

### Restrictions on the *Gadaa* System:

#### Its Repercussions and Responses of the Arsi Oromoo at glance

There are three significant points about the Arsi Oromoo that are relevant to this study. First, the Arsi are the earliest of the Oromoo groups cited in both Christian and Muslim sources. Three witnesses are there for this point. One, Martial De Salviac stated that the Arsi Oromoo were mentioned in Christian sources in the first century of the last Millennium (Salviac, 1901: 39; Braukämper, 2004: 76; Hassen, 2015: 150).<sup>98</sup> Two, the first reference to Arsi Oromoo in Muslim sources, is in hagiography of *Sheik* Isaq Ahmed of Alawi, dated to the 12<sup>th</sup> century (Hassen, 2015: 101). Three, as to oral tradition of Dirre *Sheik* Hussein area, Makida, the mother of *Sheik* Hussein, an Islamic saint who converted the inhabitants of the ancient Sultanate of *Bali* to Islam was an Oromoo woman. Besides, there some Arsi Oromoo clans who claim to have descended from Sof Omar, brother of Makida and the most favorite disciple of *Sheik* Hussein.<sup>99</sup> *Sheik* Hussein's shrine is located at Anajina,<sup>100</sup> which is dated to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, makes Arsi among the first Oromoo groups to become Muslims in Ethiopia. Thus, historical contact of the Arsi with both the Christian and Muslim states led them to know and watch each other for long time (Braukämper, 2004: 83,136; Hassen, 1989: 109-11; Eshetu, 1973: 8-10; OCTB, 2006: 233).

Two, the Arsi Oromoo is a large group of the Oromoo Nation that inhabited a large fertile territory. The Arsi Oromoo descended from their father Arsi(e) and came to one of the main Oromoo stocks separating itself from the rest and inhabited Arsiland (Kefyalew, 2004: 36). The Arsi Oromoo are divided into two main branches, the Sikkoand Mando(yu) that inhabits the present Oromia zones of Arsi, West Arsi, Bale and East Shäwa. Arsi settlements extend up to the Sidama, Guji and Borana

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<sup>98</sup> Braukämper cites (Perruchon 1897: 277, 280) *Bali* appeared in Zagwe records.

<sup>99</sup> Braukämper analyzed the oral tradition of people from the sanctuaries of both saints and it strongly underlines strong relations of two personalities. Sources date *Sheik* Hussein to 29 generations ago. But that of Sof Omar is to 20 generations ago. Moreover, Shakamarra clan (corruption of *Sheik* Omar), one of the clans that claim descent from Sof Omar cite him to 10-12 generations ago only. Thus, though it is hardly logical to accept these two Sufi *Sheiks* have lived as contemporary, their connection to Oromo is strong in the local tradition.

<sup>100</sup> A legend about the origin of the name Anajina has it that one day *Sheik* Hussein was said to have taken a walk and on his way back to his Mosque, he heard of a strange noise and asked "who is there?" Then, the *Satan*, who was said to have been afraid of the *Sheik*, replied in *Afan* Oromo as "Ana Jinniidha" meaning "it is me *jinni* (*Satan*)," which eventually transmogrified into Anajina. And to this day that gate of the shrine is called *Karra* Jinni- gate of the Satan. Eventually, the name Anajina came to be used as alternative name of the Shrine. This shows Oromo presence or its influence at the site.

in the south. So, the Arsi has settled over a larger area than any other settlements of the Oromoo main “tribes” (OCTB, 2006: 233). Eike Haberland stated that the territory they [Arsi Oromoo] occupied was too extensive and they therefore, split up in to a number of *Gadaa* area each with its own often different rules (Haberland, 1963: 784; Abdurahiman, 1991: 12).

Therefore, grace in natural resources and human capitals of the vast Arsiland were the prime target of the Shāwan expansion of the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Arsi warriors and elites seemed to know that enemy at the gate was merciless and determined to resist to the end at any cost. Likewise, the Arsi defeated the expansionists that were armed to their-teeth in five major campaigns in 1881, 1882, 1883, 1884 and 1885 (Abbas, 1982: 32; Ketebo, 1999: 88; Bahru, 1991: 29). Moreover, as Professor Asmarom Legesse puts it: “[t]hey [the Arsi] kept the Emperor’s army at the bay for ten years and, on one occasion, captured the *negarit* (royal drums) and came to very close to capturing Emperor Menelik himself” (Legesse, 2000: 66). Thus, the secret behind such a formidable resistance and a social fortress was their *Gadaa* System.

But, finally the battle of Azule that took place on September 6, 1886 was a disastrous defeat for the Arsi warriors (Ketebo, 1999: 88-89). At the climax of the Shāwan atrocities was the Annole mutilation, an incident secretly operated in the disguise of public conference and reconciliation that are respected by the Oromoo. In this sabotage, the notables of Arsi including *AbbaaGadaas*, the *hayyuu*, best of the military commanders—*qondaalas* and women of their ilk were chopped off, men their right hand and women right breast at Annole in 1886 (Abbas, 2014: 68-69). The incident is still a fresh social memory among the Arsi and cited as “harkaa fi harma muraa Anoollee” meaning the mutilations of hand and breast of Anole (Hassan, 2014: 187). The objectives of this event were both to put down further resistance and to dismantle the Arsi *Gadaa* for once and for all. The conquerors knew that every institution that unites the Oromoo would be a threat for their hegemony. Thus, the *Gadaa* system and its various institutions were forbidden ever since the occupation of Arsiland, on the ground that they rejuvenate patriotic sprit that would ferment revolts (Salviac, 1901: 182).

Following the conquest, the feudalist system called *mālkāñña system* in which, Menelik’s soldiers were given the authority over the people and that each clan was required to provide annual taxes (in kind) that were paid to the different landlords. According to Ketema Meskela and Mindaye

Abebe, as a result of the Shāwan conquest the majority of the Arsi were reduced to the status of *gäbbars*.<sup>101</sup> They also note that the pre-existing social organization, based on the *Gadaa* system was put aside and instead the autocratic and exploitative Shāwan system was superimposed on the indigenous Oromoo people. But, the central government in Addis Ababa did not have sufficient resource to collect taxes from the vast Arsi Oromoo territory it conquered. To redeem this, the government introduced a form of semi-indirect rule in which clan chiefs were given the title of *balabbat*, who entrusted areas to control under over lordship of *näftägnas*. The top governors and middle level officials were directly appointed from the center of the Empire with all judicial, administrative and military powers in their hands. In sum, it was reckless feudal rule known as *näftägna-gäbbar* system (Ketema, 2002: 49; Mindaye, 2005: 43-45).

Particularly, the justice system and courts were so corrupt, incomprehensible, infested by nepotism and favoritism. Most the Arsi did not opt to bring case to court. This was because of language barriers, religious biases and bribes were said to have cost more than winning the litigation used to gain in many instances. Informants didn't say they went to justice institution, it is said that people used to say 'we went to "mana diinaa"' meaning 'house of the enemy'.<sup>102</sup> Moreover, according to survey of Bale high court statistics, cases with highest frequency include banditry, so called treason against the nation, homicide and divorce cases.<sup>103</sup> Particularly, informants remember popular saying that shows hardships and agonies of the Arsi Oromoo in attending the regional high court in Asalla as "*abet abet ye Asellaw fird bet*" meaning *Oh! the Court of Asella*. This was an expression that one used to tell how messy it was to go to this court. They say it takes long time even to appear in front of judges bribing them in series of increasing gifts known as "dajji matigna", "ber megibiya" and "ejji menesha."<sup>104</sup> This was happened due to the termination of the indigenous justice system of the Arsi that was embedded in *Gadaa* System (Levine, 2000: 145). This is just one aspect of the multifaceted exploitations of a back-dragging and parasitic administrative system known as the *näftägna-gäbbar* rule.

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<sup>101</sup> *Gäbbar* literary mean tax payers but Arsiland they were *chisägna* (tenants) who lost their ancestral lands.

<sup>102</sup> Informants: Adam Tina; Burqa Cuqurru; Aliyi Cirri.

<sup>103</sup> የባለከፍተኛ ፍርድ ቤት የቀድሞ 4 ይሎች: 1935-36 ፍርድ ቤት ኮንዎን /Archives of the Former Bale High Court, Report on the 1935-35 E.C. (1943-1944) Court Activities. It is very simple survey. The struggle against injustice was called treason.

<sup>104</sup> Informants: Robe Mamma; Burqaa Cuqurru. They state that *däjimätign* means gift to get into home yard, *bärmägbiya* means bribe to enter the house and *ejji mänsha* is the gift to shake the hand of the official. They stated that people from Bale also had to attend the High Court in Asella until the early 1960s.

The Arsi Oromoo never accepted this undemocratic rule alien to its culture in peace. Sections of the society in all walks of life have conducted bitter struggles against it in two broad ways. One, they relied on cultural resistance. This was a new cultural orientation among the Arsi Oromoo following their conquest by the Imperial Ethiopia and the subsequent imposition of *gäbbar* system. Such struggle also took the form of civil disobedience, none violent protests and mass conversion to Islam in the form of cultural resistance. The dominations of the local people by culture of the conquerors and the restriction on the indigenous culture have rejuvenated Islamic sentiments among the Muslims and forced the non-Muslim Arsi in Gadab and western Bale to embrace Islam as means of cultural resistance (Østebø, 2005b: 37). This was based on the unifying spirit of *Sheik Hussein* as explicitly indicated in the next document from the state archive as follows:

የባሌጠቅላይግዛትቀላድ፣ይለካልአየተባለከብዙጊዜጀምሮሲነገርይልቁንምዘንድርቀላድጣይከአዲስአበባተነሰ፤ልየሚልድምፅሰለሚሰማጉዳዩአሰጊሆኗል።ባለባዮቹቀላድሲጣልአይፈቅዱምበፍፁምተቃዋሚናቸውየሼከሁሴንአገርቀላድሲወድቅበትአይገባም፤አይበጅም እያሉየአምልኮትወሬአቸውንይነዘሉ።<sup>105</sup>

In Governorate General of Bale there were rumors for long time about the imposition of *qäläd*;<sup>106</sup> but this year the news about men from Addis Ababa, who are discharged to impose *qäläd* have worried the people in Bale. The *balabbats*<sup>107</sup> of Bale do not want the imposition of *qäläd* and they totally resist it by disseminating blasphemies such as ‘the land *Sheik Hussein* shall not be subjected to *qäläd*; it will have bad consequences.’

The case was so vigilant that even persons from the core of the empire had proposed to the government to delay the imposition of the *qäläd* because of the possibility of resistance based on the fraternity among the Arsi embedded in *Arsoma* tradition and Sufi Saint Cult that was gaining public acceptance in the region. The cult did not get wider acceptance until the intrusion of Italians (1936-41), who employed preachers among *Sheiks* of Dirre with salary for their religious services to counter Christian expansion, which they see as threat their rule. For example, in Gädäb they hired a certain *Sheik Abd al-Rahman*, who converted much of people of Kofälé and Dodola districts to Islam. Thus, some of the Arsi, who sustained the *Oromoomuuda* tradition until 1950s, began to

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<sup>105</sup> NALA, Folder Number 17.2.204.01, report by *Ato Tibebe Desta* about Bale Governorate General to Ministry of Interior of the Imperial Government of Ethiopia, on 1941 E.C., (pp. 1-97), p. 1.  
<sup>106</sup> *Qalad* is a rope or leather thong about 135 cubits or 66 to 67 meters that was used to measure land.  
<sup>107</sup> *Balabat* (Amharic)-is an appointee at district level by the state to serve as subordinate land administrator.

change their pilgrimage to Anajina in unprecedented scale (Braukämper, 1980: 35; Braukämper, 2004: 143; Salviac, 1901: 179).

As the result the state had intensified strict surveillance on all religious and cultural congregations in Arsiland. This is illustrated in a report that advised the state to assign spies for surveillance at *ziyara* festivals, which by itself is derivative of the *Muuda* practice of the Oromoo *Gadaato* Sufi Saint Shrines in Bale as follows:

የዚያራሰፍራዎችሁሉልዩልዩዩኢትዮጵያህዝብየሚሰባሰብባቸውሰፍረዎችሆነዋል፤ ...  
በዚህምእንዲከሌላውእየተገናኙየሚተዋወቁበት...  
በዚያምልዩልዩባለባቸውጠሮማድረጊያናመማከራየየእድማመወሰኛሰፍራነው፡፡በጠቅላላውእንደመካ (አረብ)  
የፖለቲካሰፍራበመሆኑበየክብረበዓሉልዩተመልካችእንዲገኙባቸውያስፈልጋል፡፡<sup>108</sup>

.... all *ziyara* centres are places where the different peoples of Ethiopia gather.... there they meet one another and know each other ... there different *balabats* make appointments, make discussions, pass decisions to make plots. Generally, like Mecca [of Arabia], these are *places of politics and it is necessary to assign a special observer (spy) during these ceremonies*. (Emphasis added)

Two, armed struggle was seen as another way to get rid the oppressive system. The Arsi Oromoo are among peoples of Ethiopia to wage the earliest and incessant armed struggles to regain their economic, political and socio-cultural freedom. This struggle was conducted by collaboration among Arsi warriors mainly in Harrana, Dallo and Wabe sub-regions of Bale for security reasons. The first armed protest of such kind was known as “waraana jaghiir”-war of *jeghir* and at some places as struggle of Mohammed Gada Qallu. According to oral sources of the area, a certain Mohammed Gada Qallu, a local spiritual leader-*qaallu* of the Oromoo of Dallo *Awrajja*, organized the first and historic opposition against the reinstatement of *gäbbar* system called *jeghir*, in 1942 (Gabru, 1996: 130). Many informants in Dallo remember Mohammed Gada as pioneer of the patriot in Dallo and some battles he fought against the *naftañña*.<sup>109</sup> A document from the former MOI dated to November 1975 states this struggle as follows. “ከ1934 ዓ.ምእስከ 1936 ዓ.ምድረስጃጋሂርበሚልስያሜከደሎአውራጃየተነሱሽፍቶችበደቡብሲዳሞናባሌያሰላማዊውንህዝብንብረትናህይወትእየተዘዋወሩበማጥፋትበሐገሩላይከፍተኛጉዳትማድረሳቸውየሚታወስነው፡፡” meaning ‘bandits under the name *jeghir*, who

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<sup>108</sup> NALA, Folder Number 17.2.204.01, report by Ato Tibebe Desta about Bale Governorate General to Ministry of Interior of the Imperial Government of Ethiopia, on 1941 E.C., (pp. 1-97), p. 4.  
<sup>109</sup> Informants: Musa Roba; Abdullahi Butta.

originated from Dallo *Awrajja*, have caused serious damages on human lives and properties wondering throughout southern Sidamo and Bale between 1944 and 1944'.<sup>110</sup>

The second and the most widely known struggle of the Arsi was known as the “Bale Peasant Rebellion” or locally “Waraana-Dhoombiir” meaning the war of *Dhombir(ka)* 1963-1970. This was a more organized struggle lead by some Para-military Generals such as Wako Gutu in Dallo, Hussein Bunie in Wabe and Kahin Abdi in Ek-Kere, Abba Shaqe in Harana and Gadab. The resistance was so vigilant to the state authority that it was forced to use its maximum power including bomber planes and massive infantry expeditions. Consequently, despite heavy handedness of the expeditionary forces led by *awrajja* officials, it failed to restore government supremacy in the *awrajjas* of Wabé, Dallo and El-Kere until 1970. For instance, by the end of 1966, the protestors were in control 3/5 of Bale and forced the government to declare the state of emergency in Bale and Borana regions (Abara, 1971: 22-23). Besides, due to irresponsiveness of the state, rebellion broke out in Gadab area led by notables such as Abdulahi Ganamo and Tibäbu Wäldä Mikael in 1978. Moreover, the quest for cultural freedom continued until 1990s, when the window of hope was opened and cultural revivalism began to see its dawn.<sup>111</sup>

## Revitalization of Some *Gadaa* Institutions in Dodola District

### Gumii Yaa'ii Abbootii *Gadaa* /Council of *Gadaa* Leaders/: Structure and Functions

*Gumii Abbootii Gadaa* is council of *Gadaa* leaders organized on the model “Saglan Yaa'ii Booranaa” meaning the nine executives of the Borana council, stated by Professor Asmarom Legesse in his *standard opus* monograph on the *Gadaa* System (Legesse, 1974: 63-65).<sup>112</sup> He flamboyantly explained the various structures subordinate to this main council in his other work (Legesse, 2000: 102-5). The council is the highest executive organ of the *Gadaa* government. In Dodola district able elders were elected from each villages ((*qäbäles* (Amharic) - *gandoota* (in *AfaanOromoo*, singular *ganda*)) to be the representatives of that village and form council of that

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<sup>110</sup> NALAA, FN, 17.1.1.270.07 letter from Let. Coronel Lägässa Wäldä-Mariam, Minister, MOI to Lieutenant General Täfäri Banti, Chairman of Ethiopian Provisional Military Government and Chairman of the Council of Ministers concerning Waqo Gutu and Issues in Dallo *Awrajja* of Bale Province, (written on *Tikimt* 9, 1968 E.C. pp. 1-4), p. 1.

<sup>111</sup> Informants: Aliyi Cirri; Musa Roba, Adam Tobe. Oral and written sources claim that more than three-quarters of Bale were under the control of the anti-government forces for over three years until 1970.

<sup>112</sup> In Oromo custom of teaching numbers particularly to children it is usual to associate a number with a significant cultural or natural object that amounts equal to the number. For example, five is associated with the five fingers of a hand, and nine symbolizes the nine members *Gadaa* executive council, *Saglan Yaa'ii Booranaa*.

*ganda*. Its members are one person from each of the five *Gadaa* classes, manager and public relation officer that *ganda* (without vote) and in total seven members (Legesse, 1974: 8; Østebø, 2005a: 27).<sup>113</sup> The council is known as “Gumii Abbooti Gadaa fi Manguddoota Gandaa” meaning Council of *Gadaa* Leaders and Elders of Village (CGLEV). The village council elects its executives from *shanee* members (Legesse, 2000:32). These five elected officials, which stands for the five *Gadaa* classes (*birraji*, *bultuma*, *horata*, *robale* and *bahara*), are known as *shanee*. The CGLEV has its *bokkuu*<sup>114</sup> (head), *hookkaa*-vice head, *dachaasaa* or *lalba* (memorizer of the law decision of the *shanee*). In line with this each major clans elect their executive organ of eight, *saddeeta*, which hold power for the next eight years. *Saddeeta* also elect its *bokkuu*-head and *hookkaa*-vice head.<sup>115</sup> All officials work together for one *Gadaa* period (8 years), and when their term of office ends, they hand over the power to next *Gadaa* class, which will elect new officials for the next eight years (Østebø, 2005a: 27).<sup>116</sup>

In Dodola and the neighboring Adaba districts, members of the *Gadaa* structure at the level of village, the *shanee*, are merged to form the structure at district level. Since there are many villages in a district their representatives form a larger forum known as “Yaa’ii Abbooti Gadaa fi Manguddoota Aanaa” which means Assembly of *Gadaa* Heads and Elders of District (AGHED). Its members include *shanee* of each village multiplied by the number of villages in the district plus governor of the district, the vice and head of the Culture and Tourism Office as nonvoting members.<sup>117</sup> This assembly elects its executive body in a direct, free and competitive election. This executive organ is known as “Koree Abbooti Gadaa fi Manguddoota Aanaa” meaning Council of *Gadaa* Leaders and Elders of District (CGLED). CGLED is headed by its own elected *bokkuu*, his

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<sup>113</sup> The structure here seems to consider the five representatives as *shanee* and the other two non-voting members are to assist the *shanee* and help them on secretarial and administrative matters but do not represent the village in the district council. While, if the manager and public relation officer of the village are removed from their post by the government for any reason, the members of the *shanee* remain unchanged for eight years.

