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VOLUME 11, NUMBERS 1 AND 2, JULY 2004

Editorial Overview	i-ii
The Place of the Oromo in Ethiopian History: 2003 OSA Conference Keynote Address Tesema Ta'a	1-11
The Pride of the Guji-Oromo: An Essay on Cultural Contact and Self-Esteem Taddesse Berrisso	13-27
Pluralization in Afaan Oromo Tilahun Gamta/Xilaahun Gamtaa	29-45
Human Rights Violations and Famine in Ethiopia Begna Dugassa	47-68
Some Medical Side Effects of Khat Addiction: A Review of Literature Tesema Taye	69-74
Book Reviews	
Asafa Jalata <i>Fighting Against the Injustice of the State and Globalization: Comparing the African American and Oromo Movements</i> by Asafa Jalata New York: Palgrave, 2001, pp 216. \$49 95, cloth by Getahun Benti	75
Chaltu Deressa Gasso. <i>Breaking the Silence: Sexual Health Education of Adolescents in the Modernizing Development Society: The Case of Nakamte High School, Ethiopia.</i> University of Joensuu: University Publications in Social Sciences, No. 59, 2003, by Mekuria Bulcha	79

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EDITORIAL OVERVIEW

This volume of the *Journal of Oromo Studies* addresses major issues related to the place of the Oromo in Ethiopian history, an essay on cultural contact and self-esteem of the Guji Oromo, pluralization in Afaan Oromo as a substantive contribution to the development of Qubee, famine and the wide-spread cases of the HIV/AIDS pandemic as manifestations of human rights violations in Ethiopia, and a research note on the side effects of Khat addiction. A brief synopsis of each article is given below.

In his article, **Dr. Tesema Ta'a** traces the place of Oromo in Ethiopian history and suggests the periodization of Oromo historical studies, highlights the problems and prospects of Oromo studies, and indicates the special role of OSA with its *Journal of Oromo Studies (JOS)* in the growth and development of Oromo studies. Highlighting how much attention has been given to the Oromo in the history of Ethiopia, Dr Ta'a suggests the need for a quasi independent periodization of the Oromo historical studies

Dr. Taddesse Berriso's article deals with cultural contacts of the Guji-Oromo and other groups from the North (Tigre, Gurage, etc) at the three levels. It discusses changes that have taken place in Guji-Oromo culture as a result of culture contacts and their effects on the pride and self-esteem of the Guji Oromo. In general, the paper attempts to show in what ways and to what degree the indigenous Guji culture has responded to the outside influences, which aspects of the old culture have been changed, what new ideas and social relationships have come into being, what conflicts have arisen, and where they tend to lead. He reaches the conclusion that the Guji and most other conquered peoples of the South were not assimilated significantly to the Amhara culture for a number of reasons: 1) the Amhara-Tigre became numerically a small group (minority) in the new empire to assimilate more than 70 percent of landmass and about 70 percent of population of the present-day empire, 2) the Amhara settlers possessed no traditions and institutions for complete social integration unlike the Oromo and other groups, 3) many conquered people did not simply want to give up their ethnic identity and imposing one's own culture on others was no more tolerable, and 4) Abyssinians always wanted to assimilate others by ridiculing them, defamation, character assassination, excommunication, discrimination against equal opportunities, intimidation, and by creating inferiority complex on them

Professor Tilahun Gamta's paper is a summary of his most recent major work on the Comprehensive Oromo-English Dictionary (COED) which paves a way toward the standardization of Qubee (Latin-based Oromo script). The major purpose of this paper is to study the plural forms of nouns and adjectives as used in one Oromo newspaper (namely, Batiisaa, a four-column, twelve-page government-owned, weekly newspaper) based on its many years of circulation, accurate use of qubee, and its coverage of a wide variety of subjects including weekly local and international news, economic, social, cultural activities, and sports. In this study, Professor Tilahun Gamta distills his findings that there are four plural markers in Afaan Oromo including **-oota**, **-ota**, **-lee**, and **-wwan**. It is now possible to predict the environment in which **-oota** and **-ota** can occur. Without exception, **-oota** is suffixed only when there is a short vowel in the syllable that immediately precedes

the final syllable of a singular noun. On the contrary, the plural marker **-ota** is suffixed only when there is a long vowel in the syllable that immediately precedes the final syllable of a singular noun.

