, one's wound appears red but doesn't give pain.
160. Madaan hiyyeessaa madaa bineensaat.
Wound of a poor person is wound of a beast.
161. "Maal maqne" jete sareen jaamaa sagal dhalte.
"What is our sin" said a bitch after giving birth to nine blind puppies.
162. Rakkataan raada qala.
A poor person slaughters a heifer.
163. Namni iyyome takka lafa reeba takka nama reeba.
A poor person beats sometimes the ground and other times persons.
164. Okkoteen waaqa hinbeekne eelee bishanni kadhatti.
A pot that doesn't know God begs "eelee" for water.
165. Rakkataan fira hinqabu, gowwaan hiriyyaa hinqabu.
A fool doesn't have a friend and a poor person doesn't have a relative.
166. "Reefuu natti ifa "jette jaartiin mana gubdee.
"I can see everything now " said an old woman after burning her house.
167. Qeerransa moofetti daaraa baasan.

- One throws ash to an old tiger.
168. Qoree dur dirteef iyyeessi hokkola.
A poor man lames because of the thorn injured him in the past time.
169. Qoreen abbuma kessa jirtu quuqxi.
Thorn gives pain to a person whose body it is found in.
170. Quuqqaa cinaacha jalaa abbaatu beeka.
It is only the subject who senses the pain under his armpit.
171. Qurcii biratti qubni tokoo jabbadha.
For a leper, one finger is important.
172. Rakkatan malee rakkoo kessa hingalan.
A Problem pushes someone into another problem.
173. Shorus caamus ili misira lama.
Whether it rains or not lentils seeds are two.

2.1.2 Censuring of Misbehaviors

174. Ani badeen waan bade hindeebiftu.
Saying "sorry" does mean anything.
175. Badii geetee caffan ajootte.
When the date of its destruction approaches, grass gives a bad smell.
176. Badii geetu fardoon alkan baddi.
To be perished, a horse runs away in the night.
177. Dhibeen finyaan qabe hidhii hin hanqatu.
A disease that has infected the nose doesn't fail to reach the lips.
178. Gurri abbaa ala jira.
The ear is beyond its owner.
179. Hantuunni du'a fedhe ofiin adala araaba.
A rat licks a cut when it wants to die.
180. Harreef gadheen namarra hingortu.
A wicked person and a donkey don't leave a way for people.
181. Harreen gowoomte waraabessa gegeesite.
A fool donkey accompanies a hyena.

182. Harreen gaafa Quufte sirba wearaabessa dhaqxi.
A proud donkey goes for dancing with hyena.
183. Heerumaaf bootee heerumnaan bootte.
She cried to get married, and also cried for being married.
184. Kan tikatti laaftu barbaadatti jabduu.
Someone who is weak in keeping is strong in searching.
185. Kan ormaa kan barbaadu kansaa dhaba.
A person who covets for others' property loses his own.
186. Kan tokko hinguunne lama qoraafti.
She cannot fill in one although she cleans two.
187. Kennee gaabba donnii.
A greedy person feels offended after offering something to someone.
188. Kijibaan oddo farda hinbitiin lichoo bita.
A boastful person buys carts before buying a horse.
189. Lagni hogguu baduu fedhu maddarra raammawa.
A drying river produces worms at its source.
190. Limmoon yoo jallattee dhadhaa hin waraantu.
When it is bent, a spill can't pierce butter.
191. Lukkun badii geette addi dhalti.
A deteriorating hen gives birth to white ducklings.
192. Loon lama tiksen kudha lama.
The cattle are two but their keepers are twelve.
193. Manni abbaan gube abbaa hube.
A house burnt by its owner harms the owner himself.
194. Nama of dhaadu manni karaara.
House of a boastful person is near a road.
195. Nama hamaa duuti lama.
A brute person dies twice.
196. Nama gurraan du'erra nama lubbuun du'e wayya.
A person whose soul is destroyed is better than whose name is spoiled.
197. Namni eegee laalu eegee ta'ee hafa.
A person who looks at a tail becomes a tail.