<sup>114</sup> *Bokkuu* is short form of *AbbaaBokkuu*, another name of *AbbaaGadaa*, meaning possessor of the scepter.

<sup>115</sup> These are the significant positions in the *Gadaa* officials but other less functional posts like *AbbaaSeeraa*, in memorizer of the law, *Abbaa Duula*, commander of the army and others are known in Arsi *Gadaa*.

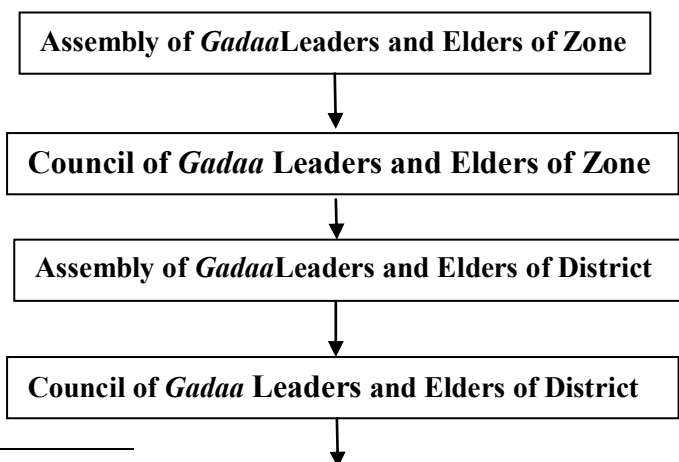
<sup>116</sup> Informants: Hussein Cawwo; Abba-Cabsa; Mohammed Qbbo.

<sup>117</sup> In Dodola district there are 23 *qābāles* (*gandoota*) (excluding four towns). So, the total members of the Assembly of *Gadaa* Heads and Elders of Dodola District is  $(23 \times 5) + 3 = 118$ .

vice *hookkaa* and other officials. CGLED is accountable to the AGHED.<sup>118</sup> The council has eight members that symbolize the *saddeeta* of *Arsi Gadaa* as described above.<sup>119</sup>

At the level of zone, the next higher administrative unit, there are structures similar to district which is formed by joining structure of various districts. This means district representatives establish “Yaa’ii Abbooti Gadaa fi Manguddoota Godina” which means Assembly of *Gadaa* Leaders and Elders of Zone (AGLEZ). This assembly elects its executive body in a direct and free election. This executive organ is known as “Koree Abbooti Gadaa fi Manguddoota Godina” meaning Council of *Gadaa* Leaders and Elders of Zone (CGLEZ). It elects its own *Bokkuu*, the vice known as *Hookkaa* and other officials and accountable to the AGLEZ. Its members include the *Shanee* of each district and zone administrators (the first and his vice) and two elected elders from every level two towns in the zone (including Dodola and Arsi Nagelle) that is about some 66 members.<sup>120</sup> From these members the executive of council with eight members or the *saddeeta* are elected for the term in office for eight years (Østebø, 2005b: 21-23).<sup>121</sup> The following diagram shows its operational structure.<sup>122</sup>

Figure 1: Diagrammatical Structure of *Arsi Gadaa* in West Arsi Zone



<sup>118</sup> The *Bokkuu* and *hookkaa* are usually elected from the first and second most populous clans and other officials from the next in that order.

<sup>119</sup> Informants: Hussein Cawwo; Burqa Cuqurru; Robe Mamma. The members of the *saddeeta* are the *shanee* (elected by the assembly from one the five *Gadaa* classes each) and three nonvoting members including the district governor, vice governor and head of the culture and Tourism office. But, the document of Dodola district culture and Tourism of Office makes it nine members.

<sup>120</sup> The total number is 12 districts time 5 and two elders from three level towns each is equals to 66 members.

<sup>121</sup> Informant Hussein Cawwo interviewed on May 2012 and July 2014. Hussein is an expert of the Culture and Tourism Office of the Dodola District, who is well acquainted in folk tradition and *Gadaa* of the area. He is not only a key figure in the development of the *Gadaa* structure but also in its materialization in his district.

<sup>122</sup> WATAD, 2009: NP. The document from the Culture and Tourism Office of the Dodola District is a computer print document not given pages and it is written in *Afaan Oromoo* in 2001 E.C / 2009/.



Council of *Gadaa* Leaders and Elders of Village/*Ganda*

Source: Dodola District Culture and Tourism Office, 2014 (adapted and translated)

According to Dodola District Culture and Tourism Office, this structure is designed after discussion with administrative bodies and elders of the community with the following responsibilities. One, the Council of *Gadaa* Leaders and Elders (CGLE) at the various levels are responsible to follow the traditional rules and regulations embedded in *gumaa* (law of blood money) and *jaarsummaa* (arbitration by elders) and solve disputes, disagreements and other problem in family and the community to ensure peace, security and social harmony of their area. Two, CGLE is required to assist governmental bodies that are working on law enforcement and administration in all aspects. Three, it is expected to advise and guide the community to avoid harmful practices that harm marriage, rights of children and women, human rights and to reduce expansion of crime, transmission of HIV/AIDS and so on through discussions and community participation. Four, CGLE is responsible to aware the community on environmental protection, promotion of tangible and intangible heritages of the country. A total of 17 duties and responsibilities are assigned to the council some of which are summarized here.<sup>123</sup>

The document also states that the Culture and Tourism Office of West Arsi Zone has six objectives in designing this *Gadaa* structure that it stated is based on the conducive condition in our country at the time. These include, first to enable the Oromoo people in the zone to promote and protect the *Gadaa* System. Second, it is aimed at solving social, economic, health and peace and security problems in collaboration with the *Gadaa* leaders and local administration based on active community participation and indigenous mechanisms. Third, it is aimed to create a public wing that would rejuvenate the Culture and Tourism Office in its efforts. Lastly, to conserve the tourism potentials of West Arsi Zone by active participation of *Gadaa* leaders, to minimize differences in the Oromoo *Gadaa* system from place to place and to let them protect material and natural heritages in collaboration with governmental organizations (WATAD, 2009).<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>123</sup>*Ibid.*, Informant: Hussein Cawwoo.

<sup>124</sup>*Ibid.*

### *Jaarsummaa, Gumaa and Fixata Institutions*

*Jaarsummaa* is a widely known traditional institution of arbitration and reconciliation by neutral elders assigned to the task in consensus with the conflicting parties and other concerned bodies with judicial and decision enforcement powers. *Jaarsummaa* institution serves the community to solve most conflicts between individuals and groups in the civil, criminal and commercial fields. *Jaarsummaa* is a traditional practice that gives the first solution among the family, neighbors, villages and clans. The terms *jaarsa* and *araara* are to mean literally elders and reconciliation, respectively. In this context the term elders does not necessarily show old age but role played by known and respected person, who can play the roles of mediator, negotiator and arbitrator. *Araara* is the final result of the process of reconciliation. It sometimes shows the solution an issue. The term *fixata*, which literally means to finish, is the process of reaching a resolution of a case by any means leading to agreement. The price of solving disputes through *jaarsummaa* is not to be calculated in terms of money or in kind, but rather in terms social prestige, honor, recognition as “*jaarsa biyyaa*” meaning elder of the people or nation. Informants who had the experience of successful *jaarsummaa* and solved serious crime cases state that the prestige, honor and above all the satisfaction in it are success that few persons can achieve in a lifetime.<sup>125</sup> In Gadab area there are different kinds of traditional means of conflict resolution such *kootu-dhufee*, *gumaa* and *fixata* (WATAA, 2013a: 5; WATAA, 2013b: 1).<sup>126</sup>

*Gumaa* is both law of blood money and the process of solving cases through it. The *gumaa* law concerns homicide, robbery, adultery, abduction, burning of house, insult and other crimes that violate laws endorsed by the *Caffee Gadaa*. *Gumaa* usually implies blood money paid to victim of the above crimes or to relatives by defendant based on values decided by *caffee*, depending up on the condition in which the crime is committed. Investigation of the intention behind a crime needs superb detective skills, knowledge of the customary laws and persuasive oratory to give justice, heal the heart of the victims and restore peace and security in the society. Individuals assigned to the task of handling the *gumaa* case at hand are selected for these abilities. Some informants believe that *Waaqa* create persons with such skills in a society for this purpose (Salviac, 1901: 214). Therefore, elders who are assigned to the task of investigating *gumaa* case are known as “*jaarsa*

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<sup>125</sup> Informants: Burqa Cuqurru; Robe Mamma; Abdulaqadir Abe; Tuke Bariso; Adam Tinna, Adam Yobo.

<sup>126</sup> Informants: Abdulaqadir Abe; Tuke Bariso.

*gumaa fixu*” meaning elders who resolve *gumaa* case. Their first task is to identify the type of *gumaa*, establish *gumaa* structure and then to recite *gumaa* law of the case.

There are three types of *gumaa* namely *gumaa adii*, *gumaa dalgaa* or *barriittii* and *gumaa danuu*. The first one is a clear case of intentional crimes such as murder, burning of house, killing of animals and inflicting physical injury. *Gumaa adii* (white *gumaa*) is a full-fledged *gumaa* as its name shows.<sup>127</sup> This is a premeditated offense or murder or crime and to be punished by maximum blood money according to *seera* (law) and *sirna* (system) of the *gumaa* if proved with evidence. *Gumaa dalgaa* case is unplanned and unintentional murder and offenses caused by accidental dispute and conflicts. If proved to be so this case is considered differently from the first one and its blood money is in many cases half of the *gumaa adii*.<sup>128</sup> The last one is a *gumaa* that happened circumstantially. For example, if a person killed a traveler on private business by spear he has thrown to kill a wild animal or by bullet he has fired to kill somebody else but not for victim in this condition, it is called *danuu*. If a case is found *danuu*, its *gumaa* price is the least than the former two and it is resolved by rituals of reconciliation than punishment of the defendant (WATAA, 2013a: 5-6). A case is based on type of the charge and evidence.<sup>129</sup>

The *Gadaa* system has endorsed *gumaa* laws corresponding to each type and specific crime cases so as to keep social harmony such that peace and security prevail in the Oromoo society. Three principles are important to consider before looking at the amount of the blood money. One, in Arsi Oromoo society Allo Arsi (Arsi laws) strictly forbids an Arsi person killing another (Abdurahiman, 1991: 19).<sup>130</sup> Two, at first the penalty for convicted murder was death penalty by hanging known as *qucee* or *raraasaa*. But, the side of the defendant begs for *qucee* to be changed into *gumaa*. Three, the *gumaa* considerations are different when the accused confess and deny the crime. Elders who settle the *gumaa* case ask “*amanee dhufe moo waakkatee dhufee?*” meaning ‘does he come to deny or agree the charge?’ so as to decide the process needed to investigate the case. In both cases they tell to the applicant “*amanaan dhibba waakkataan jilba*” literally means if crime is confessed it is

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<sup>127</sup> The case known if the person was well armed, vowed to kill in public, sings in victory after killing, did further damages after killing or on the opposite cried to on the scene, tried to save the life of the victim and take the case to elders to pay *gumaa* as per the tradition. The murder will suffer a lot alive until *gumaa* of the deceased is paid.

<sup>128</sup> There cases in which it can be more than half or less than it. This is to be decided after investigation.

<sup>129</sup> Informants: Burqa Cuqurru; Robe Mamma.

<sup>130</sup> Abdurahiman states that at first it was so for all Oromo no matter which branch it be, before people multiply and Oromo branches are numerous. This is because the blood money for Oromo and non Oromo is different.

100 cattle and if murder is denied it should handover *jilba* (persons as indemnity in place of the deceased) for the victim's relatives.<sup>131</sup> Here again the family of accused beg for *gumaa* to ransom *jilba* held by the victim's family as substitute for their deceased relative. This seems to have been far sighted than only to avoid blood shade but to value life. Nonetheless, in social life such things like conflict and loss of life can happen as two legs of a person can hit each other. Revenge is strictly forbidden. All one need to do is to present her/his case to community leaders and will get solution. That is why the *Gadaa* system devised the *gumaa* for every detail situation.<sup>132</sup>

Some of the common cases appropriated *gumaa* or blood money in terms of heads of cattle are as follows. Counted in heads of cattle, the *gumaaadii* for murder of man is 100, for woman is 50, house burned at night is 50, for emasculated man is 50, for an eye is 50, an ear is 25, for a thumb is 9, for other fingers is 7 each, for eye brows is 7, for a bull killed is 8 calves for five consecutive years and for war horse killed is 7 cattle. There is also blood money if a girl is rapped, the convict pay 50 head of cattle for the victim on the logic that she cannot get anyone to marry her and thus she has to get her lifetime resource to survive on. If man committed adultery to wife another he must pay 7 heads of cattle if convicted. There is multifaceted logic for each amount of the blood money appropriated in each of the above cases as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Getachew, 2002: 193). The process of *gumaafixata* is complex and it needs the help of *Gadaa* council with its own structure that varies from place to place in Arsiland.<sup>133</sup> Generally, *gumaa* council during its courtyard among the Mando(yu) branch of Arsi Oromoo has following diagrammatical structure and organization as shown in Figure 2 .

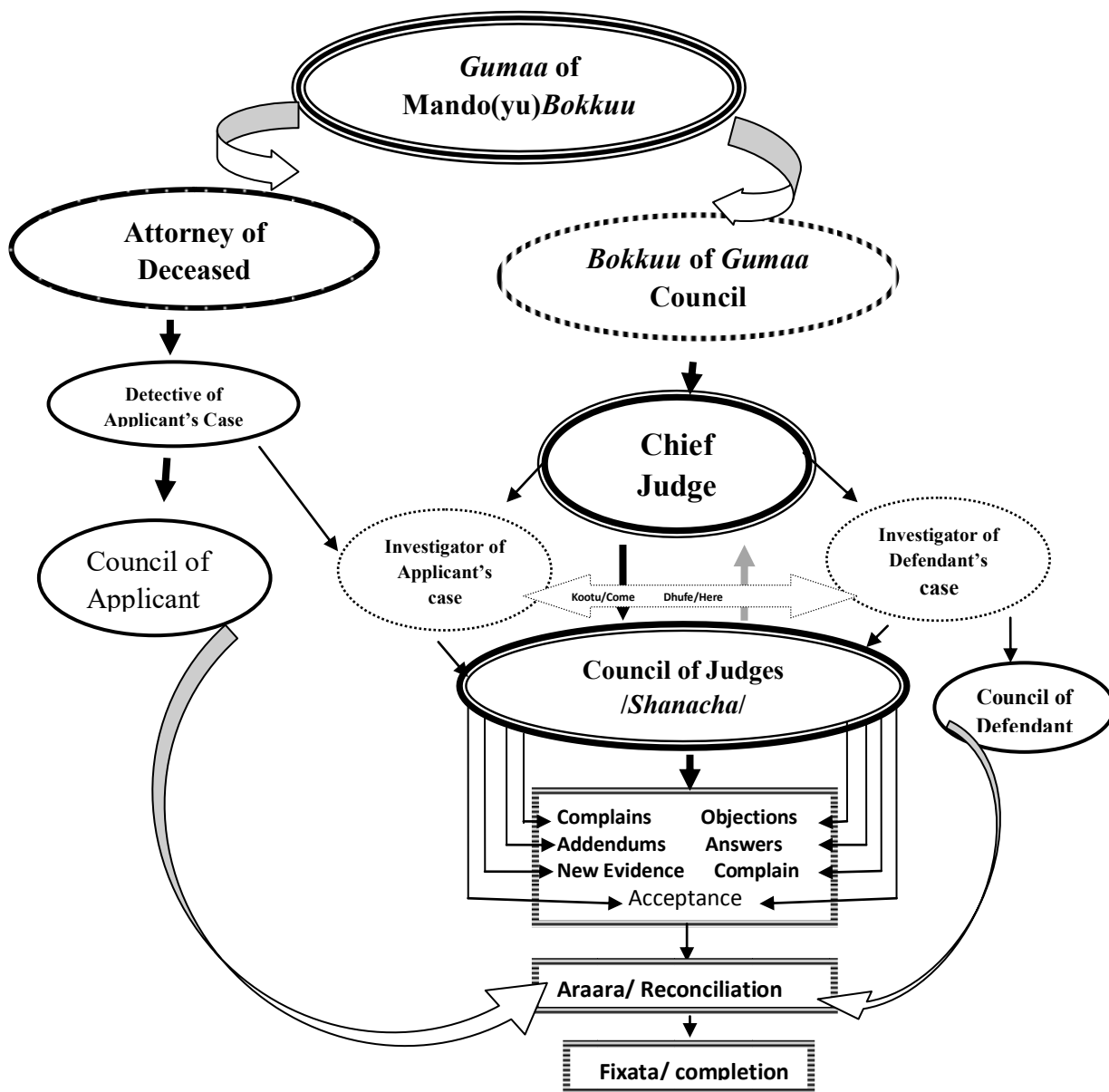
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<sup>131</sup> *Jilba* is to give persons (mostly 16 closest to the murder) to ensure *gumaa* of the deceased be paid not lost wild.

<sup>132</sup> Informants: Burqa Cuqurru; Robe Mamma; Abdulaqadir Abe; Tuke Bariso.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

Figure 2: Diagrammatical Presentation of *Gumaa* Structure



Source: WATAAD, 2013a: 4; adapted, modified, translated restructured based on discussion with informants.

The process of giving solution to a *gumaa* case involves selection of notable and experienced elders in consensus with the conflicting parties in which the CGLEV and CGLED provide help required. Then, the selected elders set up the *gumaa* court which investigates the case according to the tradition of its proceedings. It has a structure that needs to have *bokkuu lalabaa* (head of the whole *gumaa* council), *qora mataa fi miilaa* (detectives of the charge of applicant and answer of

defendant), *hoakkaabokkuu* (vice of the *bokkuu*), *bokkuu dikaa* (attorney of the deceased), *abbaa murtii* (chief judge) who preside over the *shanacha* (council of judges that investigate the case from both sides), *qora himataa* (council of the applicant) and *qora himatamaa* (council of the applicant). The process of deliberations involves various rituals including slaughters of sacrificial animals need at different stages until both sides agree to settle their case. When homicide case and other matters that applicant and defendant handed over to the *gumaa* council are resolved and reconciliation is reached without any dissatisfaction from both sides it is called *fixata gumaa* meaning resolution through the *gumaa* process. It is believed that the soul of the deceased person rests in peace when *gumaa* is completed without any blood shade thereafter. The side of the defendant also needs the resolution in the *gumaa* process more than anybody else. So both sides need the *gumaa* institution and the defendant no more considered as murder once the case is settled and he can live without any fear of revenge (WATAAD, 2013a: 4).<sup>134</sup>

### Success and Challenges of the Revitalization of *Gadaa* Institutions

Some of the achievements the revitalization process of the *Gadaa* institution discussed above are highlighted under the next six points. First, the *Gadaa* structure under reinstatement in Dodola district has won wide public acceptance, created the sense of belongingness and ignited the notion of cultural revivalism within the time of not more than fifteen years. *Gadaa* festivals and rituals were said to have been colorful and the number of people gathered on such events was claimed to be very high. According to *Abba-Gada* Robe Mamma, who was member *Gadaa* council of the district, large number of people participate in the festivals that was celebrated at Odaa Koraa near Dodola town.<sup>135</sup> He remembers how tremendous the whole process of the ceremony was in 2008. The festival involves many rituals in which oxen contributed by individuals on voluntary bases were slaughtered according to the *Gadaa* norms.<sup>136</sup> Community acceptance of the reviving culture and the satisfaction of being connected to ancestral spirit have been becoming sources of pride and accentuation Oromoo identity. Thus, it has been a great achievement to try to galvanize all the

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<sup>134</sup> Informant: Robe Mamma

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, Some local *Gadaa* centers in Dodola area in Koraa, Biliqaa, Lamaa and Qaccamaa.