Framing Ethiopian famines (particularly famine in Oromia) within the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, **Mr. Begna Dugassa's** article argues that the root cause of the cyclic occurrence of famine that the world community has witnessed in 1972/73, 1985/86, 1999/2000, and recently in 2002/2003 is a product of human rights violations. *Historical analyses show that famine in Oromia is very similar to the great Irish and the Indian famines under the British colonial rule.* After an introduction to the history of the colonial rule in Oromia, he argues that principal ideas of human rights are interwoven with concepts of empowerment such that, if the people in Oromia were empowered in their affairs, they could have minimized the magnitude of the famine problems even if they could not totally avert them.

The purpose of **Dr. Tesema Taye's** paper is to describe the pharmacology of khat and summarize the potential adverse effects of habitual khat chewing. Dr. Tesema suggests that knowledge of its pharmacology and morbidities associated with its use may provide an insight into its effect on public health and the potential for the development of a strategy for limiting the use of khat in Oromia and elsewhere.

Finally, I want to extend my sincere thanks to the contributors of articles and book reviews without which *The Journal of Oromo Studies* could not have succeeded in its mission of expanding the frontiers of knowledge about the forgotten Oromo people. I would also like to thank the anonymous referees for their valuable contributions by reading and making constructive suggestions for the authors. The need for quality articles which address issues related to the Oromo and the Horn of Africa at large continues to exist. I would hope that you would accept the challenge by making JOS as one of the main outlets for your scholarly contributions. With your cooperation and contributions, we can certainly produce and disseminate a first rate journal to individuals, institutions of higher learning, governments, and nongovernmental agencies such that there is no excuse for ignorance about the Oromo people. Each of you has a key role to play in the collective mission of Oromo studies which is to broaden our understandings of the Oromo people. We are indebted to the vice president for Research and Sponsored Programs, African American Student Services and Programs, and Students Project Link to Africa at Georgia State University for their financial support and for sponsoring the 2004 OSA conference.

Bichaka Fayissa, Editor
Professor of Economics
July 2004

The Place of the Oromo in Ethiopian History: 2003 OSA Conference Keynote Address

*Tesema Ta'a, Associate Professor,
History Department,
Addis Ababa University.*

Introduction:

In this keynote address, I would like to discuss the following: review the place of Oromo in the history of Ethiopia and suggest the periodization for Oromo historical studies, highlight problems and prospects of Oromo studies, and indicate the special role of OSA with its *Journal of Oromo Studies (JOS)* in the growth and development of Oromo studies. In recent years, many Oromo scholars interested in Oromo studies and particularly those in the Diaspora have immensely contributed to the growth of our knowledge and understanding about the Oromo people in the Horn of Africa. Nevertheless, scholars still have a long way to go, particularly in the reconstruction of the history of the people who had suffered from deliberate distortions, biases, and prejudices no less than the countries of the African colonial past. Thus, highlighting how much attention has been given to the Oromo in the history of Ethiopia and suggesting a quasi independent periodization for the Oromo historical studies is in order.

The Place of the Oromo in the History of Ethiopia: Oromo History to 1500

It is beyond any shadow of a doubt that the Oromo who belong to the Kushitic stock are one of the earliest indigenous inhabitants in Northeast Africa. Ample historical evidence forwarded by writers such as Houston (1985), Prouty and Rosenfield (1981), Pliny (1978;1979), and Bates (1979) witness that the term Ethiopia originally referred to the Kushites. It was only quite recently that the name was applied to present day Ethiopia (Ehret, 2002).

In his recently published book entitled *The Civilizations of Africa: A History to 1800*, Christopher Ehret clearly indicates that the period between 3500 and 1000 BC was marked by a continuous expansion of the Kushitic population in Northeastern Africa in general, and the Ethiopian Highlands, in particular. He further explains that the plains and grasslands along the Ethiopian Rift Valley floor and the southern edge of the Ethiopian Highlands became the domain of the two groups of Lowland Eastern Kushitic peoples, namely the Konsoromo and the Omo-Tana (Ehret, 2002).

It is interesting to note that the Oromo, a second distinct Konsoromo society which took shape in the early first millennium BC with its own cultural identity pursuing agro-pastoral economy (Ehret, 2002). Although the period up to 1500 saw the growth and development of the Oromo society as a distinct group within the Kushitic stock of people as *afaan* Oromo speakers with their *gadaa* institution; during this period, like that of many African societies, not much has been recorded about the Oromo in Northeast Africa like that of many African societies. Currently, however, some in-depth studies are undertaken on the

Oromo before 1500 (*Seenaa Oromo Hanga Jaarraa 16ffaatti*) by Oromo scholars in Oromia which will hopefully be a groundbreaking contribution to Oromo studies, particularly for the early period which has never been properly documented

Therefore, scholars interested in Oromo studies in general and social scientists in particular, should pay more attention to this period in their research undertakings, not only to fill the lacunae with original findings, but also to analyze, synthesize, and substantiate the existing information in the available written and oral literature. In this connection, the attempt made by Mohammed Hassen (1994) to substantiate the presence of the Oromo south of the region of Shawa before, during, and after the fourteenth century is not only plausible, but also encourages further research and an in-depth study of the roots of Oromo history and culture.

The Period of 1500-1800

Apparently, the beginning of the 16th century marked the maturity of the *gadaa* system as a socio-political and economic organization. It was essentially an egalitarian and democratic institution which was also practiced among other Kushitic peoples like the Sidama, the Gedeo, and others in a similar fashion. The Oromo *gadaa* was, however, a complex system which governed every aspect of Oromo life. It can rightly be considered as an Oromo ideology, or world view (Baxter, Hultin and Triulzi; eds, 1996: 150-161; Asmarom Legesse, 2000)

The period witnessed a great turning point in Oromo history which could be termed as *Oromo Renaissance*. It was in the first half of the sixteenth century that a section of the Oromo began their mass movements being organized under the *gadaa* system from the south-central of today's Ethiopia (Madda Wallabuu area) where they seem to have lived since the days of the Kushitic southward drift and dispersal from the historic Nubia and Meroe areas including the Abbay Valley in Northeast Africa

The movement was spearheaded by the predominantly pastoralist groups, particularly the Maccaa and the Tulama. The *gadaa* institution was capable to provide leadership, spiritual guidance, military organization, and other divisions of labor which manifested the maturity and efficiency of the system (Tesema, 1986: 27-43)

During this period, the pressures and the provocations of the neighboring Christian Kingdom/Abyssinia, the Muslim Sultanates and the so-called "pagan" states in the north, east, and southwest, respectively were serious external factors which triggered the Oromo mass movement

Particularly, the wars between the Christian Kingdom and the Muslim Sultanates which went on for so many years (14th to the 16th centuries) had assumed a global status in the first half of the 16th century when the Portuguese allied with and supported the Christian kingdom (Abyssinia) and the Muslim Ottoman Turks came to the assistance of the Sultanate of Adal led by Ahmed ibn Ibrahim el Gazi referred to as *Ahmed Gragn* by the Abyssinians (Teklatsadik Mekuria:1965).

The Oromo who were neither Christians nor Muslims at the time reacted and fought against both expanding Christian and Muslim powers, not only to defend their habitat, but also to recover the lost lands since the days of the Kushitic dispersal. In the 2nd half of the

16th and the beginning of the 17th centuries, the Oromo were well consolidated under the *gadaa* system and had obtained an upper hand against all their enemies and had settled in the wealthy lands of Oromia (Tesema, 1986: 13-26).

It was during this period that the Oromo were portrayed by some Ethiopian and expatriate scholars as people without history and culture. Among the first written documents on the Oromo was one produced by a Christian monk named Abbaa Bahrey in 1593. It is referred to as a primary source just because it was put on record in Geeze and was later translated into Amharic and English. According to him the Oromo were brutal, evil, and bad in contrast with his good and kind Christian society often identified as Amhara-Tigrean. In connection to Abbaa Bahrey, one can raise several questions. Who was Bahrey? Where did he live? How did he come into contact with the Oromo? How did he collect his information on the Oromo? Did he know *afaan* Oromo? Why did he fail to mention the Oromo groups such as the Arsii, the Raya- Assaboo, Yejju, and others? This shows that any researcher on the Oromo has every reason to suspect the authenticity of the document, at least partially.

It is clear that Bahrey's document contributed to the rise of a tradition that the Oromo history in Ethiopia only began in the 16th century. Some of the earliest writers among modern scholars who used this document do not seem to have carefully and critically assessed its credibility correctly (Mohammed Hassen, 1994: 44-46).

Palace and ecclesiastical chroniclers after Bahrey even surpassed him in distorting and ignoring Oromo history. The fact that these writers were closely connected with the church and the state, they used Geez and Amharic which, together with the popular belief that everything written or published is infallible enhanced the dissemination of the distorted history of the Oromo. For scholars with prejudice against the Oromo, Bahrey's document became instrumental in resisting new historical findings coming before the 16th century.

Be that as it may, at this point, I would like to commend many Oromo scholars in the Diaspora and those in Oromia, for they have deeply investigated and examined both written and oral sources on the Oromo and have been able to establish and develop Oromo studies to meet an international scholarly standard. In connection with this, the works of Mohammad Hassen, Bonie Holcomb, and Sisay Ibssa deserve a particular mention for the period 1500-1800 (Holcomb and Sisay Ibssa, 1990; Mohammed Hassen, 1990).

The Period of 1800-1870

This was another crucial period in Oromo history. It was the time when the socio-economic and political transformation among most of the Oromo branches took place, mainly owing to occupational change. The southern Oromo shifted from a predominately pastoralist society to a predominantly sedentary agriculturalists, practicing mixed farming (Lewis, 1965).

The Yejju, Rayyaa, and Assabo (the Northern Oromo). During this period, the Yejju began to involve themselves in the politics of the Christian Kingdom. These were the Oromo minority who were used by the monarchy as guards to the Gondarine kingdom and they eventually became powerful *Rases* in their own right. This group by no means represented the Oromo as some scholars claim. They were caught up in the intense rivalry of the Abyssinian

(Amhara – Tigray) politics and were more or less detached from the other Oromo. When the Yejju Rasses were in power, they were never accepted as legitimate leaders of the kingdom, though they were converted to Christianity and built several Orthodox churches. The Rayyaa and Assabo were caught up among the Tigreans, the Amhara, and the Afar-Saho. They had spent a long time in a hostile environment, but survived with their own language and culture. I would like to indicate that more research needs to be done among the Northern Oromo groups (Mengesha Retie, 2003: 5-40; D Donham and James, 1987:3-4)

The Maccaa Oromo (the southwestern Oromo). This was the group among whom monarchical institution evolved at the cost of the *gadaa* system. The monarchies include: the five Gibeo kingdoms of Limmu Enariya, Geraa, Gumaa, Jimmaa, and Gomma, and the principalities of Wallagga and Ilubabor led by (Abiishee Garbaa of Horroo, the Bakaree family of Leeqaa Naqamtee, Jotee Tullu of Qellem, Abbaa Booraa of Ilu, and others). Here, the prominent individuals, most of them Abbaa Duulaa, founded their own dynasties by using war situations and war spoils and keeping themselves in power longer than eight years, i.e., more than one *gadaa* period. This area is relatively well studied compared to other parts of Oromia and there are several published and unpublished works on the Maccaa Oromo, but still, environmental, gender, social, and economic studies have to be undertaken in this area (Tesema, 1986: 44-60)

The Tulama Oromo (the Central Oromo). This branch, for the most part, continued with the *gadaa* system intact, but during the latter part of this period, the Tulama Oromo began to be ruled by clan chiefs based on internal conditions which seem to have favored the rise of chiefs. Their connection with the Abbaa Mudaa (the chief Qaallu) at Odaa Nabee remained strong. By the mid-19th century, however, the power of chiefly families greatly increