

**“IRRA DHAABA”: A CUSTOMARY MARRIAGE AMONG
THE GELAN OROMO OF CAAFFEE TUMAA IN ADA’A
DISRICT, EAST SHEWA, ETHIOPIA**



BY

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GLOSSARY OF OROMO TERMS

Ababbalil	Ask for marriage
Abba Worra	Head of the family
Araqee	Homemade liquor or Local beverage with high alcoholic content
Aseennaa	Marriage type arranged by preference of the would be wife
Ayyaana	Spirit
Biddeena	Type of food made of teff known as ‘Injera’.
Butii	Abduction
Caffee	Counsel, general assembly
Caffee Taayichaa	Meeting of Oromo elders for special case
Daadhi	Local drink made from honey
Dhaala	Inheritance
Farsso	Local drink made of grain and the leaves of a small shrub called ‘geesho’
Fuudhuu	To marry for male
Gaa’ila	Marriage
Ganda	Community
Hamaamota	Companion
Hawii	To ask or influence for marriage
Heerumuu	To be married for female
Hiddii	Solanaceous fruit
Irra Dhaaba	Customary marriage practiced in a hurry
Irreesa	Takes/ giver
Iddirii	Local mutual aid association
Jaarsummaa	Reconciliation
Jigii	Working together co-operatively
Kaadhimamuu	Engagement

Mahiber	A religious Association by EOTC followers
Miinjee	Best men
Muuda	To give presentation, thanks giving
Oola	Neighbor
Oromiffa	Oromo language
Qaalluu	A leader of religious ritual
Qeerroo	Unmarried male or bachelor
Rakoo	An arranged form of marriage where led by the boy's parent
Safuu	Moral and ethical order
Seera	Law
Uumaa	Nature
Waaqeffannaa	Worship in one God/Waaqaa

ACRONYMS

CSA:	Central Statistics of Agency
EOTC:	Ethiopian Orthodox Christian
FDRE:	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FGD:	Focus Group Discussion
RFC:	Revised Family Code
STD:	Sexually Transmitted Disease

ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to explain the Irra Dhaaba customary marriage among the Gelan Oromo of Caffee Tumaa woreda. There are various forms of customary marriage practices in Caffee Tumaa woreda such as Irra Dhaaba, Rakoo, Hawwata, Butii, and Dhaala. However, this study has mainly focused on Irra Dhaaba customary marriage among the communities of Caffee Tumaa.

The study also explores different type of marriage practices, which are generally divided in to formally concluded and informally concluded customary marriage among the Caffee Tumaa Oromo. The formal concluded marriage is given strong considerations and it is recognized as the best mode of concluding marriage. Formerly the arrangement of marriage was established by the families of the future spouses. Nowadays, the formality of concluding marriage through this arrangement has changed from time to time. It has become the boy who in most cases selects the girl of his choice.

Informal concluding customary marriage also takes place among the Caffee Tumaa Oromo communities. These forms of marriage arrangements are made due to various cases. Even though some of these types of marriages including Irra Dhaaba have been considered by the society as being against customary law of the Oromo, they are still practicing by the Oromo communities of Caffee Tumaa.

This study employed both primary and secondary resources. The relevant primary data were collected through qualitative strategies such as interview, Focus group discussion and selected case studies. The secondary data were published and unpublished articles, journals, books and MA thesis.

Irra Dhaaba is incidental customary marriage which is practiced in a hurry. This form of customarily concluded marriage is practiced only among the Oromo communities. The distinguished feature of this customary marriage is that the girl and her parents do not have any prior knowledge until the boy accompanied by a group of men of different social classes arrive at the gate of the girl's parent. The reasons why a man engages in to Irra Dhaaba customary marriage practice are social, economic, age, divorce or death and failed abductions in Caaffee Tumaa Oromo community of Gelan zone.

When we look at *Irra Dhaaba* marriage practice, it has both positive and negative consequences. This is because the family is forced to enter into relationship without consent. The main implication of this type of marriage is socio-cultural and emotional consequences. In a place where this study was made, its continuity and frequency is limited.

The study thus gives description on how the Oromo in general and Caffee Tumaa Oromo in particular practiced customary marriage especially *Irra Dhaaba*.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Ethiopia is a country with over eighty ethnic groups with diverse cultures. All nations and nationalities or ethnic groups of Ethiopia have their own unique traditional practices and ways of life such as peaceful conflict resolution mechanism, dressing and dancing style, eating style, ritual festivities and marriage ceremonies.

Among the above traditional practices marriage can be described as a culturally approved relationship or union between opposite sex, with the expectations that children will be born of the relationship. The custom of marriage differs in various parts of the world and every civilization produces a marriage pattern appropriate to itself.

Marriage is a contract made in due form of law, by which a free man and a free woman reciprocally engage to live with each other during their joint lives, in the union which ought to exist between husband and wife. By the terms free man and free woman in this definition are meant, not only that they are free and not slaves, but also that they are clear of all bars to a lawful marriage (Stewart, 2006).

Ethiopia consists of a number of nations and nationalities or ethnic groups with different backgrounds and ways of life. The Oromo people are the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia and account for 50%-60% of the population of the Ethiopian empire state (Tilahun, 1992). Oromia (spelled Oromiyaa in the Oromia Language) is one of the nine ethnically based regional states of Ethiopia. According to Asmarom,(2006), “the total area of the Oromo speaking nation is about 367, 000 sq km, as large as Germany”. The Oromo speak a common language. In addition to the above statement, The Oromo people have five main/major groups; these are the Tuulemaa and *Mecha*, the *Sabbo* and the *Goonaa*, the *Rayyaa* and the *Aseboo*, the *Siikkoo* and the *Mando*, and the *Ituu* and the *Humbanna* (Dejene, 2002).

It is bordered by the Somali region to the east; the Amhara region, and the Afar region to the north; South Sudan, Gambela region, and Southern Nation, Nationalities and People to the west; and Kenya to the south. The 2007 census reported Oromia's population at over 27

million, making it the largest state in population and area. The Oromo people primarily reside over a vast region of Ethiopia predominantly in Wallagga, Iluabbaabooraa, Jimmaam, Shewa, Arsii, Baalee, Harargee, Borenaa and southwestern parts of Gojjam.

Oromo people's culture is one of the many patterns that has been implicitly and explicitly learned, acquired and transmitted by generations over centuries. As it has some common features with other peoples of this world, it has also its own unique features in expressing itself, in solving the problems of the owners and in adapting them to the natural environment they are living in. It expresses itself in Oromummaa and makes the bearer of this cultural values being Oromo. So long being an Oromo remains a socio-political group by itself, the dynamism of Oromummaa continues to perpetuate in satisfying the unique curiosity of the Oromo people. The Oromo people have got important elements of cultural values that are peculiar to them. Since the inception of the Oromo as an ethnic group, these elements have been rendered to portray them as being Oromo, differently from those who possess other cultural traits peculiar to them as well.

The Oromo people have their own language, which is called *Afaan Oromo* which is highly spoken in most parts of Ethiopia and north Kenya. It is considered as one of the five most widely spoken languages from among the approximately 1000 languages of Africa, (Gragg, 1982). The Oromo have vast and very rich culture, fostered by the size of the population and large land areas with diverse climate condition.

Marriage is one of the most important things in the Oromo culture. There are three things Oromo talk about in life; Birth, marriage and Death. Traditionally, there are different forms of marriage in Oromo culture. What is very important to Oromo marriage institution is the existence of two terms that express the two opposite sexes. *Fuudhuu* is for the man. That means the boy is covertly or overtly engaged to a girl, and at one time is ready to take her. *Heerumuu* is for the girl who is officially or unofficially acquainted or engaged to a boy; and finally taken by him as his wife (Gemechu and Assefa, 2006).

At the same time, in addition to the above point, under the existing political administrative system the region of Oromia is divided into 18 administrative zones to form 18 total regional zones of the Oromia. Gelan zone is one of the zones whose inhabitants speaks *Afaan Oromo*,

which belongs to the eastern Cushitic group of Afro-Asiatic linguistic family. The name Gelan is derived from the senior son of Dacci who belongs to the Tuulemaa Oromo branch. This mean the Oromo in Gelan are descendants of the Tuulemaa Oromo branch (Henock, 2014).

Therefore, this thesis investigated the essence, root causes and socio-emotional consequences of *Irra Dhaaba or Sabbatmarii*, customary marriage among the *Caffee Tumaa* Oromo, East Shewa, Ethiopia. *Caffee Tumaa* Oromo community is found in Ada'a district, one of the district of East Shewa zone (Ethiopia). *Irra Dhaaba* is a type of marriage, which is practiced in a hurry.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Marriage is a unique relationship different from all social relationships. An essential characteristic of marriage is the biological fact that a man and woman can join together as male and female in a union that is oriented to the generation of new life. Marriage can be perceived from different facts, as an institution, a partnership, a lifecycle phase and as a role. Marriage as an institution is confronted with the process of adapting to the process of modernization which inherently helps to mold modern marriage structure.

Traditional tenets of African marriages are increasingly subjected to stabilize amidst sporadic social change. In traditional rural Africa societies, the contraction of marriage was dominated by arranged marriages whereby parents usually indulged in the selection of marriage partners for their children; this is mostly common for their daughter. In some part of Africa parents choose marriage partners for their children even before they are born (Paul, 2012:3). Sub-Saharan Africa has one of the fastest annual population growth rates. Families in Sub-Saharan Africa are experiencing changes which are felt in fertility rates, that is the number of children women give birth to, and age at marriage to name a few. Marriage in sub-Saharan Africa is universal. There is early and universal female marriage. The age at first marriage is experiencing slight delay than it was before. Marriage in Africa is subjected to the task of adapting amidst sporadic changes emanating from the society (Caldwell, 1987:411).

Ethiopia is an ideal site for studying marriage custom, since it is characterized by extensive socio-cultural and ethnic diversity. The ethnic and cultural makeup of the country is also

quite varied, with Semitic traditions in the north, Cushitic traditions in the south and east, and Neolithic traditions in the west.

Marriage is one of the most important ceremonies in the Oromo culture. The Oromo have a traditional marriage ceremony which is descended from earlier times. One of the great social significances in Oromo communities is attached to the wedding ceremony. Oromo marriage rituals include exchange of gifts, mainly by the bride to be paid. The ritual of courting begins a long time before the marriage date. It may entails encounters at events, mainly at weddings, or the courting may stem from understanding between the families.

In olden days, Oromo never married within their immediate clans, and today some Oromo continue to abide by that restriction. However, with the introduction of foreign religions and influences, times are changing the marriage traditions of the Oromo people. Now a day marriages of Oromo resemble marriages of Western or Middle Eastern cultures.

Since girls have to marry into different clans in traditional Oromo society, their relatives are almost always some distance away. Traditional Oromo wedding rituals fostered understanding and interconnectedness between different societies as well shattering a stereotypical myth that African societies were at war with one another before the arrival of foreigners, mainly Europeans and Arabs.

Traditionally, there are different forms of marriage in Oromo culture. What is very important to Oromo marriage institution is the existence of two terms that express the two opposite sexes. *Fuudhuu* is for the man. That means the boy is covertly or overtly engaged to a girl, and at one time is ready to take her. *Heerumuu* is for girl who is officially or unofficially acquainted or engaged to a boy; and finally taken by him as his wife. *Gaa'ila* is a venerated general term pertaining to marriage as an institution. *Heerumuu* serves for both sexes, *Fuudha* and *Heeruma*, as marriageable persons. It has a deep social meaning, signifying the establishment of the family and the continuity of generations in the society. Therefore, it is the task of Anthropologists and other professionals to have a record document about cultural lives of Oromo people including marriage pattern, family formation and kinship system (Gemechu and Assefa, 2006). This study deals with mainly *Irra Dhaaba*, traditional marriage among the *Caffee Tumaa* Oromo, east Shewa, Ethiopia.

Among the different forms of marriage among the Oromo of *Caffee Tumaa*, Rakoo (this is an arranged form of marriage whereby the boy's parent takes the first initiative for engagement), *Butii* (is the form of marriage, the boy abducts the girl without her consent or out of her consciousness), *Hawwii* (this type of marriage is common among poor people and because of this the best alternative is secret selection type of marriage), *Aseennaa* (in the case of *Aseennaa* form of marriage, the girl takes the lead instead of the boy) and *Irra Dhaaba or Sabbatmarii* (it is an incidental marriage, which is practiced in a hurry) (Yonas, 1998).

Regarding customary marriage practice among the Oromo community, few researchers had conducted researches. In their work, they highlighted slightly about *Irra dhaaba or Sabbatmarii*. The work of Gemechu and Assefa (2006), "*Marriage practices among the Gidda Oromo*" describes the meaning and forms of *Irra Dhaaba* customary marriage. The work of Moges Walelign (2005), "*Customary marriage system among the Jille Oromo of East Shewa*" discusses about steps in customary marriage arrangement and forms of customary marriage in general. In this research work he simply explains what *Irra Dhaaba* means.

The other work the researcher tried to review is that the works of Yonas Melaku (1998), "*Customary marriage of the Oromo of North Shoa*". In this research, the researcher tried to describe and compare and contrast the customary marriage of the Oromo with the civil code provisions on marriage and divorce. The researcher also tried to indicate the customary marriage among the Oromo and in his way of discussion he assessed the economic, social and psychological causes of *Irra Dhaaba* marriage practice. Literatures and unpublished documents also discuss it generally but not in detail.

There was a total absence of previous research on *Irra Dhaaba* marriage practice specifically among the Oromo communities including *Caffee Tumaa* Oromo of east Shewa. The whole works that I tried to refer, included *Irra Dhaaba* marriage practice as part of customary marriage.

Therefore the above mentioned research works do not express the reason why people engage in *Irra Dhaaba*, the ritual or ceremonial festivity, the current state of it, and the

implication of it in detail. So, these are the gap identified from the researchers that I tried to refer to and fill it from the context of *Caffee Tumaa Oromo*.

This thesis tried to describe the rights of women in marriage. According to Article (35:2) of FDRE constitution “Women have equal rights with men in marriage.”, but some forms of marriage including *Irra Dhaaba* do not consider women’s rights. In addition to this, article four of the revised family code proclamation (2000) state that “Marriage according to custom shall take place when a man and a woman have performed such rites as deemed to constitute a valid marriage by the custom of the community in which they live or by the custom of the community to which they belong or to which one of them belongs.”

As it is mentioned above the law and its implementation on the ground has a gap in marriage practice. So this study examined the above things in the study area by raising real case study. Therefore, this study is aimed at bridging this gap.

1.3. Research questions

General guiding questions to be addressed in the study

1. What are the values, norms and customs of *Irra Dhaaba* type of marriage?
2. Why do people engage in *Irra Dhaaba*?
3. How does *Irra Dhaaba* marriage take place?
4. What is the current state of *Irra Dhaaba*?
5. What is the implication of *Irra Dhaaba* marriage in the present context?

1.4. Objective of the study

1.4.1. General objective

The overall objective of the study is to explore the practice of *Irra Dhaaba* marriage and examine its implication to the girls among the *Caffee Tumaa Oromo* people.

1.4.2. Specific objective

In order to achieve the above general objective, the following specific objective were set

- To explore the essence of *Irra Dhaaba* marriage among the *Caffee Tumaa* Oromo community.
- To investigate the legal, social and emotional consequences of the *Irra Dhaaba* marriage on the girl and her family.
- To describe in detail about the ritual/ rites of *Irra Dhaaba* marriage festivity among the *Caffee Tumaa* Oromo people
- To describe the reasons why people get engaged in *Irra Dhaaba* marriage.
- To describe the current state of *Irra Dhaaba* marriage.

1.5. Research Methodology

The study adopted qualitative approach. Qualitative approach is a type of scientific research that consists of an investigation that seeks answer to a question, collects evidence, produces findings that were not determined in advance and produces findings that are applicable beyond the immediate boundaries of the study. Qualitative research claims to describe life worlds from the inside, from the point of view of people who participate.

Qualitative research can be employed when the concern is with people whom the researcher wants to study in depth and detail (Patton, 1990). It is an approach that the researchers learned at first hand and explore about social world they are investigating by means of involvements and participation.

Qualitative approach focuses on the depth of information rather than generalizing the whole population. Qualitative approaches produce a wealth of detailed information about a much smaller number of people and case (Patton, 1990). Qualitative research is done in naturalistic setting and interpret phenomenon in terms of meaning people bring to them. This method focuses on process, qualities and meaning that cannot be experimentally measured. (Denzim Lincon, 1999 in Creswell, 2007).