<sup>136</sup> Robe Mamma was *AbbaaGadaa* of *horataaGadaa* class. He stated rituals that require slaughtering of bulls are include *buttaa*, *jaarraa*, *dullachawal-argii*, *sangaa goodaa* and *ree'ee dhawaa* to perform various ceremonies.

Oromoo based on the notion of cultural identity despite diversification of the society in terms of religion and political outlook.<sup>137</sup>

Second, flexibility and inclusiveness of the *Gadaa* structure are significant success that is open to accommodate of the diverse contemporary societies (Legesse, 2000: 79). There are three vital examples of this in the reviving *Gadaa* structure of West Arsi Zone. First, it accommodate notable elders outside the *Gadaa* structure obviously aimed at inclusiveness and to minimize opposition from societies not affiliated with the *Gadaa* system due to various reasons be it ethnic or political or religious. Nowadays societies are more diversified than they were before over a century, when *Gadaa* was in its maximum strength. By that time it was only the Arsi including adopted clans, who were allowed to participate in the *Gadaa* system (OCTB, 2006: 107).<sup>138</sup> Likewise, the *Gadaa* of Dodola and Adaba area that is commonly known *Gadaa* Gadab consists of *Gadaa* classes with major clans. These were *brimajii* for Abbiyu, *bultuma* for Futtallee, *horataa* for Babboo, *bahaara* for Gannata and *robalee* is Hoolee clans.<sup>139</sup> But, Terje Østebø has observed slightly different clans (Østebø, 2005b: 23; Østebø, 2005a: 29).<sup>140</sup> In Gadab the Oromoo people from Shäwa, the populous Oromoo group in the area next to the Arsi, have been allowed to participate with its own *Bokkuu/Abbaa Gadaa* known as *Bokkuu Tuulama*.<sup>141</sup> Organization of the *Gadaa* around Malkaa Waakkannaa area is also is flexible to accommodate populous clans (OCTB, 2006: 221). So, here six clans with their respective *bokkuu* are Adaabaa, Qoomaa, Silxaana, Angisso, Hawwaxuu and Tulamaa (which is added to reuse the *Gadaa*). Second, revitalization also accommodated interested knowledgeable elders even from other sections of the society including from people who are none Oromoo in their ethnicity as explained above in the structure. The best example is the free participation of representatives from level two towns to be represented in the *Caffee*.<sup>142</sup> Third, the willingness to respect religious diversities is a key example of its inclusiveness. Informants state that some personalities including many Oromoo, who held to positions mainly in the religious

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<sup>137</sup> Informant: Robe Mamma.

<sup>138</sup> Adoption is one institution of the *Gadaa* system. Gadab, the area is known for diversity of adopted clans to Arsi. Ulrich Braukämper (2004: 83) provides us with detail explanation on status of Oromized remnants of the autochthonous Hadiya-Sidama peoples of the ancient state of Balé in today's Gadab region.

<sup>139</sup> Informants: Burqa Cuqurru; Mohammed Qabo; Abba-Cabsa Hassen. This means these major clans took power in that order as member of the corresponding *Gadaa* class.

<sup>140</sup> His list shows *brimajii* for Abbiyu, *hultuma* for Babboo, *horataa* for Futtallee, *bahaara* for Badhiiqa and *robalee* for Beeramu *Gadaa* class.

<sup>141</sup> Informants: Burqa Cuqurru; Robe Mamma; Abdulaqadir Abe; Tuke Bariso.

<sup>142</sup> Informants: Abdulaqadir Abe; Tuke Bariso.

institutions, are tempted to declaim the initiative to revitalize the *Gadaa* on religious grounds. They suspect that the *Gadaa* system includes spiritual elements and it would eventually lead to degeneration of the faith of their followers. Thus, the *Gadaa* council has invited officials from Council of Islamic Affairs at Zone, districts, and Imams of renowned Mosques as well as officials of the Christian Churches (mainly of the Ethiopian Orthodox, Evangelical Churches to mention those with large number of followers) to attend the festivals and contribute what they can in the cultural development of the area. This helped to reduce opposition from the beginning.<sup>143</sup>

Third, the Council of *Gadaa* Leaders and Elders of Dodola district has good success in creating awareness in the society of the district about *Gadaa* laws by assisting its structure in each village. In this regard, the councils at all levels, particularly those of the village and district, have been disseminating the earlier laws known as *Seera Gadaa*<sup>144</sup> that had been endorsed by *Gadaa* Assemblies at Madda Walabu and then at Odaa Rooba dated back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Getachew, 2002: 238). At various *Gadaa* Assemblies social memory have been put together to inculcate “seeraa ganamaa” meaning *earlier laws* to inculcate in to the society. These laws include *seeraGadaa* (laws of *Gadaa*), *seeragumaa*, *seerarakkoo*,<sup>145</sup> *seerawayyooma*,<sup>146</sup> *seeraahormaata* (laws of herding), *seera waaqeeffannaa* (law of worship) and so on. These laws are set of rules that direct how a *sirna* (system) indicted by the term next to the *seera* (law) operates. For example, *seeragadaa* directs how the *SirnaGadaa* has to be carried out and similarly *seeragumaa* directs the executive body how to administer the *gumaa* institution (Getachew, 2002: 238).<sup>147</sup> This is to prevent the people from unintentional violation of the law and to bring their case to the council in case of crimes such as homicide, robbery and disputes in a family. Besides, as a set of law its violation leads to punishment decided corresponding to the intention and condition of the crime committed. In this regard, many informants almost accurately told me that *gumaa* laws and punishment as endorsed by early ancestors who engineered the *Gadaa* system as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Getachew, 2002: 193). For example, information collected in different districts of West Arsi and

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<sup>143</sup> Informants: Burqa Cuqurru; Robe Mamma; Abdulaqadir Abe; Tuke Bariso.

<sup>144</sup> *Seera Gadaa* are general laws the *caffee* decided with specific laws in it.

<sup>145</sup> *Seera Rakkoo* is law that guide marriage life in the Oromo society that was appreciated by Monk Bahrey.

<sup>146</sup> *Wayyuu* is to mean law that orders to give honor and respect but if someone failed, it is followed by duties and punishment to be fulfilled according to the law of *wayyoomaa*. It says Waaqan (God), Lafti (ground), abbaan (father), haati (mother) soddaan (father-in-law), soddaatin (mother-in-law), qaallu fi qaallitiin (priest and priestess)... wayyuu.

<sup>147</sup> Informants: Hussein Cawwo; Burqa Cuqurru; Robe Mamma.



Bale are the same about *gumaa* as shown above. Thus, awareness creation is one big achievement of the *Gadaa* system on the process of revitalization.<sup>148</sup>

Fourth, efficiency of *gumaa* and *jaarsummaa* institutions that are mitigating some shortcomings in the formal legal system such as infiltration of fake-witness and revenge related to it are other key success of the revitalization process. Efficiency of these institutions is also seen in terms of avoiding boring chain of bureaucratic procedures and time it take that become aspect of the modern legal systems. Informants state that the increase of crimes such as homicide, abduction and robbery is due to false witness and weaknesses in the formal legal system to prove innocence and guilt of suspects have been increasing the acceptance of the indigenous legal institutions embedded in *Gadaa* system. Moreover, revenge is becoming a side of convictions based on fraudulent and conspired testimonies in many court cases. But, the traditional system is respected and feared by the society due to social taboo and stigmas associated to denying crimes and making oaths falsely that are more serious offenses than the crime itself. For example, serious crime like homicide has social solution once the case is known by *gumaa* law in which members of the clan of the plaintiff pay the blood money and members of the clan of the deceased also accept the case as matter of the fate and reconcile from the heart with clan of the plaintiff according to the tradition. There is no idea of revenge in cases solved by this mechanism. Thus, social acceptance of the indigenous system makes it reliable (OCTB, 2006: 80).<sup>149</sup>

Fifth, in Dodola and Adaba districts, *fixata*, resolution of homicide case through *gumaa* process, is so widely accepted by the society such that even cases decided by formal court procedures are being reconsidered by the *gumaa* council. This is the best achievement of the *Gadaa* revitalization effort in West Arsi that the formal law enforcement body has constrained to avoid repeated crimes. It is the only way in which revenge can be avoided, hearts of the conflicting party is healed and usually such cases end up in marriage exchange to avert any idea of further conflict as far this issue is concerned. The *gumaa* is also considered as justice that pleases *Waaqa* /God/ (Legesse, 2000: 208). Elders argue that murder could not happen by the power of the assassin alone, but by will of *Waaqa*. For example, it may happen between brothers accidentally or on the pretext of minor

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<sup>148</sup> Informants: Abba-Cabsa Hassen; Mohammed Qabo; Adam Tinna.

<sup>149</sup> Informants: Burqa Cuqurru; Robe Mamma.

incident. People can learn from it a lot. The law of *gumaa* is an indicator indigenous Oromoo justice and social virtue (Legesse, 2000: 262-63).<sup>150</sup>

Finally, the roles of the *Gadaa* laws under revitalization in solving disputes in family, neighbors and between individual and neighboring clans have been backing the formal legal and administration structures of the government. It is getting the support of the administrative and legal system and the success in this regard is insurance for its sustainability. In Arsi most family related issues were resolved by *jaarsummaa*. Even the formal law entrust marriage related disagreement to elders nominated by each sides to solve through *jaarsummaa*. The council of *Gadaa* Leaders and Elders is minimizing the rate crime related to robbery, physical injuries due to fighting between two groups, revenge, homicides, abuse of women and children.<sup>151</sup>

The revitalization of *Gadaa* institutions in West Arsi is not without challenges. The next four issues are among major challenges that are dimming its successes. One, informants state that the inclusion of political officials such as manager and public relation of *qäbäles*, administrators, vice administrators, and heads of Culture and Tourism Office of districts and zones has created insecurity in the system due to fear of surveillance and limit autonomy. It was expected to facilitate the process by connecting the council to the administrative structure and by providing logistic and secretarial services. But, there are many educated *bokkuus*, who are able to give those services. *Gadaa* is based on principles of equality and trust. In sum, the challenges of the inclusions of these cabinet members seem to have more side effects than its merits.<sup>152</sup>

Two, challenge from religious elites and institutions, which are discomforted with the revitalization of *Gadaa* due to fundamentalist perspectives, is not easy and not without consequences. Conservative religious figures and institutions they lead tend to associate *Gadaa* festivals and some ceremonial rites with deviation from correct and desired dogmas of religious institutions. They denounce the practice as outdated and harm relationships of peoples of different backgrounds. In some cases people who actively participate in the *Gadaa* council and *gumaa* rituals have been subjected to loss of their status in religious institutions. A considerable portion the Oromoo people observe both of the major global religions of the World i.e. Christianity and Islam, which control all

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<sup>150</sup>Informants: Hussein Cawwo; Burqa Cuqurru; Robe Mamma.

<sup>151</sup>*Ibid.* Officials in the administration supports the significance institutions like *Jaarsummaa*, *gumaa* and *fixata*.

<sup>152</sup>Informants: Hussein Cawwo; Burqa Cuqurru; Robe Mamma.

aspects of the life of their followers. But, the logic is should the people abandon its indigenous culture proved to be useful at expense of foreign cultures embedded in those religions? The solution seems to search ways to accommodate and tolerate vital elements from both sides. Thus, religious jealousy and cultural nationalism confront each other apparently due to intolerance to diversity and inability to distinguish the boundary between religion and culture. The lasting solution is public common good (Salviac, 1901: 214).<sup>153</sup>

Three, there are challenges from some individuals in the formal legal and administration organs. This kind of opposition is subtle and very strategic. The reason behind might be personal dislike towards culture, loss of material benefit in litigious formal court activities and nearsightedness of the cultural and psychosocial values of indigenous institutions. A case in point is crucial because the celebrants of these indigenous *Gadaa* institutions tend to associate any opposition to their constitutional right to promote their culture, language and history to ‘remnants’ of the old autocratic monarchy and totalitarian military regimes, which were anti Oromoo culture. This issue is wrongly connected to the presence of people from all over Ethiopia with range of its diversities in the civil service in one way or another. Hence, persons from any backgrounds need to surrender their private interests to constitutional benefit of the public (Legesse 2000: 262).<sup>154</sup>

Last but not least is the challenge of how to fully harmonize those *Gadaa* institutions with the contemporary social and economic settings. The effort towards its eventual improvement in such a way that it entertains every section of the society to enjoy the benefits of the indigenous institutions on progressive bases is limited by shortage of the contribution of scholars in the field. The undergoing initiatives are basically the result of courageous contribution of experts of the Culture and Tourism Office of West Arsi Zone and its branches in districts. Though this revitalization is backed by yearns of the public and contribution of notable elders who did historic job in guiding the process, it may slide back unless social scientists put together research endeavors towards its further success. Thus, the work of so far is thinned due to less contribution of scholars.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>153</sup>Informants: *Ato* Hussein Cawwo; Adam Tinna; Robe Mamma.

<sup>154</sup>*Ibid.* See constitutional rights in article 39; sub article 2 and article 41, sub article 9 of the 1995 constitution.

<sup>155</sup>*Ibid.*

### A Retrospective Prospect

In conclusion, survey historical background of the Arsi Oromoo asset that Arsi *Gadaa*, which blended the dualism of indigenous polity and clannish organization system, yielded a formidable military resistance against external aggression for long than any other Oromoo areas in the 1880s. This was an evidence of the system's internal institutional stability achieved by its regenerative capability (OCTB, 2006: 51). The conquest was followed by the termination of the *Gadaa* system aimed at weakening the social and institutional foundations of the Arsi Oromoo to pave the way for exploitative rule at gunpoint. The termination of the *Gadaa* had led to social crises which in turn the mushrooming of bloody armed resistance and civil protest in Arsiland since the 1940s. The impact of these crises have been not only limited to sacrifices in the struggle to freedom but also to the following intertwined problems. One, over a century of time has been lost for the *Gadaa* system to progress and consequently successive young generations of the Arsi, during this time, were not able to exercise and test the indigenous knowledge embedded in the culture of their ancestors. Two, indigenous administrative and legal skills of the Arsi implanted in *Gadaa* institutions such as *gumii abbootii gadaa*, *gumaa*, *jaarsummaa* and *fixata* through which they solve their internal problems were outlawed with gunpoint and the society turned to Islamic and *Sharia* courts mainly as defensive strategy to counter the *näftagna* system. Three, Arsi Oromoo, a society that is skilled enough not only to solve complex matters but also to heal the hearts of the conflicting parties, was forced to litigate in corrupted alien courts (Hassen, 2014: 191). This in turn led to the widespread of revenge, divorce and breach of social norms that were uncommon in Arsi society previously (Levine, 2000: 129).

Thus, Arsi society had to struggle a long way to regain its indigenous institutions and some successes are being achieved. In Dodola and Adaba districts of West Arsi Zone, revitalization of *Gummii Abbootii Gadaa*, *Gumaa* and *Jaarsummaa* have become cultural power that are easing the toil for the formal administrative and legal systems. Cultural revivalism, social satisfaction, decrease of crime, awareness of *Gadaa* laws are contributing a good share in the reduction of children and women abuses, spread of HIV/AIDS and harmful practices in marriage and community. These are among benefit the revitalization Arsi *Gadaa* in a period of less than a couple of decades. The *Gadaa* system encompasses multifaceted indigenous knowledge, wisdom and skills

based institutions neither of which is adequately discussed here. The culture of the Oromoo to self government serves to solve their immediate problems (Lewis, 1993: 102).

The way forward needs; one, to contribute her/his share and sound the call for social scientists that would render audible enough for timely, professional and collaborative work in consolidation of the revitalization efforts. Two, Culture and Tourism Offices of Dodola district should consolidate the job well undertaken in collaboration with scholars and share experience for others of their kind so that they could adapt the good experience. Three, some religious elites with concerns about the impact of the revitalization on their interest (be it spiritual or material) need to find where the boundary between culture and religion and private and public good lies. Four, awareness creation is necessary to turn few persons with myopic and self-centered attitudes within the formal legal and administrative systems into active partners that would spearhead the revitalization process. Four, the revitalization process needs to be more inclusive, tolerant to diversities and regenerative of internal fractures based on full equanimity and system flexibility.

“Gadaan quufa gabbina, Horaa bulaa.”

## Reference

### Key Informants

Abba-Cabsa Hassan Tahiro (*Ato*); Age 75; *Interview Date*, July 12, 2014; *Place of Interview*, Dodola Town; *Residence*, Dodola Town; *Information*; rich data on Arsi *Gadaa*, *gumaa*, *Gadaa* laws, role and power of *bokkuu*, *haokkaa* and active role in the revitalization of *Gadaa* in Dodola.

Abdullahi Butta (*Sheik*); Age 74; *Interview Date*, June 22, 2014; *Place of Interview*, Manna Town; *Residence*, Manna Town; *Information*; Good data on armed struggle, wars against *näftägna* forces in Dalla and Wabe, Oromoo refugee in Somalia, strategies of struggle and impacts.

Abdulqadir Abe Tuke (*Ato*); Age c.60; *Interview Date*, July 15, 2014; *Place of Interview*, Adaba Town; *Residence*, Furunna Town; *Information*; key data on Arsi *Gadaa*, *gumaa*, *Gadaa* laws, role and power of *bokkuu*, *haokkaa* and active role in the revitalization of *Gadaa* in Adaba district.

Adam Tinna Jarra (*Ato*); Age 56; *Interview Date*, June 25, 2014; *Place of Interview*, Bidire Town; *Residence*, Bidire Town; *Information*; rich data on *Gadaa* laws enacted at Madda Walabu in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, he authored a book on history and culture of Oromoo in *AfaanOromoo*.

Adam Tobe Yobo (*Haji*); Age 75; *Interview Date*, June 22, 2014; *Place of Interview*, Manna Town; *Residence*, Manna Town; *Information*; key data on the struggle with *näftägna* forces in Dalla and Wabe, invisible hands of Somalia in Oromoo struggle in Bale, strategies of struggle and impacts.

Aliyi Cirri Jarra (Colonel, *Haji*); Age 90; *Interview Date*, June 25, 2014; *Place of Interview*, Bidire Town; *Residence*, Bidire Town; *Information*; he remember struggle against *näftägna* in Madda Walabu and Dallo, invisible hands of Somalia in Oromoo struggle in Bale and leadership of the struggle.

Burqa Cuqurru (*Ato*); Age 70; *Interview Date*, May 12, 2012 & July 12, 2014, *Place of Interview*, Dodola Town; *Residence*, Dodola Town; *Information*; rich data on Arsi *Gadaa*, *gumaa*, *Gadaa* laws, role and power of *bokkuu*, *haokkaa* and active role in the revitalization of *Gadaa* in Dodola.