198. Namni ofiif hintolle ormaaf hintolu.
A person who cannot help himself can't help others.
199. Namini ulfina hinbenne ulfina hinfedhu.
A person who doesn't know respect doesn't want it.
200. Namni quufe bela'a hinse'u.
A satisfied person doesn't expect to be starved.
201. Odeessan oddu yakka dhuufuun hirriba yakka.
A talkative person distorts information as fart disrupts sleep.
202. Odoo kolfattu ulfooftee gaafaa daya booche.
She conceived while laughing and cried during delivery.
203. Of beektuun soda lagatti.
A boastful person abstains from salt.
204. Raadi harree waliin ooltu dhuufuu barti.
A heifer that lives with donkey learns farting.
205. Re'een deemsa jaalattu ilmee beneensaa kenniti.
The unsettled goat exposes its offspring to preys.
206. Sababa afaanii mataan hocame.
Head is beaten because of mouth.
207. Salphina halkanii guyyaa argu.
The shame in the night can be observed in the day.
208. Sareefi sarageen namarraa hin deebitu.
A dog and a rude person don't respect someone.
209. Saree abbaa qaallu qaallu of seet.
A dog whose master is *qallu*, perceives itself as *qallu*.
210. Surreen sagal dhuufuu hindhowwu.
Nine trousers can't block fart.
211. Tiruun lafa buutee huuba futte.
A liver dropped on the ground and picked up dust.
212. Triuun bulte hidda horte.
A liver which is kept for a longer time produced muscle.
213. Want jechaa toltu gurraa hintoltu.

- Something good to speak about may not be good to hear.
214. Waraabessi guyya yuuse mana seenuun hin oolu.
A hyena that cries in the day time, will not be afraid of entering a house.
215. Warri mataan dabe milli hinqajeelu.
Someone whose head is bent will not have a straight leg.
216. Xanacha xiqaatuu foon ajjeessa.
A small gland spoils meat.

2.1.3 Reprehension of Inter-personal Disagreements

217. Aannan Okolee bada ilmi abuyaa bada.
A dirty pot spoils milk as a bad uncle misleads a son.
218. Allaatiin waan lafaaf lafatti walilolti.
Hawks quarrel on the ground for something on the ground.
219. Dubbiin dubbii fida.
A vicious word gives rise to another vicious word.
220. Hangafa doofe quxisuun kara dhaala.
A passive elder is not respected by his younger brother.
221. Harree dhufa isa hin argiin iyya isaa dhaga'u.
One hears the cry of a donkey before seeing its arrival.
222. Hareetti dammi hin miyaawu.
A donkey doesn't like honey.
223. Harreen harreedha funyaan sii adiidha.
Donkey is donkey and its nose is white.
224. Harkaan dhaabani barbareen nama gubdi.
Planted by a person, paper burns a person.
225. Harkaan kennanii miillan barbaadu.
One gives by hand and searches by leg.
226. Karaan fagoo mitigaraa malee.
Something is far when it is far from the heart.
227. Karaaf garaatu addaan nama baasa.
Road and heart depart people from each other.

228. Karaan annaan darban deebiin nama dhiba.
One suffers to come back on a way he goes lying.
229. Kan sangaan iyyuu malu, qacceeen iyya.
A whip cries while the ox is expected to cry.
230. Kan taa'umastti jibban kaatee ijaaji.
Someone who is dreadful in seat gets up and stands.
231. Kan taa'uuf samiin dhiho.
For an idle person, the sky is not far.
232. Kan waraane nidedha kan waraaname hindedhu.
The person who injures may forget but the one who is injured never forgets.
233. Kormi lama moonaa tokko keesa hinbulanu.
Two bulls can't live in the same burn.
234. Lafa fakkatte boft nama nyaatte.
Resembling the ground, a snake attacks a person.
235. Lafti abdatan sanyii nyaatee namni abdatan gatii nyaate.
As a trustee denies one's expectations fertile land destroys seed.
236. Loon fakkaatee gafaris nama nyaate.
Resembling cattle, buffalo attacks a person.
237. Madaa hamtuu fayyan malee jecha hamtuu hinfayan.
Evil wound does heal but evil word doesn't
238. Manni abbaan gube aaraa hinqabu.
Smoke doesn't come out of a house burnt by its owner.
239. "Maaf ana hintaiin" jette duuti hirriiban.
Death said sleep, "Why not me".
240. Manni abbaan gube iyya hinqabu.
No one worries for a house burnt by its owner.
241. Namni nama abaaru nam hinfaarsu.
A scoffing tongue doesn't praise someone.
242. Raqa lafa cissu allatiin mukarra wailolt.
While the dead animal is on the ground, vultures fight with each other on trees.
243. Sossoban gaala bakkisan
By lobbing, one caresses a camel.

244. Tika diduuf aannan didan.
It is to refuse herding cattle that one refuses drinking milk.
245. "Tiyya buute" jette tan masaanuun duute.
"Mine has dropped" said a woman whose opponent is dead.
246. Tokkichi bade nama galaafata.
A spoiled person spoils others.
247. Waanihinjirre hinjirtu jedhan.
It is said, nothing is new.
248. Wannii siif lafee anaaf dhukkuba laphee.
What is bone to you is heartache to me.
249. Wanti tuffiin keessa jirut tola hintaatu.
Where there is despise, things do not go right.
250. Warra gargar bahe na baasi jedhe booranni waaqaan.
"Save me from a departed family" the Borana said to God.
251. Warra walkajeelu arabi hinqajeelu.
The discordant members of a family don't speak to each other normally.
252. Waraabessa dhessatti leenca affan bu'e.
While escaping from a hyena, he stepped on a lion.
253. Waraabessa hokkolu sareen dhugaa seeti.
Dogs believe that the hyena is lame.
254. Warraan abbaan qare abbaa qale.
A sword sharpened by its owner cuts the owner himself.
255. Warri horu wallirraa hingorus.
A concordant family cares for each other.
256. Warri badu walihinbadadu.
Members of a discordant family do not care for each other.

2.2 Reinforcing Functions

2.2.1 Self-Adjustment to Environmental Situations

257. Abbaa jaallatan ilma dhungatan.
When you love a father you kiss his son.

258. Bara baraan dabarsan.
A time is passed by a time.
259. Baraaf furgugoo gadi jedhan dabarfatan.
One lets the passage of time and "furgugoo" by bending his head down.
260. Booda nyaatan bara bahu.
By eating later, one can go through time.
261. Bubbeef bara hamaa guguufan bayani.
One goes by wind and hard time by bending his head down.
262. Hantuunni bolla lamaa daftee hinduutu.
A rat, which has two holes lives long.
263. Harreen abbaa ulfeesse fardaan jijirama.
A respectful donkey substitutes a horse.
264. Kan dhufuuf dhiyaate gaaddiduu saa dura argan.
Something near can be predicted from its shadow.
265. Kan farada dhabe harreen garmaama.
Someone who doesn't have a horse rides on a donkey.
266. Kan nyaata jaalatuuf nyaata ili, kan dubbii jaalatuuf dubbiii ili.
Leave meal to a greedy person and talk to a talkative person.
267. Kara malee deemuun laga nama bulcha.
Going without a way makes someone face a problem.
268. Karaaf dubbii arganu dhissan.
One turns back from a road and an abnormal word looking at them.
269. Keessummaan akka warri bulutti bult.
A guest sleeps in a manner the host sleeps.
270. Keennaan tissanii kiyyaan elmatan.
Ours when keeping, mine when milking.
271. Keessummaaf lukkuun yeroon galt.
A guest and a hen should go to their home on time.
272. Lafa ilaalanii muka dhaaban.
One plants a tree after looking at the ground.
273. Lafa raddaaf jibanu jibicha itti hin hidhanu.

One doesn't keep a young bull at a place he doesn't want to keep a heifer.

274. Lafee satawwaa lafee satawwaantiin cabsan.
It is possible to break graph's bone by graph's bone.
275. Lubbuu bara hinbaane abbaat bara baasa.
Life is protected by its owner.
276. Madda bu'anii jiidha hinlagatan.
After coming to a stream, exposing one's self to damp is inevitable.
277. Qaroo naft ila.
The whole body of a wise person is like his eye.
278. Qocaaf qorkeen haguma danda'an deeman.
Tortoise and Qorkee (wild goat) walk up to their capability.
279. Qoraatii nama waraante qoraatumaan baasan.
Avoid thorns by thorns.
280. Sareen qaroon unte qadaaddi.
A wise dog covers a container after drinking what it contains.
281. Waraana jannatti dheessanii dubbii qarootii dheessani.
As war is prevented by a patriot, a case is solved by a wise man.

2.2.2 Tribal Solidarity

282. Abbaan iyyu Ormi dirmata.
It is when the victim cries, that others come to help him/her.
283. Ballaan fira qabu ila qaba.
A blind who has relatives has eyes.
284. Harkaan harka fuudhan.
One receives a hand by his hand.
285. Harka lamatuu walidhiqa.
Two hands wash each other.
286. Harki tokkichi waa hindhiqu.
A single hand can't wash anything.
287. Harki nyaate nama hinnyaatu.
A hand that has eaten something doesn't eat someone.
288. Hidda malee xanach hindhiigu.

- A gland doesn't bleed but a vessel does.
289. Harki tokko ofi hindhiqu.
A single hand can't wash itself.
290. Kan xiqqoo nyaatu guddoollee abdata.
A person who uses the small can hope for the big.
291. Kan walii higalle alaa hingalu.
Discordant people can't be successful.
292. Karaa deebi'an qoree itti hincabsan.
One doesn't put thorns on the way he is to come back.
293. Kophaa nyattuun qophaa duuti.
A person who eats alone dies alone.
294. Kophaa dhiqanii xurii hin baasan.
By washing alone, one cannot avoid dirt.
295. Lafa hiddi cite dhiiga.
It is where cell is cut that bleeds.
296. Laga malee garaan walitti hinyaa'u.
Without a course, hearts may not come to each other
297. Lama dhabuun lammii dhabuudha.
Losing two is lacking relatives.
298. Leenci ajjeesee warabessi jalaan oola.
A hyena eats when a lion kills.
299. Mana ormaa bareedarra godoo ofii wayya.
One's hut is better than others' big house
300. Marii'atan malee maratan biyya hinbulchan.
It is possible to administer people by discussion but not by force.
301. Nama manatti waligaletuu alla waliin gala.
People who are agree at home can come back home together.
302. Nama jaalatan bakka rafisan hindhaban.
One doesn't lack a bed for a person he loves.
303. Ollaaf aduutti gadi bahan.
One comes out to sun and his neighbor.

304. Qayyi tokkichuma, urgaan addaa adda.
Qayya (kind of tree) is one but its odor varies.
305. Qottoon of hin qartu.
An ax doesn't sharpen itself.
306. Quba iffii ajaa'e jedhanii hinkutan.
One doesn't avoid his rotten finger.
307. Qubi tokkichi fuula hindhiqu.
A single finger can't wash a face.
308. Qubni tokko tisiisa hinqabu.
A single finger can't catch a fly.
309. Reeffa nama ofii toorba garagalchan.
One turns the corpse of his relative seven times.
310. Warri marii qabu dibicha qalatee warri marii hinqanne radda qalata.
A concordant family slaughters a young bull; while, the discordant ones slaughter a heifer.

Appendix B: List of Informants

No	Name	Age (approximately)	Cultural position	Occupation
1	Wataa Shedoo	55	Acting Qallu	Farmer
2	Barbare Balli	55	Ayyuu (deligate of Abaaa Gadaa	Farmer
3	Elemaa Marsa	55	Ayyuu	Farmer
4	Dursee Waqoo	50	Jaarsa Ganda (village elder)	Farmer
5	Elemaa Duyyo	50	Jaarsa Ganda	Farmer
6	Miiraa Bari	50	Jaarsa Ganda	Farmer
7	Alchaye Darra	50	Jaarsa Ganda	Farmer
8	Galaanaa Goba	50	Jaarsa Ganda	Farmer
9	Damake Fosha	45	Jaarsa Ganda	Farmer
10	Hundessa Wataa	45	Jaarsa Ganda	Farmer
11	Tariku Mijuu	45	Jaarsa Ganda	Farmer

Appendix C: Interview Questions for Informants

The following questions were translated to *Afaan Oromoo* and presented to the informants. The questions were used for the purpose of triggering the informants to speak.

1. Would you tell me your name?
2. What do you know about the culture of Guji people?
3. Would you tell me about Gadaa of the Guji, and the roles of *abbaa gadaa* and *qalluu*?
4. May you explain the *aadaa*, *safuu* and *seeraa* of the Guji people?
5. What are the roles of the village elders in Guji custom?
6. Do you know any proverb? What does this proverb mean? When do people use it?
7. Who usually uses proverbs in Guji culture? When and where do they use them?