Due to this latitude the researcher employed this approach to investigate the ethical conduct of essence and implication of *Irra Dhaaba* marriage among the *Caffee Tumaa* Oromo. So, the main reason for selection of this method is that it helps the researcher to investigate the root essence and implication of *Irra Dhaaba* marriage among the Oromo of *Caffee Tumaa*.

1.5.1. Research Design

With the purpose of giving qualitative explanatory insight to the issue under study, to meet the suggested objective and answer the research question, this study employed qualitative research paradigm. The reason why the researcher chose to use qualitative approach is that “qualitative research explores attitude, behaviour and experiences through such methods as interview; it helps to get an in-depth opinion from participants” (Dawson, 2007:16).

As explanatory designs seek to establish cause and effect relationships and primarily focuses to explore how events occur and which ones may influence a particular outcome, the study seeks to understand the essence and implication of *Irra Dhaaba* marriage among the *Caffee Tumaa* Oromo.

As the topic of this research is interested in understanding the essence and implication of *Irra Dhaaba*, the customary marriage among the *Caffee Tumaa* Oromo, it mainly used historical method together with ethnography. As ethnography is interested in writing about the contemporary life of certain people, this research seeks to understand the current state of *Irra Dhaaba* marriage from anthropological points of view.

1.5.2. Data sources

This thesis employed both primary and secondary sources to generate appropriate data. Primary data was collected from rural communities, local elders, relevant government officials and those who got married by *Irra Dhaaba* and their families. On the other hand, secondary data was collected from published and unpublished books, websites and various research out puts in the area of traditional marriage among the Oromo. Besides, important documents from any other stake holders were used as sources of secondary data.

1.5.3. Data collection Methods/strategies

Data gathering in qualitative research is multi-stage. There is no one and final techniques to gather the data, rather varieties of techniques are used. For this particular study Interview, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Case study were employed. Each technique and procedure is discussed below.

1.5.3.1. Interview

In qualitative research, interview is a major instrument of data gathering (Creswell, 2009). It is used to collect data in face-to face encounter (between the researcher and the informant) and in a place which is convenient for the interviewees. The interview schedules were developed with intentions of getting richer information than what is usually available from surveys. Here, unstructured questions will be used to give freedom for informants to express their ideas by their own words without restriction.

In this study the interviews were conducted in Amharic and *Afaan Oromo* because of its suitability to the study population. The informants from rural communities and relevant government officials were men, women and youth interviewed. I interviewed eight (8) people from rural communities of *Caffee Tumaa Oromo* and one person from *Caffee Tumaa* woreda woman's and children's office. The responses of some informants were recorded using audio tape and their photos were taken based on their interest.

The interviews were conducted in dialogue format to gather appropriate responses on the essence, current state and the reasons why people get engage in *Irra Dhaaba* marriage. This dialogue (conversation) enabled the informants to feel free, relaxed and confident. The researcher and the informants used flexible program. Finally, the audio taped data were transcribed by the researcher.

1.5.3.2. Focused Group Discussion (FGD)

Focused group discussion (FGD) is another relevant data collection strategy that was employed to gather the data. FGD is relatively naturalistic exchange of idea and draws on peoples live experience, thereby, providing insight that cannot be obtained by other methods (Wilkinson 2004).

This method of data collection was arranged with the purpose of supporting the data obtained through other instruments. Three FGDs, each consisting of 6 individuals were conducted. Informants were selected purposely from the woreda based on their age which lives in the town more than ten years. In addition to this the other point that was taken in to consideration in selection of this participant is the recommendation from the administrators of the *Caffee Tumaa* woreda. The first group was composed of men local elders who were experienced and participated in *Irra Dhaaba*. The second group was composed of the women who lived in the town for more than 30 years. The third group was composed of young boys and girls. These were done for the purpose of managing properly and creating conducive atmosphere for active participation of group members.

In addition to this the other point which was taken in to consideration in selection of these participants is the recommendation from the administrators of the town. The researcher prepared semi-structured questions and posed for the group discussion to get appropriate information on how *Irra Dhaaba* takes place and on the implication of *Irra Dhaaba*. The researcher was leading the discussion and striving to investigate the views and ideas of each participant by inquiring them.

1.5.3.3. Case study

Case study method enables a researcher to closely examine the data within specific context. There are several categories of case studies, that are pertinent when the research addresses either descriptive, exploratory or an explanatory question. Other researchers are also categorized as interpretative and evaluative case studies. When doing contemporary case studies, there are steps providing a helpful framework for the minimal design work. These are defining the case that is concerned to the study, selecting whether the study

consists of a single or multiple cases, and the research involves whether or not to use theory to help complete essential methodological steps (Yin, 1984).

This method is holistic, variation in terms of intrinsic, instrumental and collective approach to case studies. So, to gather appropriate and real data about the whole causes and consequences of *Irra Dhaaba* marriage practice, I conducted four case studies. The first case study was with a woman who got married by *Irra Dhaaba*. The second and third were with the man who got married by *Irra Dhaaba*. The fourth was a woman whose parents refused to give her away by *Irra Dhaaba* marriage.

1.6. Methods of Data analysis

The study used qualitative data analysis to meet its objectives. According to Creswell, (2009) qualitative data analysis is conducted concurrently with gathering data, making interpretation and writing reports. After collecting the necessary data, I categorized, combined, synthesized and thereby analyzed the collected data. Before the actual analysis of the data, the collected data were sorted and categorized in accordance to their source and type.

For the purpose of clarity and convenience of the data collected by each data collection technique were transcribed, compiled and farther elaborated into meaningful and patterned information soon after the completion of that particular data collection session. Above all, the collected data from case studies were analyzed in thematically organized way by pursuing to the original descriptions of the field note so as to infer meanings and generalization. The themes were discussed in the respects of literature and the research finding. The data gathered by interviews were first transcribed. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and interview were analyzed using description and narration.

1.7. Significant of the study

This study has great importance in identifying issue of traditional marriage practices among the Oromo, especially about *Irra Dhaaba* marriage. Academically, it contributes to the limited literature on *Irra Dhaaba* marriage practice among the Oromo people. This study together with other researches done on customary marriage by identifying the root

causes, legal, social and emotional consequences strengthen the understandings of *Irra Dhaaba* marriage practices and paves way for further studies by other researchers who are interested on the area.

1.8. Scope of the study

This study was limited to the essence and implications of *Irra Dhaaba* marriage practice among the *Caffee Tumaa* Oromo. It was purposely delimited and focused on one of the four rural Woreda of Gelan zone. It emphasized on the legal, social and emotional aspects of this kinds of marriage practices. In addition, the study tried to identify deeply about the current state of *Irra Dhaaba* practices. In general the study was to assess the challenges of *Irra Dhaaba*, bounded to the people of *Caffee Tumaa* Oromo in eastern Shewa.

1.9. Limitation of the study

This study tried to identify different cases associated with *Irra Dhaaba* customary marriage and its consequences among Gelan Oromo of *Caffee Tumaa* Ada'a district. In the process of undertaking this research, I experienced some challenges in data collection and data analysis. The major limitations in undertaking this study were the absence of detailed and in-depth research on *Irra Dhaaba* customary marriage in the study area and in all Oromo communities.

The second challenge was lack of budget which this research requires during data collection and analysis. The other limitation of this study is that it is not end by itself in the study of customary marriage of the Oromo. In the future, other researchers may come up with a new discovery in the area or may strengthen my findings. So, this research is to be a means but not an end for further study.

1.10. Ethical considerations

The ethical consideration one should take into account in his/her interaction with participant is confidentiality. In order to have informants' genuine responses and to make them free, possible emphasis must be given to the ethical issues. Participants of the research were informed about the confidentiality of their responses and there were also the

consideration of their consent. The reviewed literatures were acknowledged accordingly. The names of the informants was mentioned and acknowledged only based on their prior consent.

1.11. Organization of the study

This Thesis entitled '*Irra Dhaaba* customary marriage among the Gelan Oromo; the case of *Caffee Tumaa*'; is divided in to five chapters. The whole report of the study begins with an abstract followed by acknowledgements and glossary. Chapter one is an introduction part under which background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives of the study, methodology and methods, significance of the study, scope of the study, limitation of the study, field experience, ethical considerations and organization of the study are discussed. In Chapter two review of related literatures is discussed. Chapter three examined the general socio-political, economical and historical setting of the *Caffee Tumaa*. In chapter four the study gave the finding and procedures of data interpretations and analysis. Chapter five is conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES

2. Conceptual and Theoretical frameworks

In this section from different source the conceptual and theoretical perspectives of traditional marriage practice especially, *Irra Dhaaba* was raised and discusses. As a way of starting, in this section it explains Marriage as a concept.

2.1. Concepts of Marriage

The legal status, condition, or relationship that results from a contract by which one man and woman, who have the capacity to enter into such an agreement, mutually promise to live together in the relationship of husband and wife in law for life, or until the legal termination of the relationship. Marriage is legally sanctioned contract between a man and woman. Entering in to a marriage contract changes the legal status of both parties, giving husband and wife new right and obligations. Public policy is strong in favor of marriage based on the belief that it preserves the family unit. Traditionally marriage has been viewed as vital to the preservation of morals and civilization (Chauncey, 2003).

Marriage is special kinds of relationship between two people. It may be defined in society as a socially sanctioned union of a man and woman as husband and wife. It distinguishes marriage and mating, animals mate but man marries. This indicates that marriage is more than a sexual relationship. It involves a complex of role relationship which are allowed or expected in a culture. In other words, society systematizes or institutionalizes the relations between sexes. In some societies plural marriages are allowed. This may involve either polygene, with one man having several wives, or polyandry, the marriage of one woman to a number of husbands. In great majority of societies where plural unions are allowed most marriages are monogamous (Stroup, 1966).

The traditional principle upon which the institution of marriage is founded is that a husband has the obligation to support a wife, and that a wife has the duty to serve. In the past, this has meant that the husband has the duty to provide a safe house, to pay for necessities such as food and clothing, and to live in the house. A wife's obligation has

traditionally entailed maintain a home, living in the home, having sexual relations with her husband, and rearing the couple's children.

According to Stewart, (2006) marriage is a contract made in due form of law, by which a free man and a free woman reciprocally engage to live with each other during their joint lives, in the union which ought to exist between husband and wife. By the terms free man and free woman in this definition are meant, not only that they are free and not slaves, but also that they are clear of all bars to a lawful marriage.

Marriage is one of the most ancient, important, and indispensable social institution which has been in existence since the inception of human civilization. The term marriage is a combination of two terms which means the ceremony of carrying away the bride to the house of bridegroom. In some society it is considered as a religious sacrament whereas in other society it is a social contract.

Marriage is physical, legal and moral union between man and woman in complete community life for the establishment of a family. "Marriage is a contract for the production and maintenance of children" (Malinowski, 1929). Marriage is a stable relationship in which a man and a woman are socially permitted without loss of standing in community to have children. "Marriage is a relation of one or more men to one or more women which is recognized by customs or law and involves certain rights and duties both in case of parties entering in to the union and in the case of children born of it."(Westermarck,1977). Marriage is a relatively permanent and socially approval patterns whereby two or more person or mates establish a family. Marriage is complex of social norms that define and control the relations of a mated pair to each other their kinsmen, their offspring and their society at large.

Thus from the above analysis it is concluded that marriage is both a biological, emotional/psychological, cultural and social affair. Marriage such as *Irra Dhaaba* is also a special type of relationship between permissible mates involving certain right, obligations and privileges of husband and wife with respect to each other.

2.2. Characteristics of Marriage

Marriages may have the following characteristics; it is a universal social institution, found in almost all societies and at all stages of development, is a permanent bond between husband and wife, it is designed to fulfill the social, emotional, cultural, biological and religious aims, is a specific relationship between two individuals of opposite sex and based on mutual rights and obligations, requires social approval, establishes family, create mutual obligation between husband and wife, is always associated with some civil and religious ceremony, regulates sex relationship according to prescribed customs and laws and has certain symbols like ring, vermillion, special cloths, special sing and so on (Leach,1961).

Thus from the above it concluded an essential characteristic of marriage is the biological fact that a man and woman can join together as male and female in a union that is oriented to the generation of new life. So marriage including, *Irra Dhaaba*, established by legally or traditionally in human societies may fulfill the above mentioned characteristics.

2.3. Types of Marriage

As a universal social institution marriage is found to exist in all societies. Type or forms of marriage varies from society to society. Marriage in different communities, societies and cultural groups differ according to their customs, practices and systems of thought. In some societies marriage is a religious sacrament whereas in others it is a social contract. However, there are several types of marriage which is classified on different basis.

On the basis of number of mates marriage may be classified into three types such as Monogamy, Polygamy and group marriage. Monogamy is an ideal, widespread and rational type of marriage. It is found in all civilized societies. It refers to a marriage of one man with one woman at a time; it is normally unbreakable in nature. Polygamy is a type of marriage in which there is plurality of partners. It allows a man to marry more than one woman or a woman to marry more than one man at a time. Endogamy is otherwise known as group marriage. In this type of marriage a group of men marry a group of women at a time. Every woman is the wife of every man belonging to the particular groups.

Theoretician calls it as a kind of sexual communism. This type of marriage is found among some tribes of New Guinea and Africa (Hyman, 1965).

On the basis of choice of mate or on the basis of rules of mate selection marriage may be divided into two types, Endogamous and Exogamous. Endogamous or Endogamy marriage refers to the marriage within one's own group such as within one's own cast, sub-cast or tribe. Exogamy or Exogamous is just opposite to the endogamy marriage system. It refers to a system of marriage in which an individual has to marry outside one's own group.

Marriage in rural areas even more of a commercial affair than it is in the towns. Sometimes, even often, the finance are to beings who suddenly find themselves yoked together, without their even having seen each other, and without their having had the opportunity to discuss this impromptu marriage, through impromptu only from their point of view. Marriage for love, or marriage for reason? Freedom or control of the young by the parents? Let us acknowledge the possible variety of models which appear to depend on an economic system putting a value on the family farm and its retention in marriage (Martine, 1983).

2.4. Importance of Marriage

To ask the purpose question is not to ask of any particular man and woman, or any couple, what were their purposes in marriage? People enter in or continue in marriage with widely differing goals or hopes.

Marriage is also important to establish the legal father of a woman's children, establish the legal mother of a man's children, give the husband monopoly in the wife's sexuality, give the wife monopoly in the husband's sexuality, give the husband partial and monopolistic rights to the wife's domestics and other labour services, give the wife's partial and monopolistic rights to the husband's labour services, give the husband partial or total rights over property belonging or potentially accruing to the wife, give the wife partial or total rights over property belonging or potentially accruing to the husband, establish a joint fund of property, a partnership, for the benefits of the children of the marriage, establish a socially significant 'relationship of affinity' between the husband and his wife's brothers(Leach,1961:108).

Marriage is a two-in-one-flesh communication, is the very cornerstone of moral and social order. The Judeo-Christian concept of marriage is as old as mankind. It has served as the

very foundation of civilization itself. The marriage covenant is singular unique in civilization; for marriage is not just a civil union between two people, rather it is an emotional, physical and spiritual union between one man and one woman. Emotional in the sense that these two people, male and female, each with different attributes, join together in life; each assisting the other, nurturing and caring for one another, affirming and guiding one another in essence, completing the other.

There are many reasons to choose wisely and carefully when picking a spouse, but here's one you may not know, new research suggests that a good marriage is good for your health and that a bad one can be a real heartbreaker. I think that the choice of spouse is one of the most significant you'll make in your life; it is more serious than choosing a house or anything.

2.5. Theories of Marriage

The major theories of social Anthropology each have a different overall focus, and look at a situation from a different perspective. This is obvious by the different ways each theory looks at marriage. Under the works of Theodore W. Schultz 1974 in titled 'Economic of Family: marriage, children and human capital' Gary S. Becker stated about theory of marriage as follow.

The Structural-Functional theory studies groups of people or organizations in society, and looks for the events or other things that hold that group together. The question that fits this theory is, "What are the consequences of marriage for the operation of society?" By looking at the consequences of marriage Structural-Functionalists are looking at the most significant functions that hold a marriage together and make it work. There are many functions that hold together a marriage, but Structural-Functionalists study marriage from a macro or broad perspective. This lets them focus not on the less common functions that affect some marriages, but on the biggest, most important functions that affect nearly every marriage (Theodor, 1974: 299-351).