Hussein Cawwo Cammari (50); Age 70; *Interview Date*, May 12, 2012 & July 12, 2014, *Place of Interview*, Dodola Town; *Residence*, Dodola Town; *Information*; rich data on Arsi *Gadaa*, *gumaa*, *Gadaa* laws, role and power of *bokkuu*, *haokkaa* and active role in preparing document on the revitalization as an expert on culture in Culture and Tourism Office of Dodola District.

Jarso Waqo Boka (*Ato*); Age 66; *Interview Date*, May 12, 2012; *Place of Interview*, Dodola Town; *Residence*, Dodola district; *Information*; structured data on Arsi *Gadaa*, *gumaa*, *Gadaa* laws, role and power of *bokkuu*, *haokkaa* and organization of *Gadaa* in Gadab area.

Mohammed Qabo Oge (*Ato*); Age 62; *Interview Date*, July 12, 2014; *Place of Interview*, Dodola Town; *Residence*, Dodola Town; *Information*; insightful data on Arsi *Gadaa*, *gumaa*, *Gadaa* laws, role and power of *bokkuu*, *haokkaa* and he knows the detail of the *gumaa* process.

Musa Roba Jarso (*Haji*); Age 64; *Interview Date*, June 22, 2014; *Place of Interview*, Manna Town; *Residence*, Manna Town; *Information*; Good data on struggle and he remember wars against *näftägna* in Dalla and Wabe, Oromoo struggle in Somalia, strategies of struggle and impacts.

Robe Mamma Jarra (*Abba-Gada*); Age 70; *Interview Date*, July 12, 2014; *Place of Interview*, Dodola Town; *Residence*, Dodola Town; *Information*; Very rich data on Arsi *Gadaa*, *gumaa*, *Gadaa* laws, role, power of *bokkuu*, *haokkaa* and active role in the revitalization of *Gadaa* in Dodola and he knows the detail of the *gumaa* process and *Gadaa* festivals.

Tuke Barisso Fato (*Abba-Gada*); Age c.67; *Interview Date*, July 15, 2014; *Place of Interview*, Adaba Town; *Residence*, Adaba Town; *Information*; key data on Arsi *Gadaa*, *gumaa*, *Gadaa* laws, role and power of *bokkuu*, *haokkaa* and active role in the revitalization of *Gadaa* in Adaba district.

Tusa Gobana Jarso (*Ato*); Age 52; *Interview Date*, May 12, 2012; *Place of Interview*, Dodola Town; *Residence*, Dodola district; *Information*; Very rich data on Arsi *Gadaa*, *gumaa*, *Gadaa* laws, role and power of *bokkuu*, *haokkaa* and active role in the revitalization of *Gadaa* in Dodola.

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**13. The Impact of Climatic Changes and Economic Shifts on Population Movements  
in view of Megalithic<sup>156</sup> building Traditions: the Case of Northeastern Africa,  
Towards the Mid Late-Holocene**

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**Abstract**

**Key words:** Burial-markers, Gadaa-Systems, Population movements, Economic Shifts, Secondary products, specialized pastorals

*This paper deals with the impact of climatic changes, economic shifts on population movements in view of megalithic tradition in the northeastern Africa particularly at the Late Mid-Holocene (5<sup>th</sup> millennium BP). The preferred methodological approach consists of relevant proxy evidences: such as archaeological material cultural remains, pictures, linguistic data, oral history, written sources, rock arts, and circumstantial evidences. All the above information are implicitly focused on prehistoric or proto-historic and historical archaeological remains, mainly on the spatial distribution of grave-markers<sup>157</sup>. Furthermore, ten key informants and thirty focus group discussants were used as sources of primary data. Three of the key informants were selected by using purposive sampling; whereas the remaining seven were included by using snow-ball sampling technique. On the other hand, the thirty focus group discussants were included by using availability sampling. The focus of this study, therefore, was to look into the habitation history and settlement archaeology of the northeast Africa mainly look-through the dispersal types of funerary traditions, which extends from north to the south. This in turn gives possible traces of population movements and arguably hinted the direction of the movements. In this regard, it is believed, such a research approach would shed a light on the puzzles that academia has long been speculating, debating and hypothesizing about the population movements in and around the northeastern Africa and also put a light on the development of pastoral economy.*

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<sup>156</sup>.For Ethiopian Megalithic Monuments – I admittedly prefer to use the phrase “BURIAL MARKERS”. This is simply to show the difference between the Ethiopian monument types and the European type of Monuments.

<sup>157</sup>. This Ethiopian burial-marker phrase is contextually quite different from that of European types of megaliths. Thus, Ethiopian Burial-markers don't only indicate and imply the extravagant nature alone, rather it also put emphasis on the workmanship of stones and woods (eg. The Tiya and Waka ).

## 1. Background

Ethiopia is one of the ancient African countries with diversified cultural practices. Such multiplicity is reflected through numerous cultural elements. One of the cultural basics of the Ethiopian's are their long rooted funerary traditions dubbed by the author of this paper as burial-markers. On this point, R. Fattovich (1987:44) put forward the suggestions of Kerncker in Littman, et.a. (1913:II: 1-2), in which the megalithic monument had a funerary role, and then confirmed as funerary function by (H. Chittick , 1974).

The word megalithic was derived from two Greek words: 'mega' means big and 'lithos' is stone (G. Daniel, 1963).Megalithic researchers unanimously accept that there are noticeable variations in their material types, workmanship, decoration motives, and in time depth. Despite all these differences, the megalithic buildings have a global phenomenon (G. Daniel, 1963. One of a testimony is a folklore that refers with 'Giants' or 'Devils' work (R. Joussaume, 1985). In a very similar fashion, Ethiopian megaliths are believed to have been constructed by the mythically emerged giant and horrible individuals. For instance,

1.

The stone buildings of Harla, a legendary Giant people whom the surrounding populations believed to have been "extinct" and used to live around Dire Dawa and Hararge, c 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium bp (R Jouassuame , 1985).

2.

Imam Ahmad Ibn Ibrahim Al-Ghazi , surnamed Gagn, a left hander and an extraordinary "Giant" warlord. According to the oral historian, Gagn was said to have carried a few stelae on his horse's back and erected these stelae at the road sides tethering his horse during a short break (Aba Embakom Achenif, 2014, pers. Com.).

It is also believed that the stelae in Borana, Guji, Sidama and Gedeo Zones are said to have been erected by a person named Dingama-koyo, a husband of Akoo Mandooyee, a locally known hardhearted queen (F. Anfray, 1982; Aklilu Asfaw, 2003: pers.com. ).

3.

In Tigray the megaliths are said to have been constructed by a legendary "Queen Gudit" a lady who brought a reign of terror to the Aksumite kingdom (Ayele Tarekegn, 1994:116).

## 2. Statement of the Problem

Numerous local and overseas undertook investigation on the Ethiopian megaliths. Nevertheless, except for Fattovich (1987:39-69), most of these researchers bypassed or neglected to see into the cultural relation of megaliths and its continuity in the Northeastern Africa in general and the Northern Ethiopia together with that of the southern parts of Ethiopia via to the Northwestern Kenyan megalithic building structures. Thus, the prime objective of this paper is to bridge the gaps and shade a light on the possible cultural continuities and similarities. To this end, the following basic research questions were set:

How was population movement in northeastern Africa in general and in Ethiopia in particular look like in view of megalithic tradition pattern?

What were the impacts of population movement in relation to megalithic tradition in Northeastern Africa in general and Ethiopia in particular?

## 3. Earlier Works or Literature Review

Several scholars attempted to document the megalithic cultures of Ethiopia beginning from the late 19<sup>th</sup> until these days. These researchers could fairly be categorized into five distinctive categories:

### 3.1. Travelers, Diplomats, Missionaries, Permitted Researches and Local Scholars.

- Antonio Cecchi (1887) who exposed the “Stones of *Gragn*”, which found in the Debre Brhan. He was one of the travelers, who visited the country.
- Bitweded Alfred Ilg (1888) a diplomat who photographed the Tiya stelae for the first time.
- Heneri Neuville & Von Chollet (1904) were missionaries who exposed the stelae in the Gurage area.
- DAE (1906) a crew member led by Anno Littman, surveyed, documented and published on the megaliths of the northern regions.

Littmann (1906) with his (DAE) crew members surveyed documented and published about the stelae in the northern regions of Ethiopia.

- Father Francois Azais, and Roger Chambard, (1920s -1931) visited Hararge, Shewa and also registered about 10,000 stelae in southern Ethiopia.

**3.2. The French Archaeological Mission**-who entered to Ethiopia in the year 1950s based on the bilateral agreement and investigated several megalithic sites of the country. The worth mentioning people in this lists were:

- Francis Anfray (1960s-1990s), who was remembered for attempting to categorize the typology of stelae in Soddo area,. Anfray, admittedly identified the two cultural phases of the Ethiopian history in which he tried to explain a "Pre-Aksumite is a lowest stratum that indicates the **aboriginal/Cushitic/** cultural elements" (Anfray, **u.d.**).
- Roger Joussaume (1980s -2010s), prominent researcher who spent most of his research career surveying, documenting and excavating several sites in most parts of Africa in general, Ethiopian in particular.

**3.3. Permitted-Researchers**, who were granted a research permit from the Antiquity Administration.

- Habrland Erik (1971) who tried to establish and put the similarities of the megaliths /stelae / of the Southern region, and their function and motives.
- Rodolfo Fattovich, began in 1980s and works until today. He is an outstanding researcher investigating the *Bete-Giorgis* stelae sites. He openly declared that the stelae in the Sudan is the prototype for the Ethiopian (Aksuite) stelae erection traditions.

**3.4. Some of the local investigators on the burial-markers of Ethiopia were: put in table :**

No.	Name of the Researchers	Researched Dates	Type of activities	Published in :
1	Gizaw H/Mariam	1982	Translated a work of Francis Anfray.	Annales D'Ethiopie vol.12
2	Tekle Hagos	2000	A field work report	Kirs booklet
	Aklilu Asfaw	1995	Ethiopian megalithic history	A conference paper
3	Tesfaye Hailu	1995	Anthropological study megaliths in Aris-Ziway area.	A conference paper
4	Kebede Geleta	1995	geographical distribution of Ethiopian megaliths	A conference paper
5	Kebede Geleta	1995	A distributional map of megalithic in the Central Shewa	A conference paper
6	Ayele Tarekegn	1990	on the Gudit Stelae-Aksum	Doctorial Dissertation
7	Worku Derara	2006	A survey result in the Gurage highlands	MA Thesis
8	Abiyot Debebe	2006)	A survey work in Tutu Fala and Tuttii - Chala-Abaa	MA Thesis
9	Yohannes Ayenew	2008	A survey on the Eastern Tigray	MA Thesis

❖ These are some of a few worth mentioning works performed on burial-markers/ megaliths of Ethiopia. Despite the worldwide importance given to the megalithic building traditions in the writing of cultural history or historiography of a given society, the study of megaliths of Ethiopia is still at its infancy.

Amongst all these researchers it was the author of this thesis who tried to unequivocally disclose the cultural affinity of these stelae tradition in the north with that of South and also understand the cultural continuity, identify the local naming such as :*Soodduu* of *Oromoo*, *Sela* of Hamer, *Daasaa* of Afar, *Tulul* of Argoba,...etc. and studied the special nature of megalithic buildings of Ethiopia, Indeed, most of the above described megalithic building structures are exactly in parallel with megaliths of Sideman, Arsi, Gedeo and Konso (Haberland, 1971: 227-228) ; for they have similar motifs on the polished stones or wood megaxylic put up for memorial functions of gallantry people, with a "complex of merit" and also hold in the highest regard in the Temples(Daniel, 1963; Haberland, 1971: 227).

In connection with this Daniel Cohen (1973:8) pointed out that, *"Anything that is larger and more elaborated than it has to be for practical purpose can be considered a monument"* (Cohen, 1973:8). Thus, the monument builders of the world seem to show their powerfulness and be remembered even long after their deaths (Phillipson, 1998;Kebede Geleta, 2013). Having all these in mind, it seems logical to introduce the following significant funerary monument types of Ethiopia in the table below:

Table 1. Lists of registered Ethiopian megalithic types.

- These all are a few identified, documented and recognized heritage names so far.

However, it is worth mentioning that the megalithic wealth of the country exceeds the above enumerated materials. Hence, depending on the presence of a wide array of the monument building traditions of the country; scholars like Joussaume, (1985); Haberland (1971) ; Lee Kaelas, (1994:598), referred Ethiopia as a land of megalithic building culture. For a plain explanation of monuments/burial-markers we need to have a yardstick or a criterion to know which types of funerary structures would be considered as megaliths/burial-makers. Regarding to this it is necessary to consider the following view in the work's of ( Osbert Guy Stanhop Crawford 1954).

*"Megalithic monuments consist of standing stones (single or in row), stone circles and rings, burial-chambers in long or mounds or cairns. Standing stones singular or in groups are found all over the Old World from Scotland to Abyssinia, They range from the beginning of second millennium B.C. to modern times.... Everywhere their purpose was to mark the graves of 'important persons'; they were in fact simply tombstones"* (Crawford, 1954: 167).

No	Burial-Markers'	Localities	Regional States	Documented by
1	Nabulanda	Kunam	Tigray National Regional State	Kebede Geleta
2	Wayidal/Dassa	Afar	Afaar National Regional State	Kebede Geleta
3	Dhaaka Gurri(Tumulus)	Oromoo	Oromiya National Regional state	Jouassuame
4	Tulul	Argoba	Argoba Special Woreda	Kebede Geleta
5	Dhakkaa-Kofiya (Dolmen)	Oromoo	Oromiya Nationa Regiona l State	Jouassuame
6	Sodduu/Sida (stele)	Oromoo	Oromiya National Regiona State	Kebede Geleta
7	Dhakkaa -Dhirumaa	Konso	N.R.E Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia	Kebede Geleta
8	Sella	Hamer	N.R.E Southern Nation, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia	Kebede Geleta
9	Gitisha and Gitema-Shikuma	Gumuz	National Regiona State of the Benishangul Gumuze	Kebede Geleta
10	Goyao	Charra	N.R.E. Southern Nation, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethopia	Kebede Geleta
158	Charraa is a community occupying the Kaffa Zone	Charra	of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (SNNPRS).	

#### 4. Methodology

A qualitative approach was used in this megalithic research. Generally, ten key informants and 30 focus group discussants were involved as sources of primary data. The research sites and key informants were selected by using purposive sampling whereas the thirty focus group discussants were selected by using an availability sampling technique. Data collection tools were semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and field observation. Furthermore, critical review of existing relevant documents was extensively undertaken and rock art records, oral history, linguistic data, and circumstantial evidence were used as secondary sources of data.

#### 5. Discussions and Results

##### 5.1. The Paleo-climate caused Population Movement History.

The evidences for paleo-climate of northeastern Africa are very fragmentary and believed not adequately researched. However researchers unanimously in agreement to strengthen our current knowledge of the then climatic situation.

For instance, Hassan (1984 ; 1986b) states and makes plain that, by 7,000 bp (un calibrated dating) domesticated cattle were present in the eastern Sahara and later introduced to the Nile valley (Connah,1987 ; Phillipson,1993 ; Ehret, 2002:76).

Furthermore, Fiona Marshall - Elizabeth Hildebrand (2002 :107) has indicated that, rainfall decreased gradually across the Northern Africa particularly after c 8,000 BP albeit there seem regional variations. In addition, Jonathan Adams (2003) cited the works of Hilaire Elenga, et.al. (1994) and Bas van Geel et. al. (1996), in which these people were proposing that, since 5,500 <sup>14</sup>C years ago the climate across Africa was believed to have been relatively similar to that of today. In fact, the existences of relatively variations in pocket areas were unquestionable.

Tertia Barnett (1999:74) has also indicated that, the paleo-environmental evidence shows that by c 8,000 years b.p. (un calibrated ) a major arid phase were improving compared with the early Holocene conditions and the “long-term climatic oscillations became increasingly stabilized after the 5<sup>th</sup> millennium BP. Thus, I presume that, the modern conditions of rainfall and seasonality were probably established after c. 3,000 years. In this regard, it seems probable that these modern



conditions of rainfall and seasonality favored settlement in the Nile Valley (Brandt - Carder, 1987: 196 – 197).

Furthermore, Haaland (1992), has demonstrated the works of Hassan (1968) in which Hassan pointed out that, the "Mid-Holocene dissection brought shift from wetter to drier" situations and these again permitted the earliest Neolithic settlements in the Nile valley of Egypt and Sudan probably at around 6,300-6,000 bp (Haaland, 1992 : 54 ; Michael H.,et.al. 2011 : 158-159).

Christopher Ehret (2002 : 59-107) lent a period name from Climatologist in his book entitled "The Civilization of Africa" to indicate the gradual stability of rain in the region. Thus, the "Holocene Climate Optimum" gave conducive situations under which economic shift took place and hunting gatherings come into sight to cattle rearing and plant domestication(s) activities in Africa in general in the Nile Valley regions and in the northeastern Africa in particular ( Michael H.,et.al. 2011) .

On the other hand (Clark,1976 ; 1980) forwarded his popular model and argued that the increasingly arid conditions of the Late Mid-Holocene forced 'C-Group' pastoralists push factors out of the Sahara into Sudan and further moved to the wettest Nubian area, in search of new pasture niche.

An American historical linguist, Christopher Ehret, (2002:59-77) has also asserted that, in the southern Red Sea hills, the ancestral Cushitic speaking people conceivably have taken up cattle rearing activity at about 9<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> millennia, not much latter than their Northern Sudanian neighbors themselves had domesticated the indigenous wild cattle " Ehret, (1979 ; 2002).

Randi Haaland (1992:60) further explained that, the specialized pastoral groups probably the Cushitic Language speaking families were expanded to the assumed conducive area namely Eritrea, southeastern lowland's of Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia and in general to the northeastern Africa. This is mainly, because these regions are assumed to be favorable for livestock production. This favorability could be emanated from important and perennial rivers were available (pull factors) in the highlands of Ethiopia and Eritria (ex. Sobat, Blue Nile and Atbara).

As the above outlined idea indicates the deteriorated climatic conditions of the Holocene period seems forced the people to progressively move towards the Nile River basin (Hassan, 1986 ; Brandt-Carder, 1987 : 196 – 197; Haaland, 1992) , and, these moving people adapted the pastoral economic system and finally able to settled in the Nile valley.

Furthermore, these people have moved further to the highlands of Eritrea and Ethiopia. This was witnessed by wide range of archaeological surface collections and excavations, such as: ceramic

artifacts, stone mace-heads, stone bowls, stelae, grinding stones, clay seals...etc., which were discovered from several occupational sites particularly close to Agordat in the northern parts of Eritrea, Porc-Epic, *Laga Oda*, Lake Ziway area, (Arkell, 1954 ; Phillipson, 1977a ; 1977; Clark, and Prince, 1978 ; Clark and Williamson, 1984; Humphreys,1978; Fattovich,1978:25 ; 1987 ; 1991).

Concerning this issue, one of the key informants reported: “The existing old symmetries indicate the fact that our ancestors settled here and there many hundred years ago” (Key informant-1, November, 20, 2013).

In this regard, some researchers have suggested that, these sites are representing the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium B.C. ; in fact, these seemingly semi - permanent village based has a possible connection with a C-Group settlement along the Nile basin in lower Nubian and the discoveries of certain artifacts (stone bowl) that was also found at Lake *Besaka* (Ethiopia) dated 1,500 B.C. suggests and reminds us the East African stone bowl industries (Clark ,1976b : 86 ; see also Phillipson, 1977c : 66).

In addition to these, the decorative design of the ceramic material of *Baahiti Nebait* (in the north) is similar with that of the Butana culture of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium B.C. (Fattovich, 1978:25 ; 1997a). Researchers unanimously accepted that, potteries that are found near the area of Ethio-Eritrea and Sudanese borderlands show a strong cultural affinity with Sudanese material cultural elements. On the other hand, the Pre-Aksumite **State** (which I prefer to call it Chiefdom) was said to have been emerged with settlement at Yeha. In addition, the revised chronology of the Pre-Aksumite period and, the tombs of Yeha reveal the date to be the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. (Manzo, 2006-2007: 269) is believed to have had the precursor relations and well-rooted connection to the population and settlement of Gash Delta /Sudan/ (Arkel, 1954; Agazi Negash, 1997 ; Phillipson, 1977 :75-78 ; Fattovich, 1988 ; 1990 ; Munro-Hay, 1993; Catherine, **u.d.**:11).

## 5.2.Settlement History

Before talking the occupational history of a given society or a selection of a settlement site, we need to see the credentials of the settlement choice. One of a primary issue in selecting settlement sites rests on attraction of resource availability as a minimum standard (Barnet,1999). In this regard, my field survey, key informants and secondary data indicates that, the spatial distribution

of settlement and megalithic culture patterns goes hand in hand at all altitude ranges and spatio-temporal phases.

In support of the above statements, the Ethiopian site use come into being in the Holocene site c 8<sup>th</sup> millennium B.P. (Barnet, 1999: 122). The rationality for this was explained that the resource availability at a given area attracts people and discourages moving. Thus, out of several settlement sites we can take the evidence from the *Ona* Culture. At *Ona* (Eritrea) site we found dense settlements and well organized social structures (Tringali, 1965; Munro-Hay -Tringali, 1991; Schmidt - Curtis, 2001; Catherine, u.d.).

Here we can say a later rising Chiefdoms in and around *Ona* become similar with that of Sudan (Gash Delta), and evidently took place in the highland plateaux of the northern parts of Ethiopia, at *Yeha* and *Bieta-Giyorgis*. On this point attention should be made to discuss on the use of a term chiefdom, while the political system was observable in the *Ona*-Culture and reveal possible connections with that of Gahs Delata (Sudan) is assumed to be chiefdom (Fattovich, 2013: personal communication at Aksum ; Catherine, u.d: 10).

The use of the term Chiefdom is more or less appears to be convincing and plausible than using the word kingdom for the ancient African political settings. Concerning this, one of the key informants asserted, that, "The existence of chiefdom/*Abbaa Gadaa* in certain villages of southern Ethiopian ethnic groups can be a manifestation of the transition of culture over the many hundred years" (Key informant-4, November 18, 2013). This is merely because the term chiefdom (*Abbaa Gadaa*) has a deep-root in the African (Ethiopia) political history.

Regarding to this unequivocal evidences extracted from the works of Fattovich (1987:41) it says as follows:

*"The age of the Kasala stelae goes back to the mid 3<sup>rd</sup> (3,000 kyr) millennia. It is linked with the chiefdom Abbaa Gadaa based society. The Aksum monuments are derived from somewhere else from eastern Sudanese and the Eastern Red Sea culture."* (Underline and translation is by the author).

On the other hand, David Phillipson (1977:208) has forwarded the following noticeable points.

*"The stelae of Aksum are seen as part of a very ancient and widespread funerary tradition in northeast Africa. They reached their apogee just before the kings of Aksum adopted Christianity"* (Phillipson, 1977:208).

Having all these in mind, it is plausible to think and be able to make arguments. In this regard, Ethiopian stela building culture obviously precedes the formation of kings and kingdoms in the northern parts of Ethiopia. Thus, the age depths of the adoption of Christianity in Ethiopian domain appear to be a late phenomenon. Therefore, I strongly argue that, the African established form of chiefdom administrative (*age-set/Aba Gadaa*) system is believed to be by far earlier than the formation of kings and kingdoms furthermore the adoption of Christianity (Phillipson, 1998; Asemrom Legesse, 1963; Gemechu Megerssa, 1994 ; Tabor Wami, 2007 Eth., Kebede Geleta, in press).

In addition, Haaland (1992: 59) has forwarded that, about 5,300 b.p. the Neolithic Language speaking families were shifted or replaced by the Cushitic – Language speaking pastoralists. This replacement or occupation of places was probably due to a superior political-military systems, possibly based on the age-set (*Gadaa*) organization system as is commonly practiced among all Cushitic-speaking peoples (Haaland 1992 ; Asemrom Legesse 1963 ; Gemechu Megerssa, 1994).

The above explained view enabled me argue that the age-set or grade role could be equated with the formation of *Gadaa* (a socio-politico - economic) system which all Ethiopian Cushitic-Language Families such as : Sidama, Gedio, Konso, Oromoo...etc. are sharing and still practicing (Asemrom Legesse 1963 ; Gemechu Megerssa, 1994 ; Haaland 1992; Abiyot Debebe , 2006).

It is also unanimously accepted that, ceramics throughout the Pre-Aksumite period have African affinities, with less or no similarities to the South Arabian forms (Fattovich, 1987; Phillipson, 1993). In addition to these, circumstantial evidences indicates that, the results of different excavations and surveyed sites such as: the site in Agordat around the Barka drainage, the ceramics and stone tools of Gobedera, the pottery and the cemeteries of *Bieta-Giyorgis*, the ceramics of Quiha cave ; the excavations at Gorgora rock-shelter, and Lalibela (*Natchibet*) are supporting the occupational history and settlement resemblance. There also seem similar in animal domestication and plant cultivation economy (Dombrowski, 1970:28 ; Fattovich, 1978; 1990; Munro-Hay, 1993; Phillipson, 1998).

In this regard, I presume all these data particularly the lower level strata discloses a strong cultural affinity between Sudanese and the highlands of Ethiopia (Fattovich, 1978:28).

### 5.3. Spatial Distribution of Megaliths in View of Population Movements.

Randi Haaland (1992 : 47), in here “major phases in technological development” model, phase 4<sup>th</sup> described the emergence of specialized pastoralists in the northern Africa after 6,000 b.p. and spreading to the Khartoum area by about 5,300 b.p. Furthermore, researchers unanimously in agreement that domesticated animals were brought from the north by 7,000 b.p. (Hassen, 1986a). Taking this view into account, presumably a society who used a primary product (meat and skin) for livelihood able altering a pervious activities and acquire domesticated animals and possess knowledge and adapt specialized pastoralism in the Late Mid Holocene Phases c 5,000 B.C. (Haaland, 1992: 54).

As a result of such shifting in economic activities, people obtained new knowledge and achieved extra self feeding skills in a known sites and enclosures. Conceivably, specialized pastoral people became familiar with advanced secondary food production which is derived from animal food stuffs that are storable and portable (Haaland,1992: 54).

Thus, practice gave way for animal demographic pressure as killing of animals for meat consumption cut short. As a result of this, the increased number of cattle forced the population to move in search of wider grazing environment (Gemchu Megersa,1994) .

Arguably this brings a distinct economic category between the primary producing and secondary producing populations. Furthermore, then, semi-sedentary and sedentary pastoralists appear in the northeastern African. With regard to this issue another key informant from *Guji* asserted:

*“The existing forms of sedentary and pastoralist ways of life in Ethiopia reflect cultural patterns as well as movement of people across the country since many centuries” (Key-informant 9, November,19, 2013).*

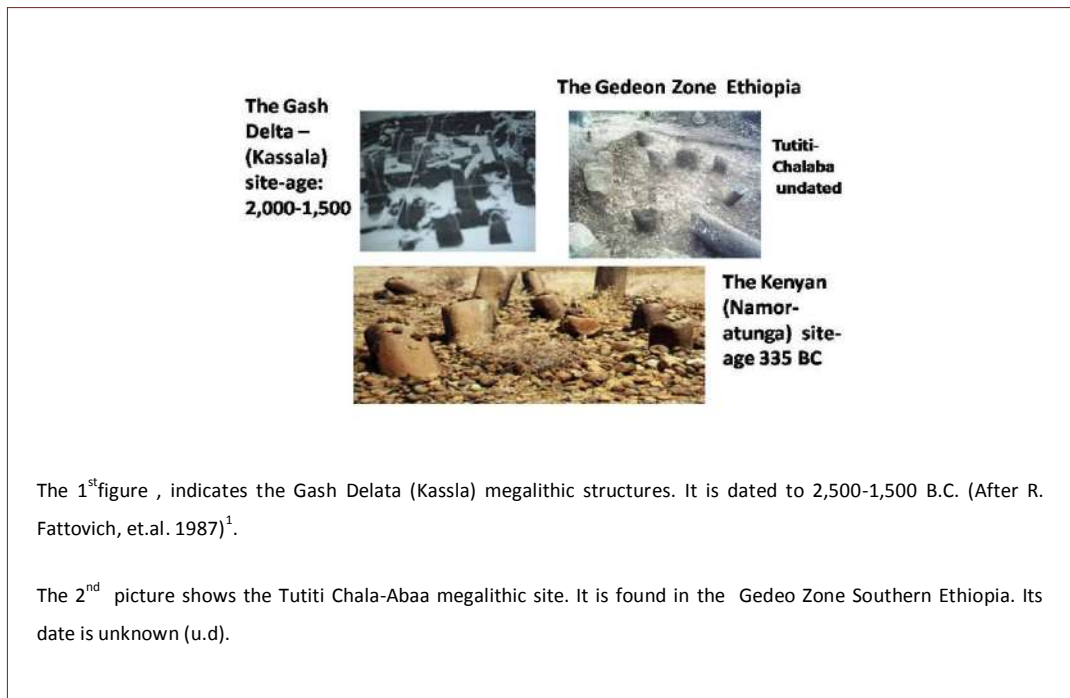
Thus, people who are moving with cattle are not in a position to have a permanent settlement area, and also do not tend to possess a plot of land individually. Rather, these unrestricted most probably an egalitarian pastoralists try to control wider and sufficient communal niches, which help them enjoy adequate grazing lands (Gemechu Megersa, 1994; Kebede Geleta, in press). This is one of the observable traditions that created the fluidity based movement of people in the northeastern African from extreme north to the extreme south (from Nubian area to the Turkana lack region/Namoratunga).

#### 5.4. Population Movements in View of Megalithic Building Tradition

In order to show the significant similarities of the megalithic building tradition of the world in general and a northeastern Africa-Ethiopia in particular I tried to demonstrate a general attributes of megaliths elsewhere in the introductory part. Furthermore, I try to illuminate and clarify using similar if not identical megalithic archaeological photographic data which are collected from three different (northeastern African) localities are shown bellow:

In addition to these, oral history, historical and archaeological findings and rock art data records reveal that the C-Group was migrated from north to south (Clark 1962 ; Graziosi 1964; Cervicek 1971; Lynch - Robinson ,1979; Kebede Geleta, in press.) probably around 5,000-300 years b.c. This dating is mainly based on the assumed dating' of rock arts found in Laga-Oda (Ethiopia) and Namoratunga (North Western Kenya).

The fieldwork of megalithic data; information from informants; circumstantial evidence and, the continuously extending geographical landscape of rock art sites which encompass : Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya; together with the spatial distribution of burial-markers; occupational areas that are showing and qualifying the southward patterns; together with the current human settlement of the Cushitic-language speaking Families such as: Beja, Agew, Kimant, Saho , Afar, Oromoo, Sidama, Gedeo, Hadiya, Tambaro, Essa , Somali, Konso, Dasenech, etc... are believed to be found in the map of the northeastern Africa. All these significant data show the south ward



population movement directions. With regard to this issue, one of the focus group discussants in Borena and Guji Oromia said:

*We are semi-pastoralists and transhumant, we often (seasonally) move from place to place in search of water and pasture, we observe similar patterns of life and megalithic structures in our different ethnic groups' and areas'' (November 21 2013).*

To sum up, the proxy evidences that I used in this thesis were indicative of the distributional patterns of megalithic building tradition following the direction of population movement and settlements. This is simply because cemeteries were believed to follow the footprints of human beings and occupational localities (Kebede Geleta, 2008 ; 2013 ; in press).

## 6. Results

The data analysis led to the following major conclusion and results:

(a) The critical review of relevant documents indicates that the oscillation of the paleo-climate conditions which took place in the Holocene period forced hunting-gathering people to move towards the Nile River Valley.

(b) It was also revealed that the people most likely learned the use of secondary product utilization which probably facilitated a long way to move to the Nubian environment.

(c) I presume it was the unpredictability of the rain and the long period drought that could further forced the C-Group people to further advance to the resourceful highlands of Ethiopia and Eritrea.

(d) Unlike the diffusion theory, the megalithic dispersal notion I stated in this research paper is based on the idea that groups of people (tribes) move with their own skills and traditions. In light of death, it was possible that they would use their crafts and skills to build appropriate megaliths (dolmen , stele, tumulus) whenever the members of their community deceased. So megalithic building is an inherited (influence or example of your parents or other relatives) cultural practice in northeastern Africa, not the idea that reached to the region.

(e) A culturally homogenous people who moved in groups, took order from a central body with intact management system (age-set type ) probably based on division of labor , contemplated to be a well-fed young generation who are assumed responsible constructing these megaliths.

(f) It was also confirmed that the view of Fattovich (1978) is valid in light of the findings of this study, megaliths of the Nubian sites (Kasala) are similar to those of Aksum , and the megaliths of northern Ethiopia (Aksum) has strong affinity with the megaliths of southern Ethiopia and north western Kenya such as : Tuto Falaa , Tuuttitii-Chaala Abbaa and Namoratunga in the Turkana depression respectively.

## 7. Conclusions

Based on the qualitative data analysis undertaken, the following conclusions were made: Regarding the megalithic traditions and its distributional pattern, we plausibly conclude that megalithic culture goes with the movement of people and probably originated in the Nubian area and Eastern Desert in the 5<sup>th</sup> millennium to 4<sup>th</sup> millennium B.C. (Manzo, 2007: 273). As burials are one of an elements of landscape indicator, they have also a capacity to depict settlement site choice, social organization, climate change, the dietary habit, the economic activity, the sex and age, cause of death, and the social beliefs in spatio-temporal perspective (Kebede Geleta, 2009 ; Connah, 1987:114). In this regard, burials are considered as archives of prehistoric and historic times. Thus if megalithic building cultures are studied together with rock art types and pattern, population movements and settlements dispersal of the aforementioned region, it may arguably unlock the mystery of the whole history of the northeastern Africa. Therefore, as the relation between climate and megalithic tradition is indirect, the megalithic building culture may serve to re-construct the climatic history of the country. This is simply because climate controls the selection of settlement sites and the cemetery site is controlled by settlement choice.

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**14. Implications of Inscribing the Oromoo Gadaa System on Unesco's List  
of World Intangible Heritage:  
A Revitalized Panacea Prophesying  
The Future of the Oromoo**

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**Abstract**

As of November 30, 2016, the Oromoo Gadaa system has been inscribed on the representative list of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity. Inasmuch as the system has lifetime democratic and egalitarian constitutional form of governance, there is a need to reinstitute it for its potentially pragmatic values. The purpose of this study was, therefore, to investigate the obligations inherent within the *Inscription* and the potential values of the Gadaa system, if properly adopted, to ameliorate the prevailing governance chaos of the world. In doing so, the study attempted to identify the likely implications and responsibilities embedded within the impetus and actions of the inscription, and assess the potential roles of the Gadaa values to serve as a remedy for the world governance mayhem, and to glimpse the future of the Oromoo within the invigorated Gadaa system. The study employed qualitative approach. Data were collected by reviewing extant literatures, by conducting interviews with 10 individuals purposively selected for their knowledge and expertise in the area, and by analyzing the video of the event of inscription.

The results have shown that the inscription of the Oromoo Gadaa System on UNESCO's list of World Intangible Heritage has marked a revitalized "*sublation*" whereby the Oromoo shall enter into regaining its foundational- legal, social, administrative, structural, and cultural basics to make use of the potential values of the Gadaa system, which eventually serves as a remedy for the common day governance chaos. The case implies incorporation of the Gadaa values in curricula and governance structures, rehabilitation of social, infrastructure, ecological, and cultural institutions including *Arda Jila sites*- all of which portend peaceful and stable political, administrative, economic, social and cultural (co)existence of the Oromoo.

Key words: *Oromoo, Gadaa System, World Heritage, UNESCO's list, Future of the Oromoo*

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTORY BACKGROUND

### 1. Introduction

This Chapter deals with background, rationales, and objectives and questions of the study.

#### 1.1. Background

The Gadaaa System of the Oromoo is an *indigenous* democratic, egalitarian, and powerful constitutional form of governance and socio-political institution. It has been shaping and guiding the lives, mode of governance, socio-economic conditions, and philosophical outlooks of the people for the main purpose of ensuring unity and solidarity among the people and resolving conflict peacefully and amicably (Ardaa Jilaa nd; ORCTB, 2015). As Ardaa Jilaa (nd) further indicates Gadaaa is an age grade System combined with sophisticated and extremely efficient socio economic and political System.

The System is based upon the principles of equality among mankind-regardless of age, sex, ethnicity, and religious affiliations. Under the Gadaaa System the power to administer the affairs of the nation and the power to make laws belong to the people being shared among different bodies to ensure check and balance. All the people have the right to air their views in any public gathering without fear. Gadaaa has immense amount of influence on Oromoo society up to date instituted by founding fathers. Each Gadaa class remains in power during a specific term (Gadaa) for eight years, which begins and ends with a formal power transfer ceremony.

During the period when a party stays on power, it is bound by the principle of rule of law. Moreover, transfer of power is made smoothly and peacefully among parties (ORCTB, 2015).

The System has a distinct distribution of political authority among male members of the society in leadership. The well-known Gadaa officers include:

1. Abbaa Bokkuu<sup>159</sup> (carrier of the *scepter* holding a position similar to that of a *magistrate*), an elected "chairman" who presides over the *Caffee* (assembly) and proclaims the laws. He is the head equivalent of president in modern governments.
2. Aba Gadaaaa (elected leader),
3. Abbaa Caffee (father of legislative assembly),
4. Abbaa Alangee (attorney general),

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<sup>159</sup>Bokku (scraper)

5. Abbaa Sa'aa (ministry of economy/finance),
6. Abbaa Seeraa (a parliamentarian), and
7. Abbaa Duulaa (war leader or defense minister) who directs the army, and
8. A council known as *shanee* or *salgee* and retired Gadaa officials also help the abba boku to run the government.

All Gadaa officials are elected for eight years. The main qualifications for election include bravery, knowledge, honesty, demonstrated ability, and courage. The System's distinctive characteristic of distribution of power across generations and age groups is by far superior to the western democracies that have deficient in as the practices show that those who assume the position control most of the authority and wealth of the country; and the young, poor and the elders are politically and economically marginalized in most western democracies (Asmerom, 2001).

The Gadaa System greatly believes in rigorous practical or actual testing of the candidates before they assume office unlike western democracy which in most cases exclusively relies on election. The System defines the rights and obligations of each classes and initiations of and period of work and performances. The roles and rules attached to the age grade System are the most important elements that regulate the Gadaa System. When one passes from one grade to the other, his roles and responsibilities in the community also changes, in such a way, an individual or group of individuals who are assuming the office will be critically tested in the System.

The Gadaa government works on local, regional, and central levels. The political philosophy of the Gadaa System is embodied in three main principles: terms of eight years, balanced opposition between parties, and power sharing between higher and lower levels. The government's independent executive, legislative, and judicial branches also are a way of balancing power (Asmerom, 2001). Whereas the System is currently rejuvenating, just some elements of Gadaa persisted the last regimes of Ethiopia mainly in southern Oromia.

The System has the principles of checks and balances (through periodic succession of every eight years), and division of power (among executive, legislative, and judicial branches), balanced opposition (among five parties), and power sharing between higher and lower administrative organs to prevent power from falling into the hands of despots. These checks and balances are created to



prevent misuse of power. Other principles of the System include balanced representation of all clans, lineages, regions and confederacies, accountability of leaders, the settlement of disputes through reconciliation, and the respect for basic rights and liberties (Asmerom, 2001).

As ORCTB (2015) indicates the democratic practices of the Oromoo people as manifested in the Gadaa System provides an exemplary System of social functioning to the world. Political leaders within the Gadaa System of Oromoo are elected by the men of the community every eight years. Corrupt or dictatorial leaders would be removed from power through *buqisu* (recall) before the official end of their term. Oromoo women had a parallel institution known as *siqqee*. This institution has been in place by promoting gender equality in Oromoo society (Encyclopedia of World Cultures 1999).

The Gadaa System of Oromoo is a result of many years of experiences of self-governance of the Oromoo people at different levels (Dirribi, 2009:206). In the same vein, Arda Jila (nd) indicates that the Gadaa System of Oromoo has been developed from practices, experiences and knowledge gained by community over generations. After long years of informal practices, it was formally established in the 14<sup>th</sup> century under a rule of Gadaaayo Galgalo Yayyaa (Ardaa Jilaa, nd, Dirribi, 2009). Based on the information obtained from Arero Ramadan (Borana), Adam and Musa have indicated that the Gadaa System had been the governance of the Orom for over 4000 years. As the same source citing the information obtained from Haji Abdurahiman Cirri in 1972 indicates, the Gadaa System of governance at Madda Walabu had 1400 years of existence.

Whereas formerly the Oromos have been under one rule for over 25 abba Gadaas after Gadaa was instituted, the Borana Oromoo have already 71 aba Gadaas as of this year. This shows that the Borana Oromoo has 576 years of indigenous democratic and egalitarian governance System. Despite unprecedented challenges they encountered, the Borana Oromoo maintained this sophisticated and extremely efficient System as it was instituted by founding fathers up-to-date (Adam & Musa, and Dirrib, 2009).

After several years of injustice made to it, the Gadaa System of the Oromoo has been inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity as of November 30, 2016. The inscription event took place from 28 November to 04 December 2016 when Ethiopia hosted the 11th session of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee (representatives of 24 State Parties) for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, (*article published by walta info*). The event and the case demonstrate to the rest of the world that the country is not only the cradle of mankind but also the mother of an age-old democratic System (ORCTB, 2015).



*Figure 1: Gadaa fathers on the occasion of UNESCO's decision of the Gadaa System as World Heritage*  
(source: Ethiopian News Agency 2016 @allAfrica)

The declaration of the Oromoo people's traditional, socio-political governance System ('Gadaa') as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage could attract much-needed international attention and help raise awareness of the Oromoo's plight for years.

### **1.2. Rationales of the study**

Due to various internal and external factors: the sweeping and acculturation, religious expansions, emergence of statehood and economic landscape, the Gadaa System's roles in terms of Legal, Social, Administrative, Structural, and Cultural aspects have become blurred in the current Federal governance arrangements of Ethiopia vis-à-vis its pragmatic roles in ameliorating the governance chaos of the time and shaping the future of the Oromoo. Equally, whereas the System has been acclaimed for its democratic and egalitarian constitutional form of governance; it seems that little conscious efforts are being made to reinstitute it for its potentially pragmatic values. This study, therefore, targets at pinpointing the likely implications and responsibilities inherent within the inscription of the Oromoo Gadaa System on UNESCO's list of World Intangible Heritage in terms of legal, social, administrative, structural, and cultural aspects.

### **1.3. Objectives**

The overall purpose of the study was to assess the inherent Implications of inscribing the Oromoo Gadaa System on UNESCO's list of World Intangible Heritage vis-à-vis the roles of the Gadaa System to solve governance chaos and to prophesy the future of the Oromoo. Specifically, the study intended to:

- 1) identify the likely implications and responsibilities embedded within the impetus and actions of the inscription: legal, social, administrative, structural, and cultural aspects;
- 2) assess the potential roles of the Gadaa values to serve as a remedy for the world governance mayhem- manifested here and there; and
- 3) glimpse the future of the Oromoo within the invigorated Gadaa System.

#### ***1.4. Research Questions of the Study***

With the purpose to achieve the aforementioned objectives, the study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What are the likely implications and responsibilities inherent within the inscription of the OromooGadaa System on UNESCO's list of World Intangible Heritage?
2. What are the potential roles and/or values of the OromooGadaa to serve as a remedy for the world governance chaos?
3. How does the inscription of the OromooGadaa System positively contribute in shaping for the future of the Oromoo?

## **CHAPTER TWO: CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY**

This Chapter outlines the OromooGadaaa System Features, Roles, Classes, Grades, and the Oromoo and their language one after the other.

### ***2.1. The OromooGadaaa System Roles***

The Gadaa system gives equal chances to all classes and grades of genealogical generations that succeed each other every eight years assuming political, military, judicial, legislative and ritual responsibilities (Asmarom, 2001). The system serves as an inexhaustible fountain of knowledge and wisdom to the contemporary generation; as a mechanism for enforcing moral conduct, building social cohesion, and expressing forms of community culture; and it has been governing the direction and day-to-day lives and guiding the political and socio-economic functions of the Oromoo people majorly during the time when the people were governing themselves

independently, and currently too, it has more power than the contemporary governance practices (ORCTB, 2015; Hallpike, 1976). As Encyclopedia of World Cultures (1999) indicates the system has helped the Oromos maintain democratic political, economic, social, and religious institutions for many centuries. The Gadaa political system and military organization enabled Oromos defend themselves against enemies who were competing with them for land, water, and power.

As ORCTB (2015) lists out, the OromooGadaa system has roles such as: 1) Political: Democratic System, Respecting Human Rights, and Respecting Women's Rights; 2) Economic Aspects: The role of all members including women in economic sector, cooperation, transfer of wealth, wealth sharing, on UNESCO's representative list as intangible cultural heritage of humanity, and the tradition of helping one another; 3) Social Aspects: Increasing the role women play in the community, ending of hostilities, prayer to 'Waaqaa', cleansing of sin, adoption; 4) Environmental Conservation; 5) Sustaining the Irreechaa Ceremony; and 6) Arbitration.

The OromooGadaa system is an effective institutional system to manage any source of conflicts among the Oromos so that harmony, peaceful co-existence and smooth relations have been maintained in the society following clearly delineating steps of conflict resolution through the use of the system to finally arrive at reconciliation.

In short, the Gadaa system regulates: political stability, economic development, social activities, cultural obligations, moral responsibilities, the philosophical and religious order of the society, military purposes, ritual responsibilities, conflict resolution, reparation and protecting women's rights, enforcing moral conduct, building social cohesion, and expressing forms of community culture (Hallpike, 1976).

Overall, the Gadaa system comprises regulatory measures pertaining to issues such as conflict resolution, questions of religion and to women's rights. In contrast to the modus operandi employed by the current, authoritarian government, the Gadaa form of governance contains provisions guaranteeing an effective system of 'checks and balances', the separation of powers and an institutionalized opposition – all of which provides safeguards against totalitarianism and a governmental abuse of power.

## 2.2. The OromooGadaa Classes

In the Gadaa System, there are five groups/parties/classes or luba (*gogessa* for Borana), in which the ten to eleven age sets of the Gadaa grade run into hemicycle (Jeylan, 2004, Hallpike, 1976, Encyclopedia of World Cultures 1999; Dirribi, 2009). As Ardaa Jilaa (nd) indicates the Gadaaa classes are recruited on the basis of genealogical generations. Luba can be defined as a segment of a generation that assumes power for a period of eight years, whereas Gadaaa is the years when the members of the class stay in power as the rulers.

The names of the Gadaa classes vary from place to place. Based on the data from Dirribi (2009) and Adam and Musa (2011), the five groups/classes are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Gadaa Classes for fathers and Children

Fatehrs' Gadaaa	Children's Gadaaa	Fatehrs' Gadaaa	Children's Gadaaa
1. Meelbaa	Harmufa	Birmaji	Aldaada
2. Muudana	Roobalee	Malba	Horata
3. Kiilolee	Birmajii	Muudana	Biifolee
4. Biifolee	Mul'ataa	Roobalee	Sabbaaqa
5. Michille	Jabanaa	Dullo	Kiilolee

Source: Dirribi (2009:261, 413,456)      Vis-à-vis      Source: Adam & Musa (2011:61)

Various socio-political functions and responsibilities are associated with each party. Of the parties, one functions as the ruling class consisting of a chairperson (Aba Gadaaaa/Abbaa Bokkuu), officials and an assembly. Each class progresses through a series of grades before it can function in authority with the leadership changing on a rotational basis every eight years. Class membership is open to men, whose fathers are already members, while women have consultative roles on all matters and decisions including their rights. The classes are taught by oral historians covering history, laws, rituals, time reckoning, cosmology, myths, rules of conduct, and the function of the Gadaa system. Meetings and ceremonies take place under a sycamore tree (considered the Gadaa symbol) while major clans have established Gadaa centres and

ceremonial spaces according to territory. Knowledge about the Gadaa system is transmitted to children in the home and at school (Jeylan, 2004; Hallpike, 1976, Encyclopedia of World Cultures 1999; Dirribi, 2009)

### **2.3. The OromooGadaa Grades**

As different sources show, the Gadaa System contains ten/eleven sequential grades that occur in eight years interval and correlate with chronological ages beginning at birth. Particularly, boys in the first grade are the sons of men in the 6th grade; in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, of men in the 7th grade, and so on-the generations being divided by five grades or forty year interval, all brothers being in the same grade. Not all grades are in fact of 8 years' duration: the 5th grade lasts 3 years, the 6th 8 years, and the 7th 3 years, while the 8th grade is of normal duration, but the basic symmetry of the system is preserved nonetheless. There is an eleventh grade, Gadaamojji, whose members assume ritual responsibilities of purity and special sanctity, in many ways resembling that of the youngest boys in the first grade, who are the grandsons of Gadaamojji. After Gadaamojji men become jarsa (Burckhardt, G. 2000, Asmerom, 2011, 1973).

As Dejene (2009, citing Asafa, 1993) indicates, the OromooGadaaa system is unique in developing the use of generation called gogeessa (forty years gap between father and son) as an element of its organization. Whereas the names of the Gadaaaa grades vary from place to place as evidenced in Encyclopedia of World Cultures (1999), Dejene (2009), Dirribi (2009), Adam and Musa (2011), and Yoseph (2016), a synthesis has been taken also considering the naming by Dirribi (2009:211) for the central Oromia with the addition of Jaarsa after 88 years as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Gadaa Grade names, ages and feature

Grades	Aga	Grades	features
1	1-8	Dabballe	the grade of the uninitiated boys
2	9-16	Ittimako	Mixing with others
3	17-24	Foollee	readiness for responsibilities
4	25-32	Qondaala	junior warriors
5	33-40	Raaba Dori	senior warriors
6	41-48	Gadaaa	the stage of political and ritual leadership
7	49-56	Yuuba 1ffaa	stage of partial retirement
8	57-64	Yuuba 2ffaa	stage of partial retirement
9	65-72	Yuuba 3ffaa	stage of partial retirement
10	73-80	[Yuuba 4ffaa] <sup>160</sup>	stage of partial retirement
11	80-88	Gadamoojjii	<b>the terminal sacred grade</b>
	After 88	Jaarsa	at which care & support is rendered

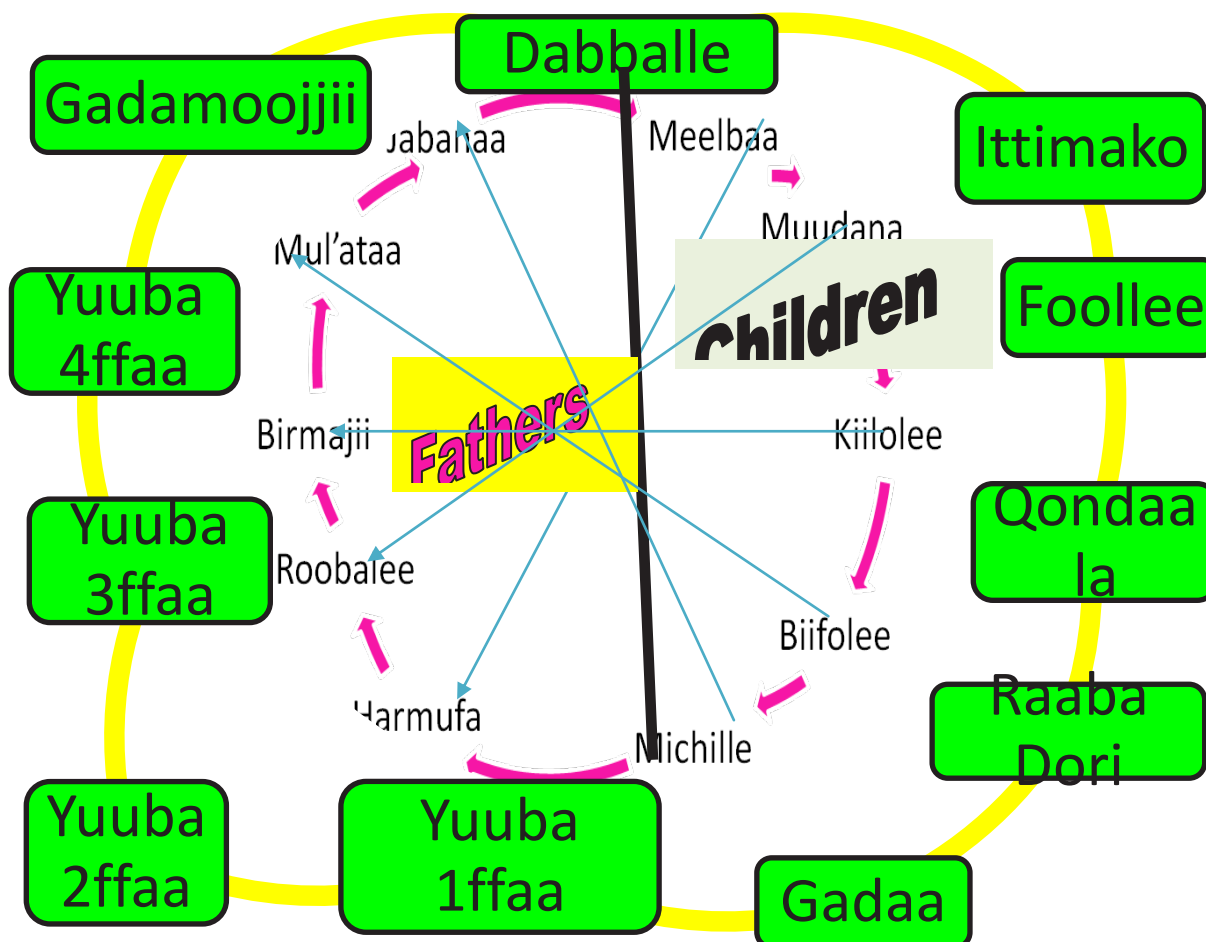


Figure 2: Alignment of Gadaa Classes and Grades vis-à-vis Fathers' and Childers's 'Gogessa'

<sup>160</sup> This Grade is considered as *Gadamoojii* by Yoseph (2016:24), Adam and Musa (2011: 63), Dejene (2009: 95)

Whereas the first of all grades is Dabballe (sons of the Gadaaa class who are in power as leaders of the society), the last is Gadaaammojji the stage at which one retires from responsibilities, followed by jarsaa after 88 years of age. All the rest grades, namely Ittimako, Foollee, Qondaala, Raaba Dori, Gadaaa, Yuuba 1ffaa Yuuba 2ffaa, Yuuba 3ffaa, and Yuuba 4ffaa have clearly defined roles and responsibilities within the society. There, however, are variations in age categorizations. For instance, whereas Dirribi (2009:211) classifies almost as presented in Table 2, slight variations are observed in classifications made by Yoseph (2016:24), Adam and Musa (2011: 63), and Dejene (2009: 95). Communalities, nevertheless, are inherent in all the classifications. Particularly, the 6th grade is commonly “Gadaaa”, which is the stage of political and ritual leadership. It is the age group that assumes the political power in the system. The transfer of power (balli) from one Gadaaa to other occurs in the specified month and weeks. For instance, in Borana Oromoo, the month of Gurrandhala is common. It is performed at the shrine of Nura in the eastern corner of Borana land. In Borana, the most senior man is referred to as Abba Gadaaa “arboraa” and the other two are Abba Gadaaa “kontoma” called collectively Gadaaa Saden. The class is required to perform four major ceremonies in the fourth and fifth years of the period. These ceremonies are named Ginda, Gumi Gayyo, Oda and Muda. The gumi Gayyo ceremony occurs in the fourth year of the Gadaaa period, but it is a ceremony that concerns all Borana, not merely the class in power. The “raba” and all the four-yuba classes are expected to attend. In the fifth year of the Gadaaa period the class goes once again to the eastern district (Liiban) to perform the muda ceremony. Muda is the occasion when the Gadaaa class in power makes an offering to the ritual leaders of the moieties, the qallu of the Oditu and the Karrayyu. Customary law prohibits the Gadaaa leaders from traveling beyond a defined perimeter within Dirre and Liban. The specific law that constrains the movement of Gadaaa councilors is known as Sera Dawwe or Sera Goro. The Abba Gadaaa himself is subject to the same punishment as all other Borana if he violates laws. This shows that the law is above everybody, including the Abba Gadaaa. To assure the continuation of agendas started during outgoing government (luba), Garba councilors are elected from outgoing luba to serve with the incoming government. One of the junior councils of the Gadaaa institution, known as the Garba council (hayyu garba) is elected by the outgoing government and serves with the incoming government. This contributes to continuity from one Gadaaa assembly (ya’a) to the next and this may help to finish the unfinished job (Ardaa Jilaa, nd, Hallpike, 1976).

Overall, the Gadaaa system assigns rights, responsibilities, rules and obligations to the members of the Oromoo generation in the age-graded manner. Every Oromoo of specific age-grade is expected to perform a



certain function according to the specified rules and regulations, which demand leaning the customary law and law of Waaqaa (Hallpike, 1976; Dereje, 2012)

Activities and social roles are formally defined, both in terms of what is permitted and in terms of what is forbidden (Tadesse, 1995). Social development (finna) stands for “ the legacy of the past which each generation inherits from its forefathers and which it transforms; it is the fertile patrimony held in trust by the present generation which it will enrich and bequeath to future generations...”(Asafa,2010)....”

Children within the Gadaa system, as Hallpike (1976) indicates, are taught by oral historians covering history, laws, rituals, time reckoning, cosmology, myths, rules of conduct, and the function of the Gadaa system. Knowledge about the Gadaa system is transmitted to children in the home and at schools. Jeylan (2004) also indicates that at a very early stage, the Oromoo boys and girls engage in cognitive self-categorization (Hallpike, 1976). This is later enhanced by other intensive process of socialization in the society.

As Adam and Musa (2011:49) indicate, parents have obligations to train their offspring through riddles, storytelling, etc. They teach how people with good deeds become respected and those with wrecked deeds degraded. AS the same source indicates: *Ilmaan samuu gaarii fi naamusa dansaa qabaatee akka guddattu gochchuu...Ilmaan kabaja hojiin qabuufi bu'aa isaa barsiisuu hojii maatii tauu...*”. This is to mean, children are expected to grow with good behavior, to be honest, to respect elders including father and mother, neighborhood, adopted other children, clan acceptable character, open-minded, and optimistic personalities.

### **CHAPTER THREE: METHODS AND PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY**

The study employed exclusively qualitative approach. The data for the study were collected by conducting interviews with purposively selected 10 individuals, and by reviewing extant literatures available on the area. To substantiate the data obtained through interview and literature review, a video analysis of the event of the inscription of the Gadaa System has been made.

The data sources for the interview were purposively drawn from five colleges (one each from the College of Law and Governance Studies, from the College of Education and Behavioral Studies, from the College of Social Sciences, and one from College of Development Studies, and two from the College of Humanities, Language Studies, Journalism and Communication); from Oromoo Cultural Center (three professionals), and from Oromia International Bank (one lawyer with history of the Oromoo background). As shown in Table 3 below, coding has been used to protect the identity of the interviewees.

Table 3: Coding of the Interviewees

The eight interviewees	Code	Mode of interview
Interviewee One	Int <sub>1</sub>	Individual
Interviewee Two	Int <sub>2</sub>	Group 1
Interviewee Three	Int <sub>13</sub>	Group 1
Interviewee Four	Int <sub>4</sub>	Group 2
Interviewee Five	Int <sub>5</sub>	Group 2
Interviewee Six	Int <sub>6</sub>	Group 2
Interviewee Seven	Int <sub>7</sub>	Individual
Interviewee Eight	Int <sub>8</sub>	Individual
Interviewee Nine	Int <sub>9</sub>	Individual
Interviewee Ten	Int <sub>10</sub>	Individual

Whereas the interviews were conducted individually with interviewees 1, and 7-10 (Int 1, and Int7-10), with the rest (Int2,3, 4,5,6) the interviews were conducted in group. All sorts of data-obtained from the interviews, reviewing literatures, and from analysis of video have been brought under pertinent themes- supplementing each other and serving triangulation purposes.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this Chapter, analyses of the data obtained through interview, from literatures, and video analysis have been made following the sequence of the themes identified in Chapter one. Before entering into specific issues, *Int<sub>7</sub>* underscored that “Following the inscription of the OromooGadaa System on UNESCO’s list of World Intangible Heritage, we ought to have done a lot in terms of legal, social, administrative, structural, and cultural aspects”. He went on saying: “inscription of the System is important, but it is not sufficient by itself”. In his saying: “Abbaatu kunuunfata sirna ofii eenyuma caalaa!”.

### ***4.1 Legal implications and responsibilities inherent within the inscription of the OromooGadaa System on UNESCO’s list of World Intangible Heritage***

An effort has been made to assess legal ground for and following the inscription of the OromooGadaa System on UNESCO's list of World Intangible Heritage. Accordingly, pertinent provisions within the Proclamation No 209/2000 on Research *and Conservation of Cultural Heritage* have been reviewed. The document defines "Intangible Cultural Heritage" as:

... Cultural Heritage that cannot be felt by hands or ears, and includes different kinds of performances and show, folklore, religious, belief, wedding and mourning ceremonies, music, drama, literature and similar other cultural values, traditions and customs of nations, nationalities and peoples;

(Article3, No. 5).

A question here is whether this can clearly cover the Gadaa System as intangible heritage. The same source (Article 3, No. p) defines "Cultural Heritage Registration" as:

... registration in the form prepared to collect wide information of Cultural Heritage, which shall include photographing, recording in film or video as appropriate, so as to put in place the means to catalogue, inspect, study, protect and conserve cultural heritage and facilitate utilization of same for the purpose of recreation and education;

Moreover, the Proclamation (Article 4, No. 3) indicates one of the objectives of the *Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage* as "enable the benefits of cultural heritage assist in the economic and social development of the country".

The issue here is that the Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage has been established as a government institution with a juridical personality, and would be accountable to the then Federal level *Minister of Information and Culture*. When it comes to the context of the Gadaa System, this Proclamation doesn't work as it is far away from the natural and practical Gadaa System. The Gadaa System has come adverse ups and downs during the past Ethiopian regimes without extinction. This because, it has been protected within its natural and cultural setup (within the people). This, therefore, calls for:

- Legally registering the Gadaa System at national and Regional levels,

- producing Proclamations and by laws Nationally and Regionally as a close host organ,
- Inasmuch as the Gadaa System is Naturally, practically, and cultural in the Oromia National Regional State structural setup and jurisdiction, the National and Regional proclamations (to be) should clearly show the duties and responsibilities of the Regional Government of Oromia to:
  - Protect the Gadaa sites and practices from: a) intruders, users, etc; b) Lawful and/or unlawful business practices that contravene the Gadaa values; c) levying taxations on any of its practices, etc
  - Put in place necessary services including, financial and nonfinancial resources, water, trees, etc; and
  - Incorporate the Gadaa System values and principles in the Curricula of the Country.

There is also a need to solicit experiences of other countries like South Africa, Nigeria, and India on similar cases (Int 8).

Equally, Proclamation No. 1/1995 of the *Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia* (Article 52, No. 1) presents the Powers and Functions of States as: “All powers not given expressly to the Federal Government alone, or concurrently to the Federal Government and the States are reserved to the States”. The same source under No. 2, states the powers and functions of States, among others: “c. To formulate and execute economic, social and development policies, strategies and plans of the State; d. To administer land and other natural resources in accordance with Federal laws”.

This shows that the Oromia National Regional State has powers and functions to: a) formulate and execute Gadaa specific policies, strategies and plans; and b) protect and administer land and other natural resources for the smooth functioning, further development and sustenance of the Gadaa System.

The above cases and the data from different sources have shown that inscription of the OromooGadaaSystem on UNESCO’s list of World Intangible Heritage imply legally instituting the system for its pragmatic values. Particularly almost all the interviewees indicated that the intent and inscription of the System has bestowed it world recognition and legal ground. The inscribed GadaaSystem should enjoy legal protection to ensure its operational independence and its capacity to entertain diverse opinions as an egalitarian and democratic institution. It should be legally empowered to exercise judicial functions with its jurisdiction. In this regard Int<sub>1</sub> said: “Inasmuch as the GadaaSystemhas legal ground and lifetime success stories and practices, it is possible to exercise its legal and democratic functions at regional, national, and international levels”.

Similarly, Int<sub>7</sub> indicated that “The inscription of the OromooGadaa System implies rearrangements in terms of judicial and legislative responsibilities.”

Furthermore Int 3 and Int4 commonly (as group interviewees) indicated:

Inasmuch as Gadaa System has international legal aspect and recognition, the Federal as well as Regional Governments should formulate Gadaa System specific policy and derive law from it. This is to protect the asset of the system, further develop it, and sustain its values, cascading down the hierarchies.

The interviewees have the opinion that the Government should come up with legal protection mechanisms, for the fact that it is internationally recognized and protected. The case calls for Policy formulation, which is a process of charting effective and acceptable courses of action for addressing utilization of the Gadaa values.

Int<sub>10</sub> also had the view that the “Gadaa by itself is a fully fledged system, governed by Constitution and legal foundations”. The same interviewee went on giving instances in such a way that when the abba Gadaa proclaims: “1. Kan umuriin ga’e fuudhuun seer; 2. Kan ajjeese gumaa baasuun seera”, these are part of the constitution. They can be further specified by asking for the first: at which age? Whom to marry? Etc; for the second how many? How?etc. The interviewee had the opinion that such practices should be incorporated within the current legal practices, father developed, and sustained. Moreover, the strict 8 years Abbaa Gadaa Governance deserve adaptation to the current practices to avert the current irregularities here and there. The System considers as violation of rule of law to stay on power after 8 years leading to out casting the wrong doers. The social law of the OromooGadaa System gives economic rights to all starting from age 5 for females, and 9 for males. “Umuriilee kanarratti roggeen muramee handhuura waliin mormatti kudhaamama, kennanisiilaatama kan akka goromsaafaa” (Int<sub>10</sub>).

Moreover, the Gadaa System has practical rules of law and prohibitions including: Marriage (bulti), Social strata from low to high, such as:

- a. Prohibition to marry genealogical relatives at least up to 7 generations;
- b. Respect to elders, family, ‘Barcumaa fi ulfina abbaatu eeggata’;
- c. Haati manaa abbaa manaa kabajjeetu kabaja argatti (return);

- d. In OromooGadaa System every member has a role to transform females as respect, dignity, purity, wholeness, etc (Int<sub>2,3</sub>).

As Int<sub>4,5,6</sub> Indicate, “Court cases should align with the Gadaa system institutionalized rule of law. .. the court should respect the decisions of the Abba Gadaas, and the arbitrators should respect social assets such as the indigenous conflict resolution practices of the Gadaa System (currently courts revoke what the Gadaa System, which is a public institution decides)/Since the Gadaa System is intangible, it should be reconciled with and check and balance should recurred practically.

Beneficiaries should decide which to use: hat of the Gadaa System or that of the formal government institution. As practically seen, whereas Gadaa System advices “habultu dubbin”, court aggravates the case (Int<sub>4,5,6</sub>). Overall, the results imply the need to reconcile the modern legal System with that of the Gadaa System justice Systems and practices of conflict resolution.

#### ***4.2 Social implications and responsibilities inherent within the inscription of the OromooGadaaSystem***

The inscription of the Oromoo Gadaa System on UNESCO’s list of World Intangible Heritage imply formulation of social policy, which authentically guarantees all the Orom access to public health and education, clean water, housing, food and social security without influence, partisanship or prejudices of any sort. This is mainly because, the Gadaa System in its right is governance known for its Federation in confederation (Int<sub>10</sub>). As the same interviewee said:

The Oromoo society are led by the Gadaa System. It is, therefore, important to revisit some of the basics of the Gadaa System for the current functions inherent within the 5 parties and 10/11 classes. In the world, the only system whereby people come to power thorough full consent and blessing and leave after 8 years effective services through blessing is the Gadaa System.

Int<sub>10</sub> further indicated that in the Oromoo Gadaa System legally:

...all people have roles and rights from the early years of life. In Oromoo society, dabballe are cultured. Gamme is also active and socialized. Folle Grade has the role of keeping peace, taking measures when norms are violated. The Raba Grade is senior and being with the Abba Gadaa

keeps their territory. Dori is at the level of working at the highest level of philosophy and making preparation to take over the role of abba Gadaa at age of 40. Whereas the Raba bears spear, Luba bears “alanga”. The regiments of Gadaa System are 9. These are: that of Luba, Raabaa, and Kuusaa, are respectively 4,3, and 2. Within the regiment there are many members.

In addressing the social implication of the inscription Int<sub>1</sub> indicated, “Nothing is more important than understanding the self and the world around oneself”. He went on explaining “for the Oromoo People, the Gadaa System is part and parcel of different social constructs that can show the social values of the Oromoo”.

Similarly Int<sub>2,3</sub> and Int<sub>4,5,6</sub> indicated that:

The inscribed Gadaa System, which is predominantly intangible with some ingredients of tangible, is more of social aspect. It is pragmatic, and beyond symbol. It is, therefore, mandatory to reconsider the Gadaa System values in education, revitalize infrastructure, and other social sectors for the development, functioning and sustenance of the System.

The same interviewees went on explaining that the formal and non-formal curricula of the country should incorporate the ingredients of the Gadaa System values which remained as indigenous asset of the Oromoo people for centuries. This calls for creating Gadaa System content at all levels of the formal education hierarchies. Int<sub>7</sub> also indicated that the Gadaa System values “*should be part of the curriculum*”. Similarly, Int<sub>4,5,6</sub> indicated that the inscription of the Oromoo Gadaa System calls for revising curricula in a way that they prepare children for the later social responsibilities within the Gadaa System. The curricula should be reworked in a way that the Gadaa System can orient children to:

- a. learn Problem solving skills, about the world, values, and how to do some activities;
- b. obtain employment,
- c. aspire to be a better husband/father or wife/mother,
- d. read and write letters,
- e. categorize himself/herself as boy/girl,
- f. engage in sport, and
- g. Engage in recreation activities (Dereje, 2012:92).

Concerning the implications in terms of infrastructure, the interviewees indicated that the lived and new infrastructure of the Gadaa System should be reinvigorated, including, Arda Jila protection and

development (currently some ArdaJila areas have been taken by individual farmers as well as investors, so return the social institutions dismantled); Protection and development of Oda areas; tourist attraction sites related to Gadaa System; Accessibility to all; Galma Caffee to all; and Protection of ritual areas.

The findings imply respect and realization of the words of H.E. Lemma Magarsa, President of Oromia National Regional State:

*The decision made today that the Gadaa System be inscribed in the UNESCO representative list has not only motivated and encouraged us to be proud of our tangible and intangible values, but it will also make us to give due attention and have much responsibility to safeguard and promote the ideals of the convention. Hopefully, it will be a center of tourist attraction and foundation of Democracy Research Center.*

(Speech made on the event of inscription)

Moreover, Int<sub>4,5,6</sub> further indicated that the case should be well communicated that the Gadaa System is a symbol of Black civilization demanding arranging national holyday parties, promoting and empowering it to teach at Africa level so as to advance the image, values, unity, potentials of African indigenous institutions. For instance the way the different classes and groups pass roles from one to the other could be exemplary to sooth the current day chaos governance in the world.

It was also suggested as part of the implication of the responsibilities to making the 5 parties and cycles of State formation functional at all levels; and Protecting and further developing *guddifacha*, *hammachisaa*, *harma hoosisa*, etc.

As ORCTB (2015) indicates, the democratic practices of the Oromoo people as manifested in the Gadaa System provide an exemplary system of social functioning to the world. Leaders within the Gadaa System of Oromoo are elected by the men of the community every eight years. Corrupt or dictatorial leaders would be removed from power through *buqisu* (recall) before the official end of their term. Oromoo women had a parallel institution known as *siqqee*. This institution has been in place by promoting gender equality in Oromoo society (Encyclopedia of World Cultures 1999).



Int7 has also given valuable information:

- 1) The Oromia Regional state should host a big forum whereby all relevant parties and stakeholders including Abba Gadaas, Higher education Institutions, Media, etc participate to contribute their fair share and deliberate on:
  - a. How to develop the System further and pass to generation,
  - b. To make active involvement of all parties and incorporate the Gadaa values and principles legal, social, administrative, structural and cultural aspects in all sectors nationally well as the regionally;
  - c. To make the System part of the Oromoo life and work at all levels.
- 2) There should be made in place councils and clubs right from early childhood, similar to children parliament as part of children socialization. This is because, whereas during the previous days of the Gadaa Governance, it was possible to keep the values and pass from generation to generation as the System of the Oromoo was more of homogenous. Currently, nonetheless, the social aspect of Oromoo is becoming heterogeneous influenced by the external as well as internal changes and dynamisms. This calls for culturing children right from the early age by way of instilling the values and principles.
- 3) The 8 years of Gadaa Governance cycle is exemplary and likened by that of the USA, which divides into two equal 4 years to serve for 8 (4x2) years if he/she successfully led the first 4 years. The Gadaa practice, therefore, can be practiced at the national level as it proved effective. Others, therefore, shouldn't view Gadaa System as a threat, rather as a pragmatic value to solve many of the internal and external challenges threatening current day governance practices.
- 4) It should be acknowledged that the Gadaa System is not traditional; rather it is an indigenous and modern form of egalitarian governance.
- 5) As some practices (for instance during the recent ceremony at Borana-Balli), it was witnessed that Liquor Factories (e.g. BGI) move the System by partly sponsoring and partly creating business for themselves and consequently some Abba Gadaas go beyond norm by being induced in drinking too much and exposing even long lived Gadaa internal affairs. This may be one way of distorting the Gadaa image and downsizing the premium social value of the abba Gadaas. The Gadaa Council, therefore, should be strong to avert bad practices and be vigilant of temptations that harm the norm of the long lived Gadaa System.

The Gadaa System of the Oromoo serves as an inexhaustible fountain of authentic knowledge and wisdom to the contemporary generation; as a mechanism for enforcing moral conduct, building social cohesion, and

expressing forms of community culture; and it has been governing the direction and day-to-day lives and guiding the political and socio-economic functions of the Oromoo people majorly during the time when the people were governing themselves independently, and currently too, it has more power than the contemporary governance practices (ORCTB, 2015; Hallpike, 1976). These qualities are inherent within the epistemology of the Oromoo.

Through its different ceremonies, tasks and rituals inherent within the Gadaa System, the Oromoo explicitly explain what they claim they know, how they can find out what they wish to know, and how they objectively judge their generations claim to knowledge. Practically, therefore, the sources of true knowledge for Gadaa System of Orom are both empiricism and rationalism. In the first place, the Oromoo's engagement in different ceremonies, rituals, tasks within the Gadaa System are sensed, seen, heard, practiced and learnt by the generation through the Gadaa classes and grades at different age levels. Secondly, of course inherent within the first, while engaging in different ceremonies, rituals, tasks within the System, generations reason and make up in their mind. In other words, the two basic sources of true knowledge source for the Gadaa System are sense perception and reason. Whereas some societies use recovered memory (historical accounts) as sources of knowledge, the Oromoo just make use of the memory as if it preserves history and events, not as knowledge.

As the data from different sources show, every member of the Oromoo within the Gadaa System is motivated to fit into social structure of the Oromoo. As *Int*<sub>4,5,6</sub> indicate children in Gadaa System are seen as having great values, which are celebrated with the hope that each newborn child will someday become a responsible member of the society (Encyclopedia of World Cultures, 1999; Dereje, 2012:92).

Moreover, as part of the Gadaa System practices, the Oromoo fit their children into healthy relationships by encouraging them to be friendly to all people, and to express their feel openly. Children learn early to greet one another by shaking hands; to talk to one another warmly. *Ashama?* (How are you?), *Fayaadha?* (Are you healthy?), and *Matin kee atam?* (Is your family well?) are common greeting phrases or questions. The other person answers, *Ani fayaa dha* (I am fine), *Matin kos naga dha* (My family is o.k.), and *Ati fayaa dha?* (What about you, are you fine?) (Encyclopedia of World Cultures, 1999). Furthermore, children are also

introduced to Oromoo military leaders (heroes & heroines) (Encyclopedia of World Cultures, 1999) and famous Oromoo figures<sup>161</sup>.

As the same source indicates, in addition to the original Oromoo religion (Waaqa), children are also introduced to the Islam, and Christianity (including Protestant Christianity). Basically, three Oromoo concepts explain the organization and connection of human, spiritual, and physical worlds: *ayaana*, *uuma*(nature), and *saffu* (the ethical and moral code). From the early age, children are introduced to celebrate and respect major holidays including: *ireecha*, *buttaa*, *ateetee*, as well as Islamic and Christian holidays.

#### ***4.3 Administrative implications and responsibilities inherent within the inscription of the Oromoo Gadaa System***

Administratively, the Gadaa System has been governed by “Hera” and “Seera” for all things. Whereas the Heras are proclaimed by Abba Gadaas upon coming to Power, the Seeras include, but not limited by: *seera gaa’elaa*, *seera daa’immanii*, *seera aangoo fudhachuu fi dabarsuu*, *seera boo’ichaa*, *seera moggaasaa*, *seera guddifachaa*, *seera bineensotaa*, *seera mukkeenii*, *seera gumaa*, *seera oromsuu*, *kkf*. These administrative practices need to be incorporated and duly implemented within the current governance of the country (Int8). Int<sub>2,3</sub> have the opinion that the “GADAA SYSTEM could enhance good governance, as it is the main root of world’s democratic administrative System”. For Int<sub>4,5,6</sub> “The GADAA SYSTEM is by itself an administrative institution endowed with duties such as conflict resolution, which can be taken as model for the modern-day governance Systems”.

Common suggestions by Int 1,2,3,4,5,6 &8 include:

- 1) The time of 8 years, levels of decision, empowerment within the Gadaa System should be sustained and passed from generation to generation.
- 2) The practices of continuously evaluating and removing (*buqisu*) or reaffirming or empowering the Abba Gadaa power should be taken by modern-day practices.

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<sup>161</sup> Belay Zeleke ... Qilxu, Tilahun Gesese (Ayyano Gudeta), Tsegaye G/medhin Qawessa, Abune Petros (Magarsa Badhasa), Gobana Dace, Habtegiorgis (Quse Dinagde), [Aba Mala], Dej. Balcha A/safoo/Nafso, Dej. Abebe Aragay Bachare Gobana, Col. Abdisa Aga, De. Garasu Dhuki, Xayitu Buxul, Fit. Gebeyehu Gurmu, and the Athletes.

- 3) Almost all the Abba Gadaas do not have offices of their own and perform their duties under a sycamore trees. While this is desirable and symbolizes the Gadaa System itself, the current landscape demand reinstating the abba Gadaas with possession of their own offices, infrastructure, and resources at all levels.

As Int<sub>7</sub> indicated, the Regional government should put in place multiparty system and allocate sufficient resources to put in place Gadaa governance system at all levels.

#### ***4.4 Structural implications and responsibilities inherent within the inscription of the Oromoo Gadaa System***

The Gadaa System of Oromoo is age based and all-rounder governance structure and system (In<sub>1</sub>), and has a decentralized structure of self-governance and forming federation in confederation. Structures of the Gadaa System should be made in place at different levels in different sectors including social, economic, cultural, political, tourism, education, peace and stability, etc (Int<sub>2,3</sub>).

Practices show that the decentralized Gadaa governance come together and form their common abbaa Gadaa. For instance, Tulam has 3: Daccii, Bacho, and Jillee each with its own Abbaa Gadaaa. The three also come together and elect their common abba Gadaa. Macc has 5: Jawwi, Oboo, Liiban, Calliya, and Guduru each with its own Abbaa Gadaaa who come together and elect their common abba Gadaa. Arsii and Gujiinis also have similar respectively, 3 and 2 of their own. All also come together and elect their own overall abba Gadaa. All five parties also have the same Qallu (abbaa muudaa), common constitution, and common language (Int<sub>10</sub>).

The current landscape, nonetheless, demands that the Regional State should establish: a) organizational structure of the Gadaa System which can ensure expeditious execution of its responsibilities; and b) an independent Gadaa System judiciary parallel with state supreme, high courts with the power to exercise judicial functions.

This can be practical by using the Gadaa System structure as governance of the Oromia Region. This means, regionally, two parallel elections should be made to put in place parliaments for check

and balance, and overseeing peaceful power transfer, etc. This is because, the Gadaa System practices are advantageous to fill the gap that may come in that of leaders in the current Ethiopia stay for 5 years; whereas that of the Gadaa System stay for 8 years covering the ending of the outgoing and the beginning of the incoming leaders of the current Ethiopian practice. In such cases, the the Gadaa System mediates and oversees. In the long run, nonetheless, the Gadaa System of structure should take over with Abba Gadaa (at all levels) having his full council members including advisors for effective function of the governance System under his jurisdiction (Int<sub>4,5,6</sub>). The case also calls for putting in place an independent Institute of the Gadaa System (Int<sub>7</sub>). The same interviewee went on saying: “yoo nuti o’ifanne malee namni nuuf hin o’isu”.

#### ***4.5 Cultural implications and responsibilities inherent within the inscription of the Oromoo GadaaSystem***

Virtually, the Gadaa System incorporates cultural values of the Oromoo and needs to be promoted at regional, national and international platforms, promoted and maintained (Int<sub>1</sub>). Inasmuch as the Gadaa System has *Safu*, it relives loss of self-concept. The practices of the inscription of the Oromoo Gadaa System on UNESCO’s list of World Intangible Heritage, therefore, implies reinvigorating the “self”. It can be a remedy for “Jooraa qe’ee abbaatti ganda bulu!” by promoting the self. The case calls for enhancing awareness on indigenous religion of the Oromoo \*(waaqeffannaa). Basically, nothing is more important than understanding the self and the world around oneself including beliefs and religion, which is spiritual culture (Int<sub>2,3</sub>).

There is a need to revitalize the valuable cultural heritages including hammachisa, siqqe, Attetee, Abbaamuudaa (religious), qaalluu, Ayyaantuu (waa-beekaa), and many children’s rituals (Int<sub>4,5,6</sub>).

In the process of doing so, all should work hand in hand on what to sustain, what to improve, etc in line with the current world, and all religious sects of Oromoo come under Gadaa System (Int<sub>4,5,6</sub>) maintaining *Safuu*, which is the cultural value and a constitution of the Oromoo and is given more weight than another constitution. This calls for teaching safu to every citizen, stressing that if violated, everything will be endangered. For instance “We bow to elders “isin...” Because of Safu; Malka, atete, Jekara, irrecha, waaqeffanna, ...are cultural values to be maintained (Int<sub>2,3</sub>).

The inscription, therefore, implies revitalizing the following cultural heritages (synthesized) from different literatures:

- 1) “Tabore” and Walale (children’s days), annual rituals and events for boys and girls respectively in which they make cultural performances.
- 2) different kinds of weedu, such as *weedufluudha* (a marriage song), *weedulola* (a war song), and *weeduhoji* (a work song).
- 3) The Oromoo women song, called *helee* that they use to express their love for their country, children, and husbands.
- 4) at adolescent and beyond age boys invite girls to marriage ceremonies by singing *hurmisu*.
- 5) men’s *sdhichisa* (a dance to celebrate the marriage ceremony) and to women’s *shagayoo* (singing and dancing) during marriage ceremonies.
- 6) prayer Gadaa System called *shubisu* and *deedisu*.
- 7) *geersa* or *mirisa* (singing), storytelling, poems, proverbs, weedu, and different cultural activities. Geersa is used to praise good behavior and discourage inappropriate behavior (Encyclopedia of World Cultures, 1999) one of which teaches children good behavior.
- 8) The Oromoos believe that *WaaqaTokkicha* (the one God) created the world, including them. They call this supreme being *WaaqaGuuracha* (the Black God). Most Oromoos still believe that it was this God who created heaven and earth and other living and non-living things Gadaa System. Waaqa also created *ayaana* (spiritual connection), through which he connects himself to his creatures. The Oromoo story of creation starts with the element of water, since it was the only element that existed before other elements (Hallpike, 1976; Dereje, 2012; Encyclopedia of World Cultures, 1999).

#### ***4.6 Potential roles and/or values of the Oromoo Gadaa to serve as a remedy for the world governance chaos***

The data obtained almost from all the interviewees and literatures indicate that the age long-lived values of the Oromoo Gadaa system, which is an institution of democratic institution, have potential roles to solve the world governance mayhem- manifested here and there. “The Gadaa System gives equal chances to all classes and grades of genealogical generations that succeed each other every eight years assuming political, military, judicial, legislative and ritual responsibilities (Asmarom, 2001). As Encyclopedia of World Cultures (1999) indicates the System has helped the Oromoos maintain democratic political, economic, social, and religious institutions for many

centuries. The Gadaa political System and military organization enabled Oromoos defend themselves against enemies who were competing with them for land, water, and power.

Inasmuch as the Oromoo Gadaa System is inclusive of all desirable values and merit-based elements, it shapes individuals, people, society, governance System, political, social, legal, cultural, administrative, etc in a desirably right directions following the long-lived values deserving reconstitute the values in all the current day governance.

A synthesis from 5 interviewees' reactions give the following Gadaa principles as authentic roles and/or values of the Oromoo Gadaa System to serve as a remedy for the world governance chaos:

- 1) Clear, inclusive, and impartial rule of law;
- 2) Majority rule (supremacy of the Caffee decisions);
- 3) Equal right of all people (regardless of status and wealth) to be part of the Gadaa;
- 4) Inclusive participation and authentic Participatory decision making with no exclusion, with no minority-Majority as all born children have place in Gadaa System;
- 5) Generational and merit-based power distribution and rotations;
- 6) Clear and authentic human rights protection practices;
- 7) Marriage, Children and other basic laws;
- 8) Openness and transparency in all aspects;
- 9) Right of all people for wealth and property possession;
- 10) Authentic and rigorous conflict resolution mechanisms with no comparable practices in solving conflicts overcoming unnecessary competitions (Int<sub>2,3</sub>);
- 11) Unwavering Sustaining peace and stability since;
- 12) Peaceful power transfer to the next group after eight years services with no implicit and explicit intents to stay longer and/or for reelection after 8 years services, and to continue with the power of advisory role continues;

In Oromoo Gadaa System, no intention and practice of *caudate*, no gossip, no war for power or benefit, rather thinking and striving for the next generation of leadership success,. Social competition in Gadaa System is exclusively merit-based.

As ORCTB (2015) lists out, the Oromoo Gadaa System has roles such as: 1) Political: Democratic System, Respecting Human Rights, and Respecting Women's Rights; 2) Economic Aspects: The role of all members including women in economic sector, cooperation, transfer of wealth, wealth sharing, on UNESCO's

representative list as intangible cultural heritage of humanity, and the tradition of helping one another; 3) Social Aspects: Increasing the role women play in the community, ending of hostilities, prayer to 'Waaqaa', cleansing of sin, adoption; 4) Environmental Conservation; 5) Sustaining the Irreechaa Ceremony; and 6) Arbitration.

The Oromoo Gadaa System is an effective institutional System to manage any source of conflicts among the Oromoo and between the Oromoo and others, so that harmony, peaceful co-existence and smooth relations have been maintained in the society following clearly delineating steps of conflict resolution through the use of the System to finally arrive at reconciliation.

In short, the Gadaa System regulates: political stability, economic development, social activities, cultural obligations, moral responsibilities, the philosophical and religious order of the society, military purposes, ritual responsibilities, conflict resolution, reparation and protecting women's rights, enforcing moral conduct, building social cohesion, and expressing forms of community culture (Hallpike, 1976).

Overall, the Gadaa System comprises regulatory measures pertaining to issues such as conflict resolution, questions of religion and to women's rights. In contrast to the modus operandi employed by authoritarian governments, the Gadaa form of governance contains provisions guaranteeing an effective system of 'checks and balances', the separation of powers and an institutionalized opposition—all of which provides safeguards against totalitarianism and a governmental abuse of power.

#### ***4.7 Perceived positive contributions of inscribing the Oromoo Gadaa system for the future of the Oromoo***

All the 10 interviewees acknowledged the positive contributions of inscribing the Oromoo Gadaa system for the future of the Oromoo. Requested to indicate the potentially specific contributions "in what terms and how?", 4 interviewees indicated:

- 1) if linked to the modern day administration, it can influence the administrative system in that it enhances democracy and confidence (Int<sub>1</sub>);
- 2) Revitalizing and practicing the Gadaa System's valuable elements including Oromoo Law, education, politics, philosophy administration, safu, Guma, etc in the current governance practices create stability and peaceful co-existence;



- 3) The Gadaa System is the political, administrative, historic and cultural manifestation of the Oromoo people that contributes a lot to the development of the democratic societies in the world (Int<sub>1</sub>);
- 4) Wtin the Gadaa System people donot claim benefits that belong to them: “ Jifuu siif hin taane hin fudhattu sirna Gadaa keessatti“;
- 5) Whereas the American Democracy lacks authentic women empowerment, in Gadaa System, women are considered as power sources and empowered accordingly;
- 6) What is talked and what done are different in some countries and Gadaa System proved authentic respect of words as part of respecting principles of Safu;
- 7) As a democratic institution, the Gadaa System doesn’t force all the Oromoo to come under one religion, but respect them;
- 8) The Gadaa System has the potential to create unity and synergy among the Oromoo and also between the Oromoo and others regardless of geographical location, religion, ideology, etc. These all can be taken as lessons by common day governance practices.

## CHAPTER FIVE. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

“We are bear responsibility not only for what we do, but for what we fail to do.” (R. Whitley)

### 5.1 Conclusions

- 5.1.1 Legal: Analyses of the data obtained from interview, literatures, and video analysis have shown that the inscription of the Oromoo Gadaa System on UNESCO’s list of World Intangible Heritage seem to be taken as an end by itself as very little efforts are being witnessed to legally reinstitute the System for its pragmatic values by concomitantly putting in place legal, social, administrative, structural, and cultural bylaws and implementation strategies that empower the different level stakeholders to protect the worldly acclaimed Gadaa values, develop it further, and make part of the current practices and pass to generation. Equally, the National Proclamation on *Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage* is too broad to consider the specificity of the inscribed Oromoo Gadaa System, which has come enduring adverse measures at different times due to its natural, cultural and practical setup (within the people).
- 5.1.2 Social: It can also be concluded from the results that inscription of the Oromoo Gadaa System on UNESCO’s list of World Intangible Heritage imply formulation of social policy, which authentically guarantees all the Orom access to naturally, culturally and practically full-fledged services without prejudice, partiality, and vested interest. The case implies a move for self concept and self valuation of the Oromoo whereby these can be manifested within in education, infrastructure, and other social sectors for the development, functioning and sustenance of the System by way of incorporating the

values within the curricula of the country as well as that of the region, calling for due attention to safeguard and promote the ideals of the convention and making the *Gadaa sites center of tourist attraction and foundation of Democracy Research Center* (Lemma Magarssa). By doing so, the Gadaa System of the Oromoo can serve as an inexhaustible source of authentic understanding and wisdom of thought and practices reinstating the long-lived epistemology of the Oromoo in its right places.

- 5.1.3** Administrative: Whereas the Gadaa System has been governed by “Heera” and “Seera” for all things, the inscription of the System imply the need for reinstating its proven administrative values to stand as the main root of the world’s democratic administrative system endowed with duties such as conflict resolution, clear demarcations of the levels of decisions, empowerments, continuous evaluation of the system and leaders followed by balanced decisions (removing/buqisu) or reaffirming or empowering). Moreover, the long-lived suppression of the Gadaa practices at some places and the new demands of the time, call for availing offices for abba Gadaas putting in place multiparty system and allocate sufficient resources to put in place Gadaa governance system at all levels.
- 5.1.4** Structural: The inscription of the Gadaa System implies the need for structurally situating its practice of decentralized governance of *federation in confederation* by way of establishing: a) organizational structure of the Gadaa System which can ensure expeditious execution of its responsibilities; and b) an independent Gadaa System judiciary parallel with state supreme, high courts with the power to exercise judicial functions based on the preference of the beneficiaries.
- 5.1.5** Cultural: It can be concluded from the results that the inscription of the Gadaa System calls for promoting the cultural values of the Oromoo at all levels endowed with and protected by *Safu*, *Attetee*, *Abbaamuudaa* (religious), *qaalluu*, *Ayyaantuu* (waabeekaa), and many children’s rituals-all of which enhance reinvigorating the “self” so as to overcome “Jooraa qe’ee abbaatti ganda bulu!” for the fact that nothing is more important than understanding the self and the world around oneself including beliefs and religion, which is spiritual culture.
- 5.1.6** Potential roles and/or values: Inasmuch as the inscribed Oromoo Gadaa system has potential roles to solve the world governance mayhem- manifested here and there, there is a need to maintain its democratic political, economic, social, and religious institutions –all of which are known for inclusiveness, merit-based elements potentially to serve as a remedy for the world governance chaos having Clear, inclusive, and impartial rule of law; Majority rule (supremacy of

the Caffee decisions); Equal right of all people (regardless of status and wealth) to be part of the Gadaa; merit-based power distribution and rotations; Clear and authentic human rights protection practices; authentic and rigorous conflict resolution mechanisms with no comparable practices in solving conflicts overcoming unnecessary competitions; Unwavering Sustaining peace and stability since; and Peaceful power transfer to the next group after eight years services with no implicit and explicit intents to stay longer and/or for reelection after 8 years services, and to continue with the power of advisory role continues.

- 5.1.7** Perceived positive contributions:Based on the results, it can be concluded that inscribing the Oromoo Gadaa system have immense positive contributions for the future of the Oromoo, provided that it is linked to the modern day administration, the Gadaa System’s valuable elements are Revitalized accordingly leading to create unity and synergy among the Oromoo and also between the Oromoo and others regardless of geographical location, religion, ideology, etc.

Overall, the inscription of the Oromoo Gadaa System has marked a revitalized “*sublation*” the idea which was developed by Shankara (788-822) an *Indian Charismatic mystic, saint and poet* (Velasquez, 2007:198). *Sublation* is the process of correcting an error about reality when it is contradicted by a different but more correct understanding of reality. As we all know, the Oromoo, after losing its self-rule, remained in illusions, bogus dreams, and unfulfilled and deceptive promises in all walks of governance, social, economic, and political. The findings call for disclosing the more than century governance deceptive, hypocrite, and trumped-up stories, but in reality proved deceptive, mainly to take the Oromoo out of the self. The so called *Solomon*, Imperial, the Dergue, and other practices looked attractive and yet not genuine and valuable and consequently put the Oromoo in uncertainty, doubt, and anxiety- engulfed by dizzying, and instability on its own territory. In short, the inscription calls for going beyond perceptions using senses as "All That is Gold Does Not Glitter" (a poem written by J. R. R. Tolkien for his fantasy novel *The Lord of the Rings*), and “All that glitters is not gold” (a Proverb used by William Shakespeare in his play *The Merchant of Venice*, line 69 of Act II, Scene VII, originally ‘*glister*’).

## 5.2 Implications

*“Be who you are and say what you feel because those who mind don’t matter and those who matter don’t mind.”*

Dr, Seuss

The results and the conclusions made so far have shown that the inscription of the Oromoo Gadaa System on UNESCO’s list of World Intangible Heritage implies the need for putting in place legal, social, administrative, structural, and cultural grounds for restorative of the values of the System by: a) clearly defining scopes, roles and responsibilities of stakeholders to situate the System at its natural, cultural and

practical setup; b) structurally reinstating the System at all levels of governance; c) incorporating the values of the system in curricula at all levels; and d) rehabilitating social, infrastructure, ecological and cultural institutions including *Arda Jila sites*.

The case calls for reinvigorating the valuable assets and move *back to the basics*, to the proven egalitarian governance system following the concept of “*Sublation*” to overcome the long-lived illusions, bogus dreams, and unfulfilled and deceptive promises, and to correct errors about the self. These calls for using reasoning (over perceptions) to gain knowledge of ultimate reality, the self, and the law of logic: “No proposition can both be and not be true at the same time”, one is false (Velasquez, 2007: 197).

The Oromoo between the unfounded fantasies during the past regimes and its current self-discovery within the reinvigorated Gadaa System calls for strategic moves. Inasmuch as we are living in an era of rapid change and new discoveries, of constant sensory input, and of an information explosion, the way the Gadaa System used to serve its people for years should be reformed with the dynamism, but maintaining the basic Gadaa principles and values. In short, the case implies reinvigorating ultimate reality, the “self” as it is the only way to take us *back to the basics*- the brass, essentials, fundamentals, hard facts, necessities, practicalities, principles, and values inherent within the Gadaa System- guaranteeing authentic peaceful and stable political, administrative, economic, social and cultural (co)existence of the Oromoo.

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