The Social-Conflict theory studies the differences in people, and the disputes and problems that are caused by this. Conflict theorists also study from a macro or broad perspective looking at the major trends of different ethnic groups' roles and acceptance in

society. The question that fits this theory is, “How do marriage benefit women and men unequally?” When this theory is applied, men are viewed as being superior to women. This creates conflict because the men are trying to maintain their power and women are attempting to seize more power. By studying the benefits that men and women receive from marriage, they are actually comparing men and women. They can then see the major conflicts this causes in a marriage (Theodor, 1974: 299-351).

The Symbolic-Interaction approach looks at a situation from the point of view of an individual that is in the situation, and what the individuals think and how they communicate based on the society they live in. The question that fits this theory is, “What do people think marriage means?” They view a setting from a micro or close-up perspective. They view each setting or situation from the inside out, by studying the people that are in the situation and finding out how differences in society make people think differently about the situation. They also study how people act in a situation and the symbols or language they use according to how they have been taught by the society they live in.

Each theory plays a different part in understanding the society we live in. When we look at a structure such as marriage using all three theories we can see the complete picture from every angle. This lets us understand a structure or group of people much better than if we just look at it from our own limited perspective (Theodor, 1974: 299-351).

The above theories of marriage assesses about different outlooks in relation with the consequences of marriage for the operation of society. Marriage is one of the tradition through which institution was established at the family level. It is an activity that lasts as old as the age of human beings. Marriage has made between opposite sexes and the way its takes place vary from society to society according to their cultural differences.

Marriages can important operation of society by determining sustainability of the society. Marriage including *Irra Dhaaba* has also been part and parcel of humans through which generation will be continued.

The other point is that marriage benefit women and men unequally in a society which is not egalitarian as far as gender equality is concerned, marriage can be a structural

mechanism to perpetuate gender inequality. In most society including my study area marriage benefit men and women unequally. The husbands become the head of the home and the wife become under him in all affair of the home including decision making.

2.6. Marriage Law in Africa

Traditional African family pattern are slowly but progressively being altered as a results of the process of modernization which is exhibited through trends like urbanization. Family patterns that were the norm in traditional rural African societies are gradually being altered and substituted by modern value. Sub-Sahara Africa has one of the fastest annual population growth rates (Merrick; 2002). The transformation of societies in the sub-continent from rural to urban setting has immensely contributed in triggering changes in family structure. This are triggered the distortion cultural/traditional norms and values that characterized rural communities in the region.

African families increasingly faced with the challenges and pressure emanating from the competition prevailing between traditional and modern family values. Family in sub Saharan Africa is experiencing changes which are felt in fertility rate that is a number of children women give birth to and age at marriage (Kalu;1981).

Despite the change takes place in sub Saharan African societies due to the modernization process, the family still remains a prominent nexus in the social life of Africans. In Africa, there is considerable importance attached to the respect for elders and Ancestors. African communities are characterized by the prevalence of collectivism as opposed to individuality.

According to Paulina (2001), the major characteristics features of African households to be that they are mostly rural, patriarchal and hierarchical, polygamous and open to kinship networks and finally they attached substantial importance of lineage continuation. At marriage women tend to have lower status than all the members of their husband's family. In traditional rural societies in most sub Saharan societies, women were voiceless and powerless. Male supremacy has also being altered a bit even though it still has a prominent strong hold in the society.

There is the existence of substantial cultural importance attributed to fertility and lineage continuation, tight patriarchal traditions, wide rate of polygamy prevalence. These are the prominent features that characterized most traditional African societies. Marriage can be perceived from different facts, as an institution, a partnership, a lifecycle phase and as a role.

There is early and universal female marriage in Africa (Caldwell; 1987). The age at first marriage is experiencing slightly delay than it was before. Marriage in Africa is subjected to the task of adapting amidst sporadic change emanating from the society. This in essence set the pace for the redefinition of its role and characteristics. Marriage is still quite important in African communities, the at first marriage range between 17 and 22 years to female. It varies across regions depending on regional and ethnic practices.

In traditional rural African societies, the contraction of marriage was dominated by arranged marriage where by parents usually indulged in the selection of marriage partners for their children; this was mostly common for their daughters. This was done without the consent of the children. However, in contemporary African societies this has been altered to the extent that some countries have adopted policies that strive to advocate for the consent of both parties that are to be married as was the case the Tanzania marriage act of 1971 and the Ivory Coast civil code of 1964 (Therborn; 2006). This does not imply that the involvement of parents in the marriage of their children has been halted. The adoption of these acts has helped to promote the recognition of the consent of the parties to be married, and as well as fostered the existence of the acknowledgement that it is the right to prospective partners to select their partners. South Africa recognition of customary marriage act of 1998 state “To make provision for the recognition of customary marriages; to specify the requirements for a valid customary marriage; to regulate the registration of customary marriages; to provide to equal status and capacity of spouses in customary marriages; to regulate the proprietary consequences of customary marriages and the capacity of spouses of such marriages; to regulate the dissolution of customary marriages; to provide for the making of regulations; to repeal certain provisions of certain law; and to provide for matters connected therewith”.

The above traditional African marriage law almost all similar with the customary marriage practices in Ethiopia. As I tried to refer some African countries marriage laws, even if they have to been a marriage law, the rural societies influenced by the culture of their communities. This is also still practices in Ethiopia as well as in my study area *Caaffee Tumaa*. In addition to this the descent and residence patterns of most African countries similar with Ethiopia. Patriliney, or descent through males, the most common descent system in Africa and thought in Ethiopia. The vast majority of patrilineal peoples practice patrilocality, in which after marriage, the bride leaves home to live with or near her husband's family. So the marriage law, kinship system, descent and residence patterns of most traditional African societies were similar with that of my study area.

2.7. Marriage Practices in Ethiopia

Earlier in Ethiopia, before two persons conclude marriage, they would go through the process of betrothal. Mainly the betrothal was concluded between the parents of the future spouses. Betrothal is defined under Article 560 of the 1960 civil code as “A contract between the members of two families that a marriage shall take place between two persons, the fiancé and the fiancée belonging to these two families”. Hence, under the civil code of the 1960 betrothal contract is to be concluded between family members of the future spouses and more emphasis is given to the choice, consent and interest of these family members rather than the future spouses. Moreover, in many condition the practice shows that betrothal was concluded when the future spouses are underage and sometimes not yet born. This means, the interest and choice of the future spouses was not considered at all (Civil Code, 1960).

On the other hand, the constitution of 1995 recognizes the right of individuals to form a family with their own free and full consent. As result, the provisions of the civil code of the 1960 dealing with betrothal were found to be contrary to this fundamental right of individuals. Article 560 sub-article 2 of the 1960 civil code state that, “betrothal shall be of no effect unless the family of each of the future spouses thereto.” But the revised family code of the 2000 has excluded the concepts of betrothal as a whole.

However, some regional family codes maintain the concept of betrothal with modification. The major modification made relates to the definition given to betrothal. All regional laws which incorporated the concept of betrothal defined it as a pact between the fiancé and fiancée to conclude marriage sometimes in the future. This is unlike the definition given by the civil code of the 1960 which involves only the parents or guardians of the future spouses.

As one demonstration of social interaction and cultural practice, marriage is arranged in different form in Ethiopia. These are: Serg or ceremonial marriage, K'urban or Teklil or religious marriage, Semaniya or Civil marriage, Gered or Demoz or paid labor marriage, Telefa or marriages by abduction, promissory marriages are highly practiced.

In the northern part of Ethiopia, in Amhara and Tigray regions based on age marriages identified into six (6) types. These are promissory marriage (it is an arrangement occur when a friendly family shows interest, as long as the girl's parents are respected and of good standing in wealth and status), child marriage (is the one that a girl can get married any time to a boy a little older than her), early marriage,(it has four kinds of marriage arrangements have been identified based on the age of the bride, promissory marriage before the birth of the child, child marriage usually under 10 years of age in a form of Madego; that is introduction of a girl to wife-hood under the custody of parent -in -law until she reaches puberty age, early adolescence marriage between 10-14 years in a form of Meleles: the married child may stay with parents put periodically visits her parent-in-law, and late adolescence marriage between 15-18 years) late adolescent marriage, adult marriage, and old age marriage (Amsalu,2007:8)

The revised federal family code as well as the regional family codes recognizes the practices of marriage ceremony in Ethiopia as it is categorized in to religious marriage, customary marriage, and civil marriage, which are practice in different way.

2.7.1. Religious Marriage in Ethiopia

It takes place when a man and a woman have performed such acts or rites as deemed to constitute a valid marriage by their religion or by the religion of one of them. As a result, the formal requirements for the conclusion of religious marriage are dictated by the religion itself. Forced marriage is not a religious practice, it is a tradition. There are many good traditions that bind communities together. But traditions are also not static they

evolve. “A religious marriage takes place when a man and a woman have performed such acts or rites as deemed to constitute a valid marriage by their religion or by the religion of one of them (RFC,2000 article 3).

Marriage in Islam is considered a religious duty as well as a moral safeguard. It imposes certain duties and responsibilities on both husband and wife. A man is responsible for food and shelter for the woman and her general upkeep, while the woman’s duty is to satisfy the husband’s sexual need and be obedient. There are debates as to whether Islam promotes forced marriage because of various interpretations of certain sections of the Quran.

Marriage in Christianity is viewed as having a divine –human character since Jesus is reported to have attended a wedding ceremony in Canon. Marriages are conducted according to Church rules that vary according to sect. The Bible does not specify an age of legitimate marriage; most churches align with local civil law. Male superiority is emphasized in marriage rather than equality (AU report: 2015:20).

2.7.2. Civil or Court Marriage in Ethiopia

It considered as being concluded before an officer of civil status, a man and a woman need to appear before the officer for the purpose of concluding marriage and give their respective consent to enter in to marriage. Hence, the phrase civil marriage basically refers to the fact that the marriage has been solemnized in front of an officer who is empowered to accept the consent of parties wishing to enter in to marriage. The husband and wife take an oath and are issued a marriage certificate. Court marriage offers better options for women in cases of divorce or death of spouse (RFC, 2000).

The 1960 Ethiopian civil code provides for the establishment and the duties of the office of civil status. However, implementations of the provisions which deal with this office have been made to wait for the issuance of an order to be published in the *Negarit Gazeta*, which has never come into life. As a result, currently there are no established offices of civil status. In town, the functions of the office of civil status are assumed and performed by the town. For instance in Addis Ababa the offices of the sub-cities or *Kifle Ketemas* are the ones who oversee the performance of civil marriages.

In order to conclude civil marriage, there are certain formalities and requirements which are stipulated by the federal revised family code of Ethiopia. The first formality is that of a residence. RFC article 22 state that, “civil marriage is concluded before the officer of civil status of the place where one of the future spouses or one of the ascendants or close relatives of one of them has established a residence by continuously living there for not less than six months before the conclusion of the marriage.”

The other formality is that of giving notice. The RFC requires under article 23 as, “the future spouses to inform the officer of civil status of their intention to conclude marriage not less than a month before the celebration of the marriage.” The other formality incorporated under article 25 of the RFC is the obligation on the witnesses to declare, under oath, that the essential conditions for marriage are fulfilled. The finally requirement for celebration of civil marriages is that the future spouses need to declare openly that they have consented to enter into the marriage. Marriage is an institution which is to be entered into by the parties of their free will. The existence of their free will has to be openly communicated to the office of civil status. Apart from the open communication of their will, the future spouses as well as the witnesses are required to sign in the register of the civil status.

The other new introduction in the federal revised family code of 2000 is the recognition of marriages that are celebrated abroad. This is necessitated by the increase in the movement of people from one place to another. Not recognizing a marriage which is concluded fulfilling the legal requirements of the place of celebration would result in unfair and undesirable consequences. As a result, article 5 of the revised family code of Ethiopia provide for the recognition of marriages which are celebrated abroad as valid in Ethiopia. The marriage whose recognition is sought in Ethiopia has to be concluded by fulfilling the legal requirements of the place of celebration (RFC, 2000).

After the fulfillment of all the above mentioned and other formalities that are not mentioned here, what is left is for the officer of civil status to pronounced them united in marriage and issue a certificate of marriage.

2.7.3. Customary Marriage in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is a nation which is believed to be home for more than eighty nationalities. These different nationalities have their own peculiar customs. The diversity in customs of the people has been recognized by the 1995 FDRE constitution. Particularly, article 34/4 of the constitution stipulates for the enactment of a specific law which gives recognition to marriage concluded under systems of religious or customary laws. In lights of this obligation, the revised family code of Ethiopia gives the future spouses the option to conclude their marriage in accordance with customary practices.

According to article 4 of the revised family code, marriage according to custom takes place when a man and woman have performed such rite as deemed to constitute valid marriage by the custom of the community in which they live or by the custom of the community to which they belong or to which one of them belong. One important thing which needs to be noted here is that for a marriage to be concluded according to custom, the custom referred to is of three: the custom of the community in which they live, or the custom of the community to which both future spouses belong or alternatively to which one of them belong. This is in contradistinction to the civil code of 1960. Article 580 of the civil code considers a marriage to be customary marriage when it is concluded under the rules of the community to which the future spouses belong or to which one of them belongs.

Customary marriages recognized by law, in accordance with customary law and registered with local authorities. Sometimes this fosters unity and cohesion amongst communities, who refer to each other in ‘my in-law.’ On the negative side, the customary traditions and cultures of most part of Ethiopian communities do not favor women. They are considered inferior to men and treated as property, denied access to land and given on rights to inherit or gain custody of children in the case of divorce or death (AU report, 2015: 19-20).

Abduction is a type of traditional marriage by which a man kidnaps, hides and rapes a girl and then, as the father of her unborn child can claim marriage.

In many communities forced marriage have strong cultural roots and a clear cultural logics, which suggests that some communities may not necessarily be very amenable to reform. This logic embodies two key elements. First, the families and kin group have a strong vested interest in the productive and reproductive capacity of women, articulated through the regulation by older generations of their sexuality and sexual conduct. Second marriage are seen to ensure girl's social integration and thereby their protection and their moral and social development.

The social power of this logic is such that there is resistance to reform even in areas where government and non-government advocates have been very active with campaign's and law enforcement (AU report, 2015:12).

Traditional marriage customs vary by ethnic group, although many customs are Trans ethnic. Arranged marriages are the norm, although this practice is becoming much less common, especially in urban areas. The presentation of a bride wealth from the male's family to the female's is family is common. The amount is not fixed and varies with the wealth of the families. The bride wealth may include livestock, money, or other socially valued items.

2.8. Customary Marriage among the Oromo

The Oromo is one of the most numerous nations in Africa which enjoys a homogeneous culture and share common political, religious, cultural and legal institutions. In Oromiyaa customary laws and practices as a system of governance and an institution of ritual performance, play a great role in regulating the social, political, cultural and religious life of the people. Among these customary practices marriage is the one, which is practiced in all ethnicity of the Oromo. *Caffee Tumaa* community is the one which is found in Oromiyaa. In *Caffee Tumaa* Oromo marriage is concluded in one of the following forms. All these forms of concluding marriage are considered as the mechanism of establishing the marital bond between a man and woman. These are categorized into formal and informal arrangements of marriage (Yonas, 1998).

Concluded arrangement of marriage is given strong considerations and it is recognized as the best mode of concluding marriage. Formerly the arrangement of marriage is

established by the families of the future spouses. Nowadays, the formality of concluding marriage through this arrangement has changed. It has become the boy who in most cases selects the girl of his choice.

Apart from the concluded arrangement of marriage made by the family of the spouses, there are other types of marriages customarily concluded among the *Caffee Tumaa* Oromo of Galan. These forms of marriage arrangements are made due to various cases. Even though some of these types of marriages have been considered by the society as being against customary law of the Oromos-the *Seera Gadaa (Caffee)* Oromo, but they are still practiced by many people. They are tolerated because they are considered as parts of the customary traditions of the society. There are cases where this customarily concluded arrangements of marriage serve societal problems as well. These forms of marriage arrangements are made due to various reasons. Some are economic, others are social and still others are emotional. Informal marriages that take place among the *Caffee Tumaa* Oromo of Gelan include, *Butii*, *Hawwata*, *Dhaala*, *Aseennaa*, *Rakoo* and *Irra Dhaaba* marriage.

2.8.1. Butii

In this form of marriage, the boy abducts the girl without her consent or out of her consciousness. It is socially not acceptable since it uses force and violence for the benefit of one side, the man. As some people say, the *Butii* form of marriage has come to be rampant as the *Gadaa* laws have been prohibited or marginalized by those successive Ethiopian rulers' laws. As a result, the people could not enforce legal or social sanction upon the offenders, as the offenders can easily corrupt and bribe the regimes' magistrates. It is one of the causes for conflict creation between kin groups belonging to the man and the girl. It builds unstable family relationship and eventually ends with divorce. *Waaqeffennaa* does not accept nor does it approve marriage by *Butii* (Gemechu And Assefa, 2006).

2.8.2. Hawwata

Is a marriage by self-selection without prior knowledge of the boy's and girl's parents? If the two agree, the boy can take her at one time when she is ready to do so. In most cases,

the girl takes this form of marriage as a final option when her parents want to engage her to another boy whom she does not want. The stability of this form of marriage depends on the agreement or disagreement of their parents, on both sides, either to accept or to reject the marriage that have undertaken by *Ababbalii* or *Hawwii*.

Though *Waaqeffanna* accepts self-selection for marriage, it does not endorse if it is conducted out of parents' consensus and blessings. For instance, in *Waaqeffanna* belief system, it is a sin to entice, to lure or to seduce a person to commit something, or to make him believe in what he is not convinced to believe in. This is what the word "*Ababbalii*" signifies. In *Ababbalii* marriage, the involvement of a third person, who secretly goes between the boy and girl is often 'employed' by the boy to convince the girl for him. If she is not convinced and finally says; 'No' the boy may use one of the other forms of marriage; in most cases *Butii* is used (Yonas, 1998).

2.8.3. Dhaala

Means literally "inheritance", it is a type of marriage between a woman and the brother of a deceased husband or levirate. The reason behind this is to preserve the children of the deceased man within the family and save them from mistreatment by the stepfather to whom the widow may marry. According to the traditional practices of Oromo society, the woman is obliged to stay idly thinking of her husband's death for a period of at least one year. After her stay for one or two years without husband she is given the deceased husband's brother, classificatory or full brother. The deceased husband brother refuses to marry the widow thinking that as if she is his own blood relative. But he accepts when he told to do so either by his family or elders by the community. This type of marriage depends on the number of children born to the couple and on how well the widow is like by the parents of the deceased man. If the man has married his own wife before this arrangement, he turn to work in the fields between the two households, but if he is a bachelor (*Qeerroo*), he will latter marry a girl because it is culturally credible and socially valued to marry a young girl and shave the *Qarree* (Moges, 2005).

2.8.4. Aseenna

In this case the girl takes the lead instead of the boy. She takes this initiative if she goes beyond the standard age of marriage sets for girls, as socially agreed upon. Second, if she

is not asked by anybody, either due to problems of beauty or due to her family's social background. When she decides, "No more stay with parents", she leave her parent at dusk and goes to the boy's parent that she has already had in her mind. Imagine the time of her departure is not at dawn, or at noon, or at night. It is only at dusk, the time cattle are coming to their enclosure.

She carries with her *Irreesa* (greeneries), nine *Hiddii* fruits (solemn) and other items which are conventionally known by society as symbols of fertility, prosperity and peace. She directly goes to the house of the boy's parent and calls his name. Then, she enters the house and leaves those symbolic items under the pillar of the house. Sitting there, she waits for the response of the boy, which, according to the traditions has been concluded with positive result for her. That means he has to accept her solemn demand, because she comes to marry him by fulfilling all what the laws for Aseennaa requires.

A family established by the Aseennaa marriage is usually found to be stable. If the question of divorce comes, it cannot be from her side. However, if it comes, the right to marry the second wife is reserved for him (Gemechu and Assefa, 2006).

2.8.5. Rakoo

Is an arranged form of marriage whereby the boy's parent takes the first initiative for engagement. On behave of boy's parent, elders go to the girl's parent and ask them to give their daughter (her name is mentioned) to the son (his name is mentioned) for marriage. If the girl's parent accepts the demand, they pay bride wealth to the girl's parents. In some families, a year before the final wedding ceremony takes place; she is officially engaged to him (*Kaadhimamuu*). On the wedding day, the boy comes to the girl's parent accompanied by horsemen, called *Hamaamota*. On this day, the girl and the boy officially come and sit together. They are blessed by the girl's parent before she is officially handed to him.

Soon they arrive at the boy's parent; they are also ceremonially received by his families and get the blessings of his grandparents, fathers, mothers and other relatives. In traditional Oromo marriage, the blessings of the elders at are quite enough. Unlike other religious group like Christianity, which earnestly requires the involvement of priest or pastor, the involvement of *Qaalluu*, as believed to be the guardian of the laws of Waaqa, is undesirable. That of the grandparents, fathers, mothers and other relatives is quite

desirable to rituals the final marriage consummation. Such form of marriage is more stable than other forms of Oromo (Yonas , 1998).

In the above mentioned forms of marriage, there are many points which need to more clarification and further analysis. However, the mentioned points could give hints on how and why Oromo have evolved various cultural mechanism in solving problems, how and why they give emphasis on alleviating problems confronted by individuals as persons and how interconnected problems are agreed upon and socially resolved for common advantage.

2.8.6. Irra Dhaaba

A type of customarily concluded marriage, the distinguished feature of this forms of marriage is that, the girl and her parents do not have any prior knowledge until the boy accompanied by a group of men of different social classes arrive at the gate of the girl's parent. Soon they arrive, at the gate; usually they call the name of the girl and solemnly appeal to her parents in the name of Waaqa who created marriage (*Gaa'ila,*) to give their daughter to the boy for marriage. In case her parent turns down the boy's request, they can curse this family which is believed to be a bad fortune for the girl. If they accept, the girl is formally given, being blessed by her parents and relatives (Yonas, 1998).

Therefore, the gap identified from the researcher and literatures is that about identifying the causes, ritual festivity, the current state and the general consequences of *Irra dhaaba* were specifically studied in this research from the context in *Caffee Tumaa* Oromo of Gelan of east Shewa. The above research works that I reviewed was conducted on customary marriages in general in different parts of Oromo community. But, this research different from the researches that I tries to review in that specifically were conducted on *Irra Dhaaba* customary marriage practice among the *Caffee Tumaa* Oromo of Gelan of east Shewa.

CHAPTER THREE

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA AND PEOPLE

3.1. The Descent, Kinship and Marriage of *Caffee Tumaa* Oromo of Gelan zone

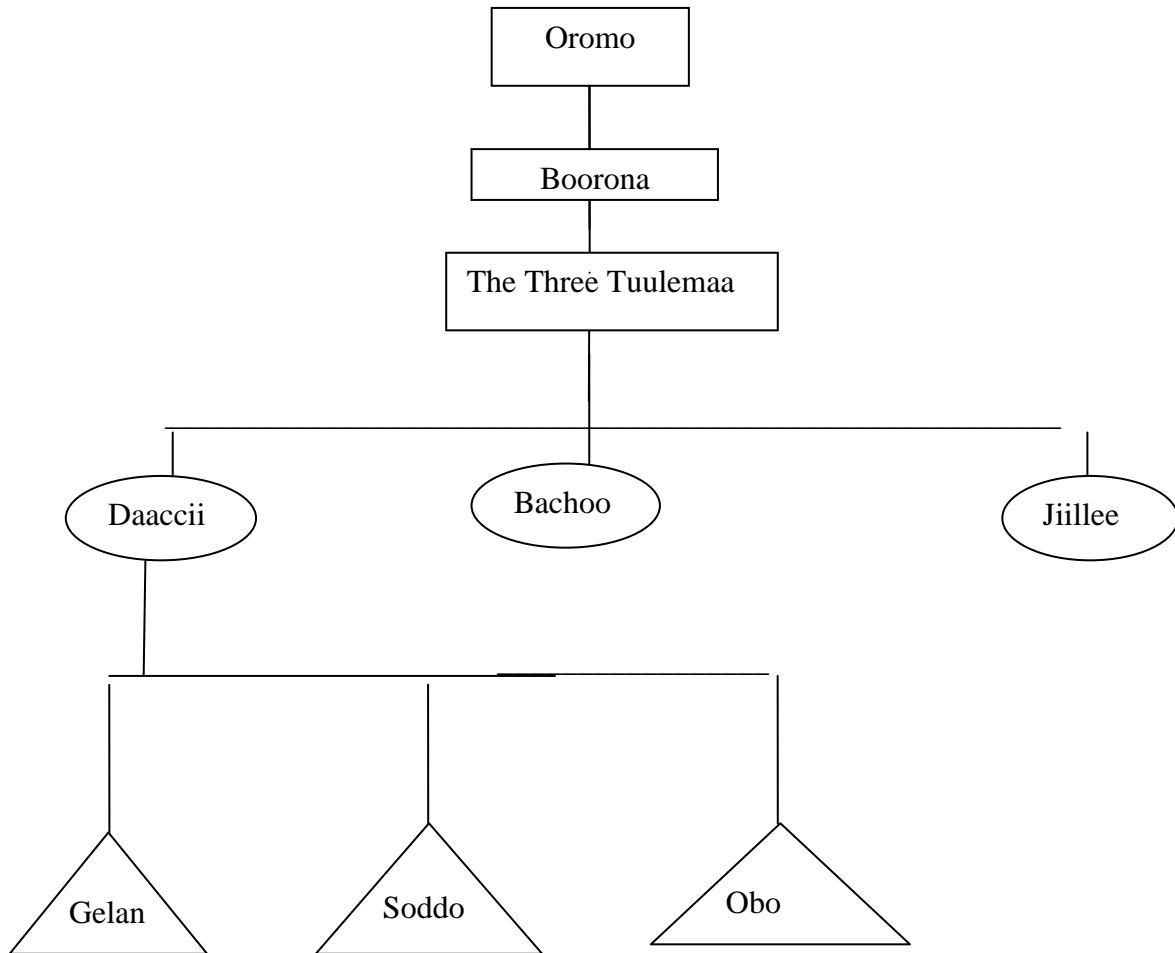
3.1.1 The Descent and Family

The Oromo is one of the Cushitic speaking peoples inhabiting on a large territory in Ethiopia. Since the Oromo is the large nation, the Oromo is divided into many large descents. These are *Tuulemaa*, *Maccaa*, *Arsii*, *Gujii*, *Boorana*, *Ittuu*, *Humbaanna*, *Raayyaa*, *Karrayyu*, *Yejjuu*, *Liban* etc. Among the major Oromo descents *Tuulemaa* inhabited the ancient territory of the Cushitic peoples in what is today central Ethiopia, Shewa. In the Oromo genealogy, since the *Tuulemaa* is divided in to three groups, *Tuulemaa* is commonly known as *Tuulemaa Sadeen/* the three *Tuulemaa/*. These sub-clans include *Daaccii*, *Bachoo* and *Jiillee* (Alemayehu, 2009).

The *Tuulama* Oromo as the results of long period comprehensive adoptions (Oromonization) portion of non-Oromo peoples in Shawa relate their genealogy to the family of *Tuulama* Oromo. However, a genealogy fabricated for the purpose of realization of objectives aimed at satisfying economic, social or political advantages is not common among the Oromo.

The *Tuulama* Oromo is a large descent in the Oromo ethnicity. Outside the region Shawa the *Tuulama* Oromo settled in different parts of Oromia in group or clans. As already indicated the major clans of the *Tuulama* Oromo are the *Daacci*, *Bachoo* and *Jillee*. The family of the three *Tuulama* is represented as follow.

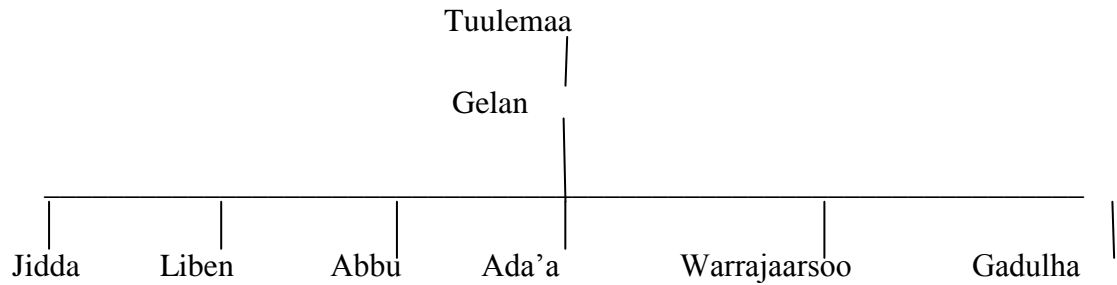
Chart 1: The Three Tuulemaa



Source: The politics of Tuulemaa Oromo Volume 1(2009) P.20

Daaccii is sub-divided into three sub-clans: *Gelaan*, *Oboo*, **and** *Sooddo*. Here what should be noted is that the clan names are written according to elder-younger relationship in the *Tuulama* genealogy. Therefore, *Gelan* is the eldest in the *Tuulama* family tree. *Gelaan* is further divided into six sub-clans (*Ja'an Gelan*). The family of *Ja'an Gelan* is represented as follow.

Chart 2: The family of Gelan



Source: The politics of Tuulemaa Oromo Volume 1(2009) P.21

Since August 2007, Gelan zone was established as a city of Oromiya special zone surrounding Addis Ababa with including four Woredas. These are Gelan, *Caffee Tumaa*, *Dalota*, and *Marino*. Out of these four woreda of Gelan zone *Caffee Tumaa* was selected for this study. The reason that *Caaffee Tumaa* was selected is that rural and *Irra Dhaaba* customary marriage practiced highly.

3.1.2. Kinship

Kinship is among the universally existing societal structures which play a significant part in directing behavior as well as binding people together in a framed manner. Kinship systems depend on societal recognition and cultural implementation of relationships. .As such these fastened relationship and interactions as part and parcel of any in kinship system that members learn the essence of kinship.

Despite the fact that Oromo claim that they descended from the same family stock, Oromo, they do not limit their kinship to biological ancestry. The Oromo kinship system has been based on a biological and social descent. Oromo recognize social ancestry and avoid the distinction between the biological and social descent since they know that the formation of Oromo people hood was based on a blood and social kinship. The Oromo have a customary marriage which descended from earlier times. The greater social significance attached to the wedding ceremony. The wedding day is very important day in

the life of both bride and the groom. It is important for the bride whose wedding celebrated once in her life. (Assefa Jalata:2010).

According to my informant in the context of *Caffee Tumaa*, kinship can be created through three ways. The first one is through blood; this is called the principle of consanguinity. This relationship encompasses blood ties between similar or /and different sexes. Consanguinity is a parents (father, mother, grandparents) relation to a child, relation between siblings (brothers and sister), an individual relation to his or her uncle, aunt, niece or nephew.

The second one is kinship through marriage relation. This is called the principle of affinity. This includes kinship ties between husband and wife, husband and his wife's group, wife and her husband's group. The third and the last one is kinship through adoption fostering and good parenthood. This kind of kinship is called fictitious kinship. Fictitious kinship is a tie between two or more individuals in which parent child relationship is created without any blood or marriage relation.

The above three principles are working among the Gelan Oromo of *Caffee Tumaa* Ada'a district. My key informant during elders FGD also elaborated that the Gelan Oromo are patrilineal society where descended rule tracing to the father side than the mother. All children born from a woman traces their genealogy to the male ancestor in the society. This is because patriarchal institution that dominated the social structure of Gelan Oromo in general and people of *Caffee Tumaa* in particular.

3.1.3. Marriage

Giving all inclusive definition for marriage for marriage is one of the areas of difficulty for social science scholars. Some of the challenges are the cultural differentiation between different societies across different regions of the world about what they consider marriage by their own perspectives.

According to my key informant, marriage is a social union among the *Caffee Tumaa* Oromo. It is not only the matter of couples (the bride and the bride groom). Marriage at the beginning started between the two parents (the male and female).

Traditionally the groom's parents search for a bride for their son. Before make any contact with the bride's parents, the groom's parents search back seven generations to make sure that the family are not related by blood. Once this has been done, the boy's parent then makes contact with the girl's parents through mediator. The mediator goes to the home of the girl's parents and asks if their daughter will marry the son of the other parents. The girl's parents impose conditions and the mediator will take the message to the boy's parents, and then arrange a date for both parents to meet at a mutually convenient location. When the parents have reached an agreement, the boy and the girl get engaged (betrothed). The parent then set a wedding date and they meet all the wedding expenses.

Exogamy marriage practiced among the *Caffee Tumaa* Oromo of Gelan. Exogamy is marriage to someone from outside of social group. In the past, exogamy marriage is the dominant marriage rule of the *Caaffee Tumaa* Oromo of Gelan zone community in general. Endogamy marriage is also one of the common types of marriage among the *Caaffee Tumaa* Oromo of *Ada'a* district community especially by the Muslim.

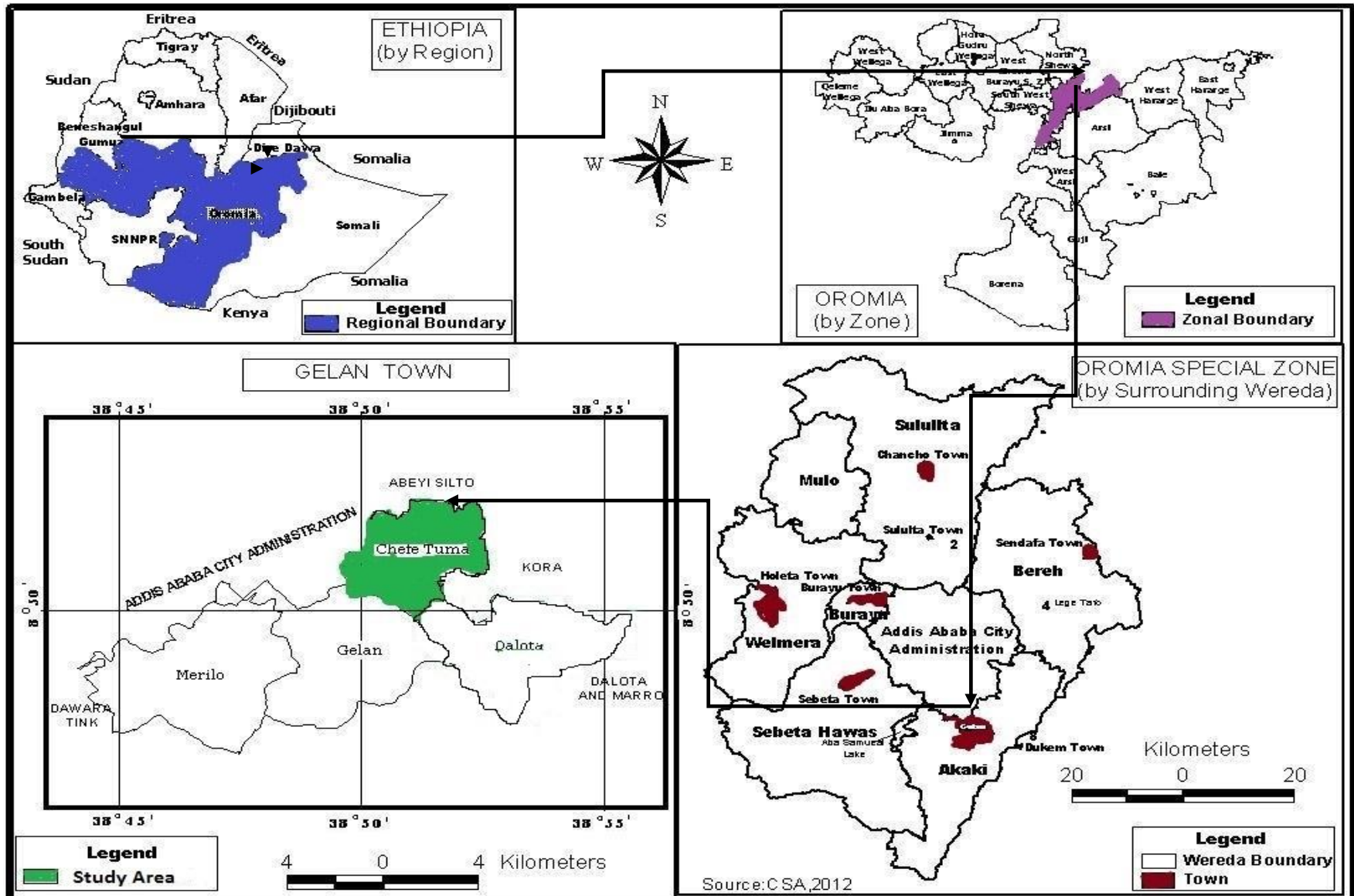
According to my key informant of interview Muslim religion follower society marriage takes place within closed family and it is the way strong ties is created between families. Where as in most Christian religion follower society, marriage made between male and female where they are not the same descent.

3.2. Location and physical environment.

Gelan Zone is located east of Addis Ababa at a distance of 25Km. The total area of Gelan zone is 7516 hectare. As I seen the document in during my observation, Gelan Zone shares its boundary with *Dukem* in the east, with *Maroo* in the south east, with *Kora* in the north east, with *Abayi Silto* in the north, with Addis Ababa in the west and north western and with *Dawara tino* (Abba Samuel dam) in the south west directions. The landscape of the study area is more or less plain. As my key informant of interview told me that, there are also different mountains like *Gara bushu*, *Tulu Guracha*, *Orobo*, *Wadensoo* and *Dhakasedeen*. There are four small rivers in the study area. These are *Dangora*, *Gogecha*, *Fincha* and *Danon*.

Gelan Oromo of east Shewa as a result of the total four Woredas found in Gelan zone, *Coffee Tumaa* were selected randomly for this research. *Coffee Tumaa* of Gelan zone is divided in to five small village. These are *Deekkee Sadden, Robo, Waadansso, Dongora* and *Qiliisaa*.

Fig-1: Map of the study area



3.3. Population and economy

According to CSA (2007) the total population of Gelan zone is 53790 which lives on the radius of 7km. Out of the total population 57% (28508) are male and the remaining 43% (25282) are female. Out of this 6200 which means 2800 male and 3400 female are the resident of *Caffee Tumaa*. The dominant ethnic composition of Gelan zone is Oromo (81.24%) with the dominant language *Oromiffa*, followed by Amharaa (17.1%) and other nationalities (1.66%) The most common religion is Christianity (96.66%), Muslim (1.83) and other traditional believes (1.03%).

Out of the total area of the land 65% (4885.4 hectare) is under agriculture supporting nearly about 1008 households. Currently it is said that the average land holding is 2.5 hectare and the farming system of the community is traditional that needs multi directional effort for modernization. Out of four kebeles Gelan is more urbanized and industrialized city. But the remaining three *Caffee Tumaa*, *Dalota*, and *Marino* are rural and the economic activities of the people are more related with agricultural activities. CSA (2007)

For a long time, both agricultural activities (farming and animal husbandry) were/still are the main sources of livelihood among *Caffee Tumaa* inhabitants. As some information collected before shows that, large inhabitants of *Caffee Tumaa* used grow a cereal like *teff*, Bean, Maize, Chickpea, Lentil and wheat and they kept animals like, oxen, sheep, hours, donkey and hen. Both product from farming and animal husbandry are used to home consumption and they provide it for the nearby market as well. Habitually, males sale *teff*, wheat, oxen and sheep; whereas, females sale hen and animal products like, butter, cheese egg etc. Basically land and economy in *Caffee Tumaa* inhabitants are inseparable.

With regard to the non-farm and off-farm activities, even though the number of population engaged in non-farm and off-farm activities are not clearly registered some of the activities observed are petty trade, carpentry, pottery, blacksmith, and wage laborer.

3.4. Religion

Oromo's use three concepts to explain the organization and interconnection of human, spiritual and physical worlds, these three concepts are *Ayaana* (spirit), *Uuma* (nature) and *Safuu* (moral and ethical order). Oromo's believe that through *Ayaana*. Waaqa (God) creates and regulates human and physical world in balanced way. This *Ayaana* also maintains the connection between the creator and the created. Oromo society has organizing principles for its known and unknown universe like any society; and *Ayaana* is a major organizing principle of cosmology through which the concepts of time and creation are ordered. *Ayaana* as a system of classification and an organizing principle of Oromo cosmology establishes the connection between Waaqa (the creator/God) and the created (nature and society) by differentiating and at the same time uniting the created things and the creator (Asafa Jalata, 2010).

The traditional Oromo religion is '*Waaqefftaa*' (believe in one God). The Oromo believe in one '*Waaqa*' (God). There are also many saint, like divinities called '*Ayyaana*' each seen as manifestation of the '*Waaqa*' of the same divine reality. An effective relationship is maintained between '*Ayyaana*' and Oromo by '*Qaalluu*'. This is a religious and ritual expert who has a special relationship with one of the '*Ayyaana*' which possesses him at regular interval.

Coming back to the Oromo of Gelan zone specially *Caffee Tumaa* the study area, they follow both Christianity and Muslim religion. But when it comes to their day to day life, they are still governed by their own traditional religious faith.

The sacred place known as '*Dongora*' was one of the earliest Oromo *Gadaa* centers which still serve as the Gelan Oromo. It had been a *Muuda* pilgrimage center of *Qaalluu* of the Gelan Oromo. '*Dongora*' is located in the northern parts of *Odaa Nabee*. The history of this ritual place closely related to *Odaa Nabee* and other scared place like *Hora Arsadii*, *Handoodee* and *Caffee Tumaa*. Since Gelan '*Dongora*', the earliest *Gada* center, it is considered as a religious center of *Tuullama* Oromo (Alemayehu, 2009:84).

3.5. Political system

The political control of the Oromo nation is based on the periodical election of leaders through an elaborate system of age-sets and age-grades called *Gada* which has survived, though with considerable modification. Even in those Oromo groups which developed into monarchical states. Under the *Gada* system the control of a tribe is in the hands of a man known as *Abba Boku* father of the scepter of a staff which was the sign of office of the ruling *luba* and whose authority lasting for a period of eight years. The *Gada* in power being known as *Luba*, at the end of the eight years new *Luba* took over and the *Abba Boku* retires in favor of a younger man who took the title. In office, his work was assisted by a war leader called *Abba Dula* father of war and ritual expert, *Qalluu*, who divined by means of the fat of slaughtered animals (Alemayehu, 2009).

The *Gada* system encloses all code of conducts, rules, regulations etc over the entire aspects of the live of the Oromo people. Every Oromo belongs to the *Gada* structure. So, the Oromo of *Caffee Tumaa* of Gelan zone also involve in this social organization. Traditional courts systems are one of the cultural elements among the *Caaffee Tumaa* Oromo. For instance, in the case of conflict, Marriage, inheritance etc, the people of the study area commonly used to peaceful methods of peace settlement known as *Jaarsummaa*

3.6. Social Organization and cultural practice

In Oromo society knowledge and information have been mainly transmitted from generation to generation through the institutions of family, religion and *Gada*. Young Oromo's are expected to learn important things that are necessary for social integration and community development. They learn appropriate social behaviour by joining age-sets and generation sets. From their families, communities and experts, they learn stories, folk tales, riddles and other mental games that help acquiring the knowledge of society. As age-mates, they share many things because of their ages; members of generation-sets also share many duties and roles because of their membership in classes (Asafa Jalata 2010).

The *Caffee Tumaa* communities interact with each other in various social events. Mainly social relations through neighborhood, occupation and blood based relations were

common. For instance inhabitants meet and help each other in different local mutual aid associations for various events like, wedding and funeral ceremonies, harvesting time and religious ceremonies. For instance in *Iddirii* (local mutual aid association), people help each other during funeral ceremonies. People also call for *Jigii* (working together cooperatively) during harvesting time, usually relatives (in-laws) and neighbors call for *Jigii*. Religious life also plays an important role in inhabitants' social life in the study area. Commonly people form a religious group called *Mahiber* (usually Orthodox Christians form this group). People in several social events help each other in a reciprocal kind of exchange. For instance, if some one's son/daughter marries, relatives and neighbors gives butter, cheese, *Injera*, food oil, alcoholic drinks, home materials etc for the groom's/bride's family. In return when other relatives and neighbors son/daughter marry the same will be done.

3.7. Residence roles

The Oromo people including *Caffee Tumaa* of Gelan Oromo people have lived in scattered homesteads or huts. The basic unit has been the patrilineal extended family. A man as *Abba Worra* (literally head of the family), has authority over his wife, unmarried sons and daughters. Next to the family, *oola* (neighbor) and *ganda* (community) have been very important social networks.

Women and men work has been valued differently; and that difference led to the assignment of different kinds of work for men and women. The allocation of time within household maintenance activities are the major tasks of women. It can also be observed that housework consists of numerous and regular activities across which women distribute their available labor time. On the other hand, men's involvement in household maintenance is largely limited to which includes work in backyard farms.

The major reasons behind the continued social exclusion of women were identified to include patriarchal values, family ideals, traditional and cultural norms lack of access of women in decision-making position, and women's lack of knowledge of their legal rights.

Generally, according to my participants of FGD in *Caffee Tumaa* women have full right in inheritance case. In addition to the above labour division between men and women in the study area that men have controlled the mobile resource, those that required going out from the homestead, herding, defence of livestock and land, tilling new fields, plowing and so on. Women have controlled the stationary resources; the house, the grain and other products, even cattle around the house are under their control, women milk them and so on.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Data Interpretations and Analysis

4.1. *Irra Dhaaba* marriage Ceremony among the *Coffee Tumaa* Oromo

Marriage is a crucial institution among the Oromo that it is highly regarded by the people. Moreover, it is believed that it is the turning point in the life of the newly married couple. But the ceremony is highly regarded only if it is the first marriage.

According to my participants of FGD, one of the traditional marriages among Oromo's is the *Irra Dhaaba* marriage. This type of marriage has been practiced in this society for long time. It is even being practiced now in some areas though it is not as common as it used to be in the past. This research attempts to explain why the prevalence of this type of marriage is decreasing from time to time, why people choose this type of marriage and the general effects of such type of marriage. First of all, it is necessary to give brief explanation about the *Irra Dhaaba* marriage ceremony.

As my key informants of interviews, *Irra Dhaaba* marriage is a sudden and unexpected type of marriage, particularly to the family of the bride. It is a type of marriage in which the bride and her parents are totally unaware and unprepared for the event. On the other hand, the bridegroom and his parents are aware of it and make the necessary preparations to propose for the marriage and bring the bride the same day. What makes this type of marriage different from other types of marriages among the Oromo people is its urgency, the completion of the whole process in one day except for some inconveniences, and its being practiced among the Oromo's only.

Based on the interview done to dwellers of *Coffee Tumaa* area, it is known that there are two forms of *Irra Dhaaba* marriages. Other participants also affirmed that such forms of marriages are practiced in this area, but one form is more prevalent than the other one. The two forms of *Irra Dhaaba* marriages are: (1) the one accomplished according to the culture and rule of the community by presenting formal marriage proposal. (2) The one accomplished suddenly without any precondition.

4.1.1. The *Irra Dhaaba* marriage accomplished by presenting formal marriage proposal according to the culture and rule of the community

According to my FGD participants in this type of marriage, like any other traditional marriage, the parents of the bridegroom propose for the marriage. If the parents of the bride accept the proposal, a delegation of elders from the bride side and the bridegroom side will be given the responsibility of finding out if there is any blood relationship among them. The delegation consists of two elders from the bride side and two from the bridegroom side. As one of my FGD participant Obbo Sime Wakene told to me, the delegation goes to the religious father (*Mana Ayyanaa*) and explains everything about the marriage they are intending to materialize. They mention the names of both families to the spiritual leader and explain their intention to unite the families. Then, they request the blessings and permission of the spiritual leader to materialize the marriage. According to the request, the spiritual leader allows the marriage and gives his blessings. This blessing takes place when most of the time the marriage was concluded by *Irra Dhaaba*. But this is not the end of the story. They told me that the final decision of the marriage has to be done by *Caffee Tayicha*, means meetings of Oromo elders who descended from their family and give decision on spiritual issues.

According to my elders FGD participants, the investigation of the blood relation goes up to the seventh generation. After it is proved that the bride and bridegroom are not related up to the seventh generation, they get approval to get married. Sometimes when *Irra Dhaaba* marriage concluded without the investigation of the blood relation and has a relation below the seven descent, the limitation of blood relation goes up to the fifth generation only. As my key informant of interview Obbo Tadesse Bacha, If there is blood relation beyond the fifth generation, the *Caffee Tayichaa* gives permission to get married. This process can last over two months. According to my key informant during focused group discussion, there is time for the *Caaffee Tayichaa* to sit and see such issues but when this kind of issue happened it was possible to meet together at any time. In addition, there are days and months which are accepted by the society to tie the knots. The days which are considered favorable for marriage are Tuesdays, Thursdays, Sundays, and sometimes Saturdays. The months which are considered favorable are January, April and

June. The reason that the above days and months were selected by the societies is related with the time s when people have everything that is needed for the preparation of the marriage feasts. There is also religious reason means Wednesday and Friday are fast days for Orthodox Christian religion followers.

According to my key informants of interviews after the couple go through these processes and get permission to tie the knot, by the order of the elders, it will be required to fulfill all other necessary procedures. After a series of discussions and negotiations, a day will be set to exchange the rings of promise. They decide the number of persons who go to the house of the bride on the day set aside to exchange the rings of promise and send the information to the family of the bride. The number of the persons is decided by the family of the bride.

According to my FGD participants based on the number of persons who come from the bridegroom side and the number of neighbors and relatives who attend this ceremony, the bride's family does the necessary preparation to host the guests. Materials which are prepared for the feast include drinks like Local drink made of grain and the leaves of a small shrub called *geesho (Farssso)*, Homemade liquor or Local beverage with high alcoholic content (*Araqee*), Local drink made from honey (*Daadhi*), as well as food items such as *Biddeena (Injera)* with variety of stews and bread. This preparation is done by the parents of the bride.

If the bridegroom wants to take the bride home on the ring (engagement) ceremony, it will be changed from formal proposed customary marriage turn in to *Irra Dhaaba*. As Obbo Kelibesa Mekonnen said, the issue will be kept as a top secret in the family of the bridegroom; this information should not leak and reach to the ears of the bride's family by any means. However, the bridegroom organizes young people who will accompany him to this ceremony. The bridegroom prepares all the necessary gifts for the bride. These gifts include clothes, gold jewelry, shoes, shawls and underwear. Before the ring day reaches, the parents of the bridegroom makes some preparations because they know that it is not only the ring (engagement) ceremony, but also the actual marriage day. The preparation in the house of the bridegroom will be more elaborate than the one in the bride's house. Up

to this moment, what the bride and her parents know is that it is a ring day, and the marriage day is going to be sometime in the future.

As Obbo Tolosa Balcha told to me, on the day of exchanging the rings of the promise (engagement), after all the necessary gifts such as clothes, jewelry, etc. are prepared for the bride and the best men of the bridegroom are ready, two elders from the side of the groom will be selected and sent to the bride's house. These elders call the father of the bride and tell the message they have. They start the conversation by saying '*Dubani kegnaa nama kabna, fuunduraan imoo imudamnaa*', which means we either have to get your daughter or we have to go to look for another.

Following this expression, they begin to explain the purpose of their being there in detail. After reminding that the day is the day of exchanging the rings of promise, they further explain that the bridegroom wants to take the bride on the same day and the family of the groom is ready to welcome the bride. At this point the father of the bride becomes very much agitated and angry with them and tells them that he is not willing to give away his daughter. Whatever the response of the bride's father may be, the two elders sent by the father of the groom will not go anywhere until the bridegroom comes.

Then the family of the bride recognizes that it is *Irra Dhaaba*. Based on the reality in front of them, they begin to discuss what they must do because they know that a man who has gone to bring a bride by *Irra Dhaaba* will never go back home without a bride. The negotiation to persuade the family members of the bride will continue up to noon or even 1:00 pm in the afternoon.

According to my FGD participants, as the negotiation is going on, the bridegroom accompanied by about 20 to 30 horse men and some elders, carrying all the necessary materials including bride wealth for the bride, the bridegroom and his best men carrying green grass (it symbolized good hope and prosperity) and thin slender sticks of a certain thorny tree (*Gorraa/Agam*) in their hands, (symbolically it represent spiritually protecting the bride groom from bad spirit), arrive at the house of the bride. Elders from the bride side and elders sent by the family of the groom do all they can to bring the issue to agreement. All this is done outside the compound of the bride's family. When the bride

groom with his best men and the attending people reach to the bride's house they down from the back of their horses. But they don't remove the bridles from the mouths of the horses until they hear the willingness of the bride's family to give their daughter. The additional elders who come with the groom join the elders who were sent ahead of them and continue the negotiation. As Obbo Abera Chala said, if the situation becomes too tense, elders who come from the side of the groom give a warning to the family of the bride by telling that a bridled horse will never go back empty (*Fardii lugamee baye duwaa hingalu*). This means, if the bride's parents are not willing to give their daughter, they will never go back bare hand to their house.

At this moment the parents of the bride will be forced to decide. They understand that even if they are not willing to give their daughter, the man gets someone from somewhere else. In addition, if they refuse to give their daughter in marriage, the groom and his attendants place the live green grass and the slender sticks they brought with them on the fence of the bride's parents and curse the bride before they leave. The community dreads the curse because they believe that it happens. Because of the fear of the danger that can happen to their daughter and considering their previous promise to give their daughter to the man, they finally decide to give their daughter.

According to my key informant of interviews, after making certain peaceful negotiations and discussions among the elders of both sides, the parents of the bride announce their willingness to allow the groom to take the bride. Elders from the side of the bride tell to the best men and attendants of the groom to unbridle their horses and enter the compound of the bride's parents. Elders from the side of the groom enter to the compound first and occupy the places prepared for them.

Following the elders the bridegroom, his best men and all other attendants enter the compound. Then, the bridegroom hands over the bride wealth to the family of the bride in the presence of the elders. After receiving the bride wealth, the bride puts on the cultural cloth and the shoes brought by the groom. Once the bride is adorned with the cloth, she will be handed over to the bride groom. Then after, three elders from the man side and three elders from the lady side bless the couple and all the guests. After the blessings are

over, they go for the feast. When the sun is about to set, they take the bride and go the house of the groom.

4.1.2 *Irra Dhaaba* marriage done accidentally (to the girl) without any precondition

According to my FGD participants, the second type of *Irra Dhaaba* marriage done in *Caffee Tumaa* is a marriage proposal done by the bridegroom without giving any pre-information to the bride's family. In this type of marriage the groom prepares his men and goes to the bride's and parents' home breaks the shocking news to people who are totally unprepared for the situation. He announces that he has come to take their daughter as his wife. This type of *Irra Dhaaba* is accidental and shocking to both the parents and their daughter. When compared to the first type, it is more compelling.

As Adde Buzu Lemma told to me, whatever the outcome may be, this is how the process proceeds: first, the bride groom goes to the spiritual leader (*Abbaa Ayyanaa*) and receives the blessing by informing him the purpose of his coming to him. He also asks the spiritual leader to decide the day of going to the bride's parent's home. All this is done together with the mother and father of the groom. If the mother and father are not alive, they select one person from among close relatives and the preparing continues in secret. It is expected that the man does some investigation in secret about the girl he wants to marry to find out if there is blood relation between them.

After completing the investigation, a week before he proposes for marriage through *Irra Dhaaba*, certain preparations begin in the house of the man. This preparation is to host the best men, the elders and other attendants on the marriage day. According to Ato Tolossa Balcha, one of the residents of the area and the interviewee the best man in Oromo culture is someone who is trusted and honored as a brother. That is why, in such traditional marriage, the man's family members, particularly the father inclines to choose a best man for his son. Finally, after they make up their mind, they go to girl's parents' home early in the morning by holding green grass (it symbolized good hope and prosperity is literally called *seerdoo*) and money. Then they beg the parents to give their daughter for marriage.

The young man who plans to marry asks another young man to be his best man and to stand beside him. In addition, he prepares clothes and shoes for his would be fiancé. This type of *Irra Dhaaba* is divided into two. As it is mentioned earlier, the first type is the one in which a person presents his request legally, based on the culture, and asks the parents to give the bride as wife on the ring day. This type of marriage is very difficult and shocking to the parents and their daughter. It is because the bridegroom is determined to take the bride on the ring day. On the contrary, the parents argue that the day is a ring day rather than a marriage day. If the parents are firm on their stand and are not willing to give their daughter, the man is ready to collect all bride wealth he prepared for the bride then curse the bride and go to look for another fiancé.

The reason why he does this is because a man who goes to look for a wife by *Irra Dhaaba* will never come back home without a wife though it may take him three or four days. The surprising aspect of this type of marriage is that the young man who goes to bring a wife by *Irra Dhaaba* is sure that his request won't be denied. If his request is denied, he discusses with elders and goes to the house where there is another young girl.

The other type of *Irra Dhaaba* is the one in which the bridegroom prepares the necessary clothes for the bride, organizes the best men, elders and the attending. Then they unexpectedly go to the house of the bride riding horses. After they reach to the bride's house, they sing and march around sitting on the horses back. As the horse men sing calling the name of the bride and marching around the house, the bride is told to go to the neighbor's house and hide there. I have come to know from the interview that the *Irra Dhaaba* marriage ceremony is different from others because the attending uses only horses.

According to my FGD participants, in such type of marriage they never use mules. I tried to find out the reason. They told me that this has been a tradition from ancient time and a mule is considered as a bad omen because it will never bear a young. On the contrary, they decorate a mare (female horse), symbolized fertility and take it with the attending crowd. This is because one of the best men together with the bride rides the mare when they come to groom's house.

Some of the elders who go to the bride's house down from horses and look for some influential elders around the village to help them are convincing the parents of the bride. The elders explain the situation to the parents of the bride. They tell the name of the man, the name of his father and from place where he comes. Next, they tell them that he wants to marry their daughter by *Irra Dhaaba*. After thorough discussion among the members of the family whether to give their daughter or not, if they do not come to agreement, the elders of the village persuade them to come to an agreement. The big issue to the bride's family will be not the personality of the man but the fate of their daughter if they refuse to give in marriage. They know that if they refuse the request, the girl will be cursed. If she is cursed, it is believed that she may not get a husband or she may not bear a child if she gets a husband, or the child may not survive even if she bears a child. This belief makes the issue very difficult and complicated for the girl's parents to accept or reject the marriage request.

In this situation the age of the bride is not considered. If she is a grown up and thought that she is physically mature, they don't care about her age. The young girl hears the decision made while she is hiding in the neighbor's house.

The bridegroom and his companion come from their horses and wait for the response. If the parents of the bride refuse to give their daughter, they go near the compound by taking grass and one of the horses as it is bridled and continue begging them to give their daughter. The family members of the daughter and other local elders discuss the issue very seriously and make a decision. This process sometimes may extend up to mid night. Ato Ifa Dadi, my informant in *Caffee Tumaa* shared with me his experience of *Irra Dhaaba* marriage that happened about long years ago. He told me that the negotiation continued up to 3:00 am in the night. He informed me that he had participated in many *Irra Dhaaba* marriages as a best man when he was young and later as an elder of the community. Then he narrated about one case that impressed him much.

This story took place around 38 years ago. At that time I was good at galloping horses. Because of my ability to ride horses my friend asked me to be his best man a week in advance. I discussed the issue with my father and finally accepted the request. After a week, making all the necessary preparations, we went to the house of the young lady. When we arrived to the house of the lady, we were

much impressed by the wealth of her parents. It took us about half day to reach to that house. Because of the distance from our residence we didn't have much information about the wealth of the man. But the mother of the bridegroom comes from which village and it was by her suggestion that the boy decided to propose to the daughter of this man. The father of this young lady was a respected man in the neighborhood; moreover, he was a person who respects his culture and every human being. He never prides by his wealth. Generally he was a person with good personality.

After we reached there, the discussion was ensued by the help of the elders who went with us and the elders of that area who were selected by the family of the mother. The father of the girl was making decisions without any consultation with other family members. Our elders, came back to us two hours after they entered the compound told us to wait. This condition was repeated several times. Every time they came to us, they told us to wait patiently. We were running out of time and it was getting too late at night. We didn't have any food for long hours and we were feeling hungry. Our horses still bridled. The outside weather was so cold that we had already started shivering. Elders were still begging and trying to persuade the girl's family.

The process continued till the next morning. The next day about noon we heard the good news regarding the consent of her father. Immediately after that an order was given to unbridle our horses and give them some grass and water. We were also ushered to get in. It seemed to me that the man kept us all night outside preparing a feast for us. I say this because I have never seen such a splendid feast in any Irra Dhaaba marriage I attended before. There was everything a man can take: Farsso, Araqee, and Biddeena with different types of stews. We ate and drank for the whole day and finally we set out on our journey to the bride groom's house in the evening.

The core issue of this story in relation with *Irra Dhaaba*, whatever the wealth and capacity to do anything, the culture and spiritual aspects influence the people who were under that tradition. Such type of *Irra Dhaaba* marriage is not only sudden, unexpected and shocking to the bride and the bride's family but also unpleasant because it tests the readiness of the family for such unexpected situation. A family like the one I mentioned above has a capacity to accommodate such unexpected shock and challenge. But, if the family does not have a capacity to prepare such a sudden marriage ceremony, I was told that the neighbors lend their hands and the ceremony takes place. When I say they lend their hands, I mean they bring Local drink made of grain and the leaves of a small shrub

called *geesho (Farsso)*, homemade liquor or local beverage with high alcoholic content (*Araquee*), *Biddeena (Injera)*, bread and other food items from their houses to feed the guests.

There are traditional procedures to be followed before the bride comes out of her parents' house. First, the couple will be seated on a dry hide of an ox that symbolized they become one or unite. Then they will bring milk from same container and make the couple drink the milk one after the other that indicate wish to fertility. Based on the information from the interview I made, they do this to express their good wish. Finally, the elders give blessings on the couple and this brings the ceremony in the house of the bride to an end.

Then the journey to the house of the bride groom begins. When the bride groom reaches with the bride to his house, the neighbors welcome them. The family of the bride can prepare a feast and call them back.

4.2. Why do people choose *Irra Dhaaba* marriage?

It is known that *Irra Dhaaba* marriage is a type of marriage that takes place incidentally. However, it is known that people get into such type of marriage because of various reasons. Below are given some of the reasons why people choose to tie the knots by *Irra Dhaaba* marriage ceremony.

4.2.1. Psycho-Social Reason

It is obvious that various social conditions determine people's personalities. This means that there are some cultural activities which are seen as a taboo in a given society. It is known that there is cultural variation in Oromo society. Such cultural variation has an effect on the person's social, psychological and spiritual wellbeing. According to my key informants of interviews, in the area where this study was made, *Caffee Tumaa*, there are certain members of the community who are given lower social status. This happens because of the type of job they do. Some of these members of the community include tanners, blacksmiths, and trumpet blowers. These groups are marginalized, undermined and neglected by the community. No one is willing to have created any kinds of relationship with them. No parent from other groups allows his/her son/daughter to marry

someone from this community. Children born in these families are extremely marginalized from the other community.

Among the major activities used to strengthen social relationship among the *Caffee Tumaa* community is selection of best men (*miinjee*). No one chooses a best man any one from among groups mentioned above. The involvement of this group of people is seen only during the slaughtering of bulls for holydays. No one accepts their proposal for marriage. This forces them to go for *Irra Dhaaba* marriage. As it is mentioned earlier, a marriage request that comes through *Irra Dhaaba* is not usually denied. This is one of the main reasons why people in the categories choose *Irra Dhaaba* marriage.

According to my FGD participants the request for *Irra Dhaaba* from these group often accepted by the societies because of the cultural and spiritual influence. The consequences of this kind of customary marriage on the girl and her parents are high because by fear of the culture they established relationship with those groups. These people were highly marginalized before three and four decades, but now marginalization of those people are decreases from time to time.

4.2.2. Economic Reason

Wealth has a very great influence and brings differences on the status of the members of the community. These means the rich people in the community usually look down upon those who are poor. These differences are seen during the birth and death of a person, marriage, funeral, as well as religious ceremonies. In such occasions the rich show their might by preparing special feast to the invited guests. The poor cannot afford to make such feasts. This brings difference in the status of the poor and the rich. The rich are highly honored by the members of the community. If one of these rich persons mistreats the poor one, the poor usually do not dare to bring the issue to the court.

In relation to this, Ato Abera Chala, one of the residents of the area who participated in the interview told me that “*marrying the daughter of a rich man is no less than buying her.*” His reason to make such statement was because the bride wealth for the daughter of a rich man is very high. The person who marries a daughter of a rich person should be someone who can pay the demanded amount of bride wealth.

Ato Abera Chala told me a story of a poor family who went to ask the daughter of a rich man to their son. He said,

The time was before four decades. There was a very rich and influential man in the community who had a beautiful daughter. A poor father had a young man who has reached the age of entering into marriage relationship. This poor father sent elders to the house of the rich man to ask the daughter for his son. The rich man said, 'your family status is not equal with my family, so, go and look for the family that is equal to you.

The father of the son and all the family members were so outraged by the response of the rich man that they began to think for another option. Finally, they decided to go and ask by Irra Dhaaba. They chose this option either to take the bride if they give them or curse and make her remain unmarried for life if they refuse to give her away. To materialize this plan a date was set, people gathered together and went to the rich man's house to beg him to give away his daughter. Elders of the community tried to persuade him but in vain. At last, the parents of the young man and elders cursed the family of the rich man, hanged the grass and the sticks they brought on the fence and left. The young man looked for another lady and married. Surprisingly, that young lady couldn't find a husband for quite some time. Finally she was impregnated by her father's servant and gave birth to an illegitimate child. This brought a big disgrace to the rich man in the community.

In the above case two important issues were raised in relation to *Irra Dhaaba* customary marriage. The first is that people who want to be established a marriage relation with the girls of rich family can expected to compare in status. Which means poor family did not get a chance to established marriage relations because of this the poor family engaged in to *Irra Dhaaba*. The second message is that wealth and property cannot suppress the social, cultural and spirituals influence. The man refused to give his daughter hoping that another gentleman will come and ask for her because of her father's wealth. But there was no one who is courageous enough to go against the culture because everybody believed that curse is something that can happen. Therefore, we can conclude that economic condition is one of the factors which lead people to *Irra Dhaaba* marriage practice.

4.2.3. Age Reason

Age is one of the conditions, in fact the major condition, to be considered in marriage. In marriage relationship, culturally it is expected that the man should be older than the woman. It is known that many people enter into the marriage relationship at their adolescence age, but there are some individuals who cannot enter to this relationship due to various reasons. Once a person is advanced in age, getting a life partner is not so easy.

This is especially true to women because no one wants to marry a lady who is advanced in age. In such cases, parents who have a daughter whose age is advancing, give her away to anyone who asks for her irrespective of his economic situation because they fear that the woman is going to be husbandless all her life. Even though age is not a big deal in the case of men, a person advanced in age may not get a lady he chooses to marry. That is why persons who are advanced in age choose the traditional *Irra Dhaaba* marriage.

The man goes to such type of marriage for fear that his request will be denied because of his age. Here is a story of a person who entered into *Irra Dhaaba* marriage relationship because of his advanced age. His name is Mekonnen Bekele. He lives in *Caffee Tumaa* Woreda, in a small village called Dekeseden. The man told me that he is now 65 years old and a father of six children. He remembered how he entered into the marriage relationship and told his story to me as follows:

Case 1

When I see back, I think I got married at the age of 40. The main reason why I couldn't marry earlier was because I was sent to military service. When I came back from this national military service, I couldn't marry the girl I wanted to marry. According to my culture I proposed to two girls one after another, but my request was denied. They told me that they were not willing to give their daughter to me because I was very much advanced in age. I felt very sorry. I wanted to have a wife and children.

My parents were also eager to see me settled in life and have children. I wanted to follow illegal way of marrying a lady (Telefa), but I was afraid because her family might follow me and reclaim their daughter. Finally, we made a thorough discussion with my family

members and it was decided that I should marry by Irra Dhaaba marriage ceremony. I prepared all the necessary materials for the ceremony. Since I did not have capacity limitations, I bought all the necessary materials including gold, clothing and other materials.

I also prepared some bride wealth. After the preparation is over, I organized my elders and friends to go to the house of the young lady I chose. After a long discussion and negotiation, her parents decided not to go against the culture; they expressed their willingness to give me their daughter. As a result, I managed to marry a lady who is 18 years younger than me. Now, we are parents of 6 children and leading peaceful life. It is true that there is age gap, but we are living happily by respecting each other.

As it is mentioned above, even though the age of the man may be very big and the lady may not be willing to marry him, because of the influence of the culture, marriages are materialized by Irra Dhaaba marriage ceremony.

4.2.4. Divorce or Death

In many societies polygamy is a taboo. This is true in a society where this study was made. As my key informants of case study told to me, in this community people enter into marriage relationship by various types of ceremonies. Some of the marriages are peaceful while others are characterized by conflicts and disagreements. A marriage characterized by conflicts and disagreements usually ends up in divorce. There is also natural separation of married couples; this happens when either the husband or the wife dies.

According to my key participants of FGD of elders in olden days if there is disagreement between married couple which ends up in divorce, the wife leaves the house and goes to her parents. When this happens, they divide the property among them and each one takes the share according to the customary law of the society. This being the case, a man who has lost his wife by death usually marries another wife by *Irra Dhaaba* marriage ceremony. The reason is because parents do not want to give their daughters in marriage to a man who is either divorced or widowed. The main reason for this is because such man is seen by the community as having bad luck. As a result, a man who has lost his wife due

to one of the above reasons has no other option other than marrying by *Irra Dhaaba* marriage ceremony.

4.2.5. Failed Abduction (*Buttaa*)

This type of marriage has been being practiced in most of the Ethiopian cultures all over the country. It is a type of marriage done without the consent of the young lady and her parents. The man prepares his strong men and takes the lady by force, usually when they find her alone and far away from her parent's home. When the man tries to take her by force, the lady struggles a lot to save herself. This time she might be beaten or even muffled to prevent her from crying for help. During this type of marriage the lady incurs physical injuries and psychological trauma.

However, this type of marriage is still being practiced in some communities. The question is, how can this illegal forced marriage practice can be a reason for *Irra Dhaaba* marriage? If the plan of the man to take the lady by abduction is aborted, he goes the next morning by *Irra Dhaaba* to the girl. In addition, if a man hears that someone is planning to take the girl betrothed to him by illegal means, he takes the lady as soon as possible by *Irra Dhaaba* marriage ceremony. Below is information I got from the person I interviewed. This man married his wife by *Irra Dhaaba* marriage because someone wanted to take his spouse by illegal means.

Case 2

This is how he began the narration: *My name is Midekisa Ifaa; I live in Caaffee Tuma Woreda and I have two children. This is how I got married. To tell you the truth, I did not have financial and material constraint to marry a respected lady by proper cultural marriage procedures. My parents were well respected individuals in the community. When I reached the right age for marriage, my father asked me to get married.*

He told me that he had found a beautiful young lady from a good family. That time I was grade 8 student; so I asked him about my studies. He said, 'What you have studied so far is enough. You are my only son and I am getting old; so it is your responsibility to control

my property.' I knew that he was telling me to go back to farm. I couldn't continue my argument; I consented to go back to farm.

It was while I was working in the farm of my father that I saw a very beautiful girl from a respected family. I and my friends were taking some drink and making fun together. As we were talking, a boy from my neighbor named Mideksa told me that they were longing to see my marriage day. I told my friends that I was hoping to get married soon. One of my friends suggested taking her by illegal means. The other one answered by saying that it would become a court case if the lady does not show her consent. The other friend of mine told me that someone had already planned to take her by illegal means (abduction). When I heard this statement, I was shocked and became speechless. I knew the boy who was planning to take my beloved by illegal means; I also loved the girl very much. So I was in a dilemma.

Finally, I decided not to miss this girl. I thought to take her by illegal means (abduction), but I was afraid. I told the story to my father; we agreed to keep the issue secret and started preparation to bring the girl in a week time by Irra Dhaaba ceremony. I prepared my best men and other attendants. I spent the week by fear and anxiety because I thought that the young man could take her before the appointed day. Luckily, the day came and we went to bring her by carrying all the items the culture demands. This happened six years ago.

As we have seen above, illegal forced marriage practice can be a reason for *Irra Dhaaba* marriage. If someone feels that another person is planning to take his fiancé by force, he goes for *Irra Dhaaba* marriage.

The above all factors are the reason why people engaged in to *Irra Dhaaba* customary marriage that done accidentally by the boy without any preconditions. The major factors for *Irra Dhaaba* customary marriage accomplished by presenting formal marriage proposal according to the culture of the community is that when the boy wants to take her to his home before the date that arranged to the final concluding day.

4.3. The Implications (Consequences) of Irra Dhaaba marriage

It is known that everything has its own positive and negative effects. Sometimes the positive implication outweighs the negative one and vice versa. When we look at *Irra Dhaaba* marriage practice, it has both positive and negative consequences. However, its negative consequences are more than its positive consequences. Below we will try to see the implication of *Irra Dhaaba* marriages.

4.3.1. Decisive (Positive) Implication

The major positive implication of this type of marriage as my FGD participants said, is minimizing the cost of feasting. It is obvious that during marriage, special feast is prepared both in the house of the bride and the bride groom. However, the level of preparation varies from person to person. When we see the *Irra Dhaaba* marriage, though not completely, it reduces this unnecessary cost particularly to the family of the bride. This is because in *Irra Dhaaba* marriage, the bride as well as her parents is not informed about what is to happen. The preparation in the house of the bride groom is also not as splendid as the normal marriage. Since *Irra Dhaaba* marriage is secretive by its nature, the number of invitees to the ceremony is also very limited.

As Obbo Mideksa Ifa said, the other positive effect is that it does not require much bride wealth from the man. This is because it is known that those who some of them go for *Irra Dhaaba* marriage are persons who have economic constraints. In addition, this type of marriage is time effective. The whole process may take only two or three days. From the conversations we held with the natives I came to know that there were times when the whole process was completed in a single day. These are the major positive effects of the *Irra Dhaaba* marriage.

4.3.2. The Denial (negative) implication

According to my key informants of interviews, the major negative consequences of *Irra Dhaaba* marriage rest up on the bride and her family members. This is because the family is forced to enter into the relationship without consent. The bride and her family members enter in to this type of relationship because they fear the social and psychological effect

that follows if they reject the request. The negative effect to the bridegroom will be marrying a girl he does not love if the one he loved and her parents reject the request, since a person who go for *Irra Dhaaba* marriage will never go back home without having a wife.

To show the true negative consequences of *Irra Dhaaba* marriage, I interviewed some women who entered into marriage relationship by *Irra Dhaaba* marriage practice. I interviewed three women and tried to find out the truth from the day they got married till now. The ladies also told me the truth freely.

The other negative effect is on those women who are asked for marriage by *Irra dhaaba* and their parents reject the request. The researcher also interviewed two women who had such experience. In this study, however, we will see about two women, one who has entered into marriage relationship by *Irra Dhaaba* marriage and the other whose parents have rejected the request. Therefore, we tried to see the negative effects of *Irra Dhaaba* marriage in two sections.

4.3.2.1. Cultural implication

During the interview and group discussions the researcher held with some groups of the community, it was mentioned several times that the cultural consequences is very strong in that community. First, the researcher would like to show the effect of rejecting *Irra Dhaaba* marriage request because the ladies whose parents had rejected the *Irra Dhaaba* marriage request have told me how they suffered because of the cultural effect.

When I say cultural consequences, I mean things which are seen as a taboo in the community and have negative effects on individuals. It is known that the norm and expectation of the community have an impact on the decisions of an individual. So, if a girl was asked for marriage by *Irra Dhaaba*, and her parents have rejected the request, this lady experiences very difficult situation in her life. This happens because of the curse that comes up on her.

That curse denies her the right of marrying another man. The community fears curse because they attach it with spiritual aspect. In that community if a lady could not enter into

marriage relationship in her young age, it is considered as a bad luck. The effect is even worse because they believe that a girl who is advanced in age cannot bear a child. It becomes the worst if she was asked by *Irra Dhaaba* and the request was rejected. Here below, I present the case of one woman who was asked by *Irra Dhaaba* marriage, the request was rejected, and the negative effect she experienced as a result.

Case 3

My name is Dinbushe Bedhane. I am about 68 years old. I have five children. The total number of my children was seven, but two of them died. I tell you the reason why they died later. Even though I am married now, I know how I managed to get married. My Father was a much respected farmer in a small village called Robo which is found in Caaffee Tumaa. I was the second child in the family.

Though I cannot remember the time, I clearly remember what happened at that time. I don't even remember my age. The only thing I remember is the coming of many horsemen to our house and marching in a ceremonial way. At first, I went out to see the marching of the horsemen.

*The only thing I knew what was going on was when my mother took me to one of our neighbor's house and informed me that the men have come to take me by *Irra Dhaaba*. She told me not to move anywhere from that house.*

*I was aware about *Irra Dhaaba* because one young girl from our neighbor was married by this ceremony some time ago. My family members and neighbors were shocked and everything was in commotion. After a while everything, including the marchers on the horses back, was silent. The time was about mid-day. I didn't know what was going on in my parents' house. When it was about evening time, I heard the people cursing. The words they were using were very strong words.*

I was shocked when I heard them cursing by saying 'let her not get married; if she gets married, let her be childless; if she bears children, let the children die; may your descendants be cursed.' I guessed my father had rejected their request. At that moment I was very happy. I loved my father more than I did before. I came back to the house, but I

was simply crying. My father tried to soothe me by telling me that he has chased them away and by promising me that he will give me in marriage by preparing a splendid party.

That time passed this way, but my age began to advance. All my age mates got married. I began to feel that the curse is bearing fruit. But what made me very disappointed was the day when a marriage request came to my younger sister while I was there. All the family members including myself were worried very much. The reason for the worry was that according to the culture marrying a younger girl while her elder sister is still at home was very difficult.

My younger sister got married. My situation continued to create worry to my parents and myself. I realized that my age was around 37. Then I started to think to take my own action. Finally I married a man whose wife has passed away. I thought for a while, and I knew that according to the tradition of the community, marrying a man who is divorced was very difficult, but I agreed to marry him

Since I was advancing in age, I decided to bear children as soon as possible. I conceived and gave birth to my first child, but my first born died just in one month time. I am not sure whether the death of my child was accidental or because of the curse. I felt very bad; I understood that the curse was following me. I conceived the second time, but this child died at the time of delivery. This made my worry even worse, so I consulted my mother what I should do.

After the consultation I and my mother went to the spiritual leader (Abbaa Ayyanaa) who was living nearby. The spiritual leader told us that there was a curse up on me. He further informed us that unless I got forgiveness, though I bear children, they cannot survive. He told me that I was lucky because I could conceive. Many others who were cursed couldn't even conceive. Finally we did all we were advised to do through the spiritual leader. After that I give birth to five children and all have survived. Now, I am a grandmother. So, refusing a request that comes by Irra Dhaaba is very difficult. So far, there is no one who has come to ask my daughters by Irra Dhaaba, but if someone comes and asks for my daughter by Irra Dhaaba, I will not reject the request. I don't want anyone to pass through my experience.

As we have seen above, if a girl is asked by *Irra Dhaaba* and not given away due to parents' rejection, she does not only face social and cultural challenges but also psychological disturbance. This kind of marriage led the parents of the girl into dilemma in making decision by fearing of the socio-cultural and emotional consequences to their daughter. The reason is that the girl and her parents who refused the request of *Irra Dhaaba* did not get a marriage because of a belief or spiritual aspects that fear of cures.

The girl who was cured during this time highly affected emotionally in future prospect of having children. The cure is concerned about spiritual aspect that was concentrated on the future prospective about not get marriage, childless, as well as the descendent be cured. Therefore, if someone is in a certain culture, being subject to the culture is very important.

4.3.2.2. Emotional Implication

The other negative consequences of *Irra Dhaaba* marriage is seen mainly in the family of the woman. The family of the girl experience emotional implication because of the fear that if, they refuse the request, their daughter suffers from the curse. On the side of the young lady, getting married without any preparation is harmful both physically and psychologically. In connection to this, I will present the information I received from a girl who got married by *Irra Dhaaba* marriage.

Case 4

My name is Tsige Degefe and I am 54 years old. I am a mother of six children and I do have grandchildren, too. I remember the time I got married by Irra Dhaaba marriage. At that time there wasn't ample opportunity to pursue education. We usually support our parents by doing some minor works such as fetching water and collecting firewood. Once, I and my friends went to collect firewood from the nearby forest. On the way we came across 5 young men and we feared them.

When we reached where they were, two of them came and caught me. Among them we didn't know any, so we began shouting and crying. The plan of the young men was to take me and marry me to one of them. However, some people who heard our shouting arrived

and rescued us. When I reached our house I heard my father talking angrily; this made me even more scared. After three days, that young man who wanted to marry me by force came with horsemen to take me by Irra Dhaaba. My father was shocked. He became much worried because he knew what will happen to me if he rejects the request.

When I knew that he was willing to give me away, I became much disturbed and began to cry and lament. When they took me, I felt as if I was dead. I couldn't calm myself because someone who is strange to me is taking me to his house. I cried a lot and got severe headache. I wanted to escape from the house. If this plan fails, I decided to starve and die. The parents of my husband were in good economic stand and they did all they could for me. But I hated to see my husband; I longed to see my family members.

The parents of my husband assigned a young lady of my age to attend and take care of me. I talked with her and slept with her. In the course of time I began to get used to the situations. I began to converse with my husband and understand each other. His family members became very happy. I began to help the mother of my husband; though there was some level of adaptation, there was still some internal disturbance.

The reason for the disturbance was getting married by Irra Dhaaba without any marriage ceremony, without any marriage party, and without my consent. Even though I and my husband began to understand each other, I continued to hate him for long time because I felt that he had snatched my childhood by force. But, after bearing children I began to forget things. This type of marriage is very difficult and disturbing. But, as long as the culture is there, it will continue to exist.

As we have seen from the above case fearing of the culture and the spiritual aspects the society led in to emotional consequences. The parents of the girl accept the request because they worried that what will happened if they reject the request. When people face something they have not thought about, they become very much disturbed and agitated.

As we have seen above, since *Irra Dhaaba marriage* is sudden and unexpected, it is very disturbing and kills the moral of the women who are forced to enter into such type of relationship. So, this kind of marriage highly breaks the heart of the girls and led in to a lifelong disturbance.

4.4. The Current state of Irra Dhaaba marriage in Caffee Tumaa

Irra Dhaaba is a type of well accepted traditional marriage which is being practiced in Oromo culture. However, in a place where this study was made, its continuity and frequency is decreasing from time to time. According to the Woreda Women's and Children's office, the main reason for the decrease is modernization. This means that the modern generation is going far away from the culture. Within the last two years, only one *Irra Dhaaba* marriage was done in the community. On the contrary, modern abduction (a type marriage that takes place based on willingness of the boys and girls without the consent of their parent) is increasing.

Today's marriage relations are entered by the interest of the two individuals. First, they know each other and agree to enter into marriage relationship. But, sometimes their knowledge of each other leads them to unexpected relationships. This relationship sometimes ends up in pregnancy. When this happens, they agree to go a type marriage that takes place based on willingness of the boys and girls without the consent of their parent called modern abduction. If the man is not willing to do modern abduction, the woman directly goes to the man's house.

The Woreda Women's and Children's office said that many forced marriage cases come to their office and when the parties involved are asked, they tell that they did it by agreement. For the parents, it is abduction, but for the couples who are getting married, it is modern abduction form of marriage.

The other idea which is being deep rooted in the community is the understanding of the women about the rights of marriage. However, if there is someone who is bold enough to go for *Irra Dhaaba* marriage, the community has still regard to the culture. During a group discussion session, I tried to discuss with unmarried boys and girls. From the discussion I came to know that they are aware about the *Irra Dhaaba* marriage.

But both the boys and girls told me that they do not want to enter into such type of marriage relationship. Especially the girls strongly attested that they prefer to remain spinsters rather than getting married by *Irra Dhaaba* marriage practice. I asked them what they do if someone comes and asks their parents and the parents agree to give them by

Irra Dhaaba. They answered, “*Those days are gone; we know that we won’t be forced to marry a man we don’t know.*” Even the men agreed that time is changing and they have no interest to go for such type of marriage unless they are forced by circumstances.

I posed a similar question to all participants who took part in the discussion and the interview. Their answer was more or less similar. I said, “This culture is declining from time to time; if it continues this way, it may disappear in the near future. What do you think is better to maintain the culture?” Their answer was that the people of Oromo are not only the people of *Caffee Tumaa*. This culture is not only a culture of *Caffee Tumaa*, but the culture of all the Oromo. So, the decline of the culture in that society does not mean that it declines everywhere. They told me that this tradition is being widely practiced in other Oromo communities.

From the three groups (elders, youths and women) of focus group discussion, the researcher finds different opinion from the same discussion point. The elders and women participants highly focused on the spiritual and cultural aspects of *Irra Dhaaba* customary marriage practices. As they said this kinds of customary marriage practice is not only about establishing formal relationship between the bride and the bridegroom, but also spiritually ties. *Irra Dhaaba* customary marriage practice in this community related with traditional beliefs. As we have seen from these discussion groups they focused on the tradition of the marriage practice and on the spiritual problems that the girl faced if the parents of her reject the request by *Irra Dhaaba*.

From the youth’s side they did not much worried about their culture and spiritual aspects of *Irra Dhaaba* marriage practice. During the focused group discussion session with them they focused on their interests on marriage. They said whatever the culture is; do not want to enter in to such type of marriage relationship. Especially the girls strongly attested that they prefer to remain spinsters rather than getting married by *Irra Dhaaba* marriage practice. In addition to this they think that no one forced them to marry a man who does not know and they stared to think about women rights in marriage.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

All society in the world recognizes the importance of marriage as a source of foundation of society. Among the foundation of society that found by marriage is family. Irrespective of this the *Caffee Tumaa* Oromo of Gelan society recognizes marriage. Different types of customary marriages exist in *Caffee Tumaa* Oromo. Different types of marriage seem to exist in *Caaffee Tumaa* Oromo of Gelan zone of *Ada'a* District. Monogamy is the most prevalent form. However, polygamy is not totally absent.

Among the different types of customary marriage practice in *Caffee Tumaa*, *Irra Dhaaba* is the one. This type of marriage is the man's request to take his fiancée earlier than the originally planned time. The choices of this type of marriage have increased as a result of the social and legal pressure exerted against abduction. In the finding of marriage partner in the *Caaffee Tumaa* community, investigation of the blood relation goes up to the seventh generation. After it is proved that the bride and bridegroom are not related up to the seventh generation, they get approval to get married.

What makes *Irra Dhaaba* customary marriage practice different from other types of marriages among the Oromo people is its urgency, the completion of the whole process in one day except for some inconveniences, and its being practiced among the Oromo's only. *Irra Dhaaba* marriages are the one accomplished according to the culture and rule of the community by presenting formal marriage proposal and the one accomplished suddenly by the man without any precondition.

The first type of *Irra Dhaaba* marriage is like any other traditional marriage that parents of the bridegroom propose for the marriage. Then bridegroom wants to take the bride home on the ring (engagement) ceremony and the parents of the bride accept the proposal, it will be changed from formal proposed customary marriage turn in to *Irra Dhaaba*. The other form of *Irra Dhaaba* marriage done in *Caffee Tumaa* is a marriage proposal done by the bridegroom without giving any pre-information to the bride's family. These are how *Irra Dhaaba* customary marriage practiced in *Caaffee Tumaa* Oromo community of *Ada'a* district.

The reasons why people get engaged in to *Irra Dhaaba* is that economically weaken on the part of boy's parent to pay marriage price is cited as one of the cause. The second causes, if the boy is found to be from uncertain family background or belongs to socially despised groups, or has some physically problems, his relatives are forced to use this forms of marriage, because, as people often say, nobody is willing to give his girl to such boy nor does she willingly offer herself to him.

The third reason, if the parents who have a daughter whose age is advancing, give her away to anyone who asks for her irrespective of his economic situation because they fear that the woman is going to be husbandless all her life. Even though age is not a big deal in the case of men, a person advanced in age may not get a girl he chooses to marry. That is why persons who are advanced in age choose the traditional *Irra Dhaaba* marriage.

The other reason, a man who has lost his wife by death and divorce usually marries another wife by *Irra Dhaaba* marriage ceremony. The reason is because parents do not want to give their daughters in marriage to a man who is either divorced or widowed. The main reason for this is because such man is seen by the community as having bad luck. The final reason why people engaged in *Irra Dhaaba* customary marriage among *Caaffee Tumaa* community is failed abduction. If the plan of the man to take the girl by abduction is aborted, he goes the next morning by *Irra Dhaaba* to the girl.

The implication of *Irra Dhaaba* marriage is divided in to positive and negative implication. The positive implication of this type of marriage is time effective and the whole process may take only two or three days. In addition, this type of marriage is coat effective.

Irra Dhaaba marriage practice negatively affected the bride and her family members. The reason for this the family is forced to enter into the relationship without their consent. The bride and her family members enter in to this type of relationship because they fear the socio-cultural and emotional effect that follows if they reject the request. The socio-cultural implication related with spiritual aspects of the community. Which means if, a girl who was asked for marriage by *Irra Dhaaba* and her parents have rejected the request, this

girl experiences very difficult situation in her life. This happens because of the curse that comes up on her.

The other consequence of *Irra Dhaaba* marriage practice is emotional implication on the girl. This type of marriage affect the young girl, getting married without any preparation is harmful both physically and psychologically. So, *Irra Dhaaba* customary marriage practice is a solution to economic and socio-cultural problem for the bride groom and his family in general and a problem to the bride and her family members in particular.

The continuity and frequency of *Irra Dhaaba* customary marriage is limited. The reason for this is that modernization. This means that the modern generation is going far away from the culture. In addition to this, young girls in the study area started to think about women's right in marriage.

Generally, the study explored the vital essences, reason and implication of *Irra Dhaaba* customary marriage practiced in the study area. This type of customary marriage especially for the girl is very difficult in inside and outside work load, continuous school dropouts, and high risk of HIV/AIDS and other sexual transmitted disease (STDs) are also confirmed as consequences.

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APPENDIX II

Addis Ababa University

Department of Social Anthropology

Interview Guidelines for the resident of Caffee Tumaa Woreda of the Gelan zone key informants

The objectives of these guidelines are to assess the essence, the reason why people engage and the current state of Irra Dhaaba in Gelan zone of Caffee Tumaa. The interview guidelines will be for the Woreda official and community elders of the study area.

Name of kebele _____

Date of interview _____

Title of respondent _____

1. What do you know about Irra Dhaaba?
2. Have you attended any Irra Dhaaba rituals?
3. Are there any forms of Irra Dhaaba that you know?
4. How often do Irra Dhaaba takes place in your locality?
5. Can you tell as the reason why people engage in Irra Dhaaba?
6. What is the role of elders on the rituals of Irra Dhaaba?
7. What is the current state of Irra Dhaaba in your area?
8. Can we say Irra Dhaaba violate human right?
9. Do you think Irra Dhaaba marriage rituals are socially recognized and accepted?

APPENDIX III

Addis Ababa University

Department of Social Anthropology

Focus Group Discussion Guidelines for the resident of Caffee Tumaa

Woreda of the Gelan zone key informants

The objectives of these guidelines are to assess how Irra Dhaaba takes place and the Implications of Irra Dhaaba in Gelan zone of Caffee Tumaa. The FGDs guidelines will be for women, men and youths of the study area.

Name of kebele _____

Date of Discussion _____

Title of respondent _____

1. How do you explain Irra Dhaaba?
2. Did you experience in Irra Dhaaba rituals so far?
3. Would you tell me the material requirements which are used for the ritual to takes place?
4. Is there any spiritual fulfillment for the festivity?
5. How do you explain the overall ritual festivity of Irra Dhaaba?
6. Do you think that this kind of marriage have social consequences?
7. How do you describe the emotional consequences of Irra Dhaaba?
8. What is the role of elders on the ritual festivity of Irra Dhaaba?
9. Do you think that Irra Dhaaba marriage breaks the customary law of the Oromo?

APPENDIX IV

Participants of FGD (elders)

No	Name	Sex	Age	Marital Status	Education Level	Occupation	Religious Affiliation	Place of FGD	Date of FGD	Remark
1	Obbo Debele Demisse	M	65	Married	Illiterate	Farmer	Orthodox	At their village	19/06/2016	
2	Obbo Tadesse Wale	M	55	Married	Illiterate	Farmer	Orthodox			
3	Obbo Sime Wakene	M	60	Married	Illiterate	Farmer	Orthodox			
4	Obbo Wondimu Negash	M	49	Married	Basic Education	Farmer	Orthodox			
5	Obbo Shimelis Chewaka	M	50	Married	Illiterate	Farmer	Orthodox			
6	Obbo Tolosa Dadi	M	53	Married	Illiterate	Farmer	Orthodox			

APPENDIX V

Participants of FGD (youths)

No	Name	Sex	Age	Marital Status	Educational Level	Occupation	Religious Affiliation	Place of FGD	Date of FGD	Remark
1	Obbo Getu Degefa	M	25	Unmarried	secondary	Farmer	Orthodox	At their Village	20/06/2016	
2	Obbo Addisu Teshome	M	28	Unmarried	secondary	Farmer	Orthodox			
3	Obbo Tabor Biru	M	30	Unmarried	primary	Farmer	Orthodox			
4	Obbo Bira Bedada	M	29	Unmarried	First cycle	Farmer	Orthodox			
5	Obbo Tesfay Bedane	M	30	Unmarried	Illiterate	Farmer	Orthodox			
6	Obbo Beshada Telila	M	33	Unmarried	primary	Farmer	Orthodox			

APPENDIX VI

PARTICIPANTS OF FGD (WOMEN)

No	Name	sex	Age	Marital Status	Educational Level	Occupation	Religious Affiliation	Place of FGD	Date of FGD	Remark
1	Adde Dinke Bedada	F	60	Married	Illiterate	House wife	Orthodox	At their village	21/06/2016	
2	Adde Desu Demisse	F	63	Married	Illiterate	House wife	Orthodox			
3	Adde Zenebu Kebede	F	59	Married	Basic Education	House wife	Orthodox			
4	Adde Tiru Lemessa	F	50	Married	Illiterate	House wife	Orthodox			
5	Adde Mulu Assefa	F	58	Married	Illiterate	House wife	Orthodox			
6	Adde Fanu Getachew	F	65	Married	Illiterate	House wife	Orthodox			

APPENDIX VII

Informal key informants of interview

No	Name	sex	age	Marital Status	Educational Level	Occupation	Religious Affiliation	Place of interview	Date of interview	Remark
1	Obbo Tadesse Bacha	M	47	Married	Diploma	Office work	Orthodox	At his home	3/06/2016	
2	Obbo Abdo Regassa	M	56	Married	Illiterate	Farmer	Orthodox	At his work p	5/06/2016	
3	Obbo Kelbesa Mekonen	M	40	Unmarried	Basic Education	Labor work	Orthodox	At his village	5/06/2016	
4	Obbo Worku Telila	M	78	Married	Basic	Farmer	Orthodox	At his home	8/06/2016	
5	Obbo Tesfaye Demise	M	53	Married	Secondary	Farmer	Orthodox	At his home	12/06/2016	
6	Obbo Eshetu Wordofa	M	42	Married	Basic	Farmer	Orthodox	At his work p	12/06/2016	
7	Obbo Obsa Shiferaw	M	38	Unmarried	Degree	Teaching	Protestant	At his work p	13/06/2016	
8	Obbo Mekonen Shoge	M	36	Married	Degree	Teaching	Adventist	At his work p	13/06/2016	

APPENDIX VIII

Key informants of interview

No	Name	sex	age	Marital Status	Educational Level	Occupation	Religious Affiliation	Place of interview	Date of interview	Remark
1	Obbo Ifa Dadi	M	65	Married	Secondary	Farmer	Orthodox	At his home	15/06/2016	
2	Obbo Abera Chala	M	69	Married	Illiterate	Farmer	Orthodox	At his work place	15/06/2016	
3	Obbo Tolosa Balicha	M	71	Married	Basic edu ⁿ	Farmer	Orthodox	At his home	16/06/2016	
4	Obbo Zewudu Dadi	M	48	Married	Illiterate	Farmer	Orthodox	At his home	17/06/2016	
5	Obbo Tabor Degefa	M	55	Married	Secondary	Farmer	Orthodox	At his village	18/06/2016	
6	Obbo Kefeni Wordofa	M	62	Married	Illiterate	Farmer	Orthodox	At his work p	18/06/2016	
7	Adde Buzu Lemma	F	50	Married	Secondary	House wife	Orthodox	At her home	21/06/2016	
8	Adde Bekelu Nigusse	F	66	Married	Illiterate	House Wife	Orthodox	At her home	23/06/2016	

APPENDIX IX

Key informants of case study

No	Name	Sex	Age	Marital status	Education al level	Occupation	Religious affiliation	Place of interview	Date of interview	Remark
1	Obbo Mekonnen Bikila	M	65	Married	Illiterate	Farmer	Orthodox	At his home	16/06/2016	
2	Obbo Mideksa Ifa	M	38	Married	Primary Education	Farmer	Orthodox	At his work place	17/06/2016	
3	Adde Dinbushe Bedane	F	68	Married	Illiterate	Farmer	Orthodox	At her home	21/06/2016	
4	Adde Tsige Degefa	F	54	Married	Illiterate	Farmer	Orthodox	At her home	26/06/2016	

DECLARATION

I the undersigned declare that this thesis is my original work, has not been presented for the Degree in other University and all sources of materials used in this thesis have been duly acknowledge.

Name: Seyoum Worku Telila

Signature _____

Date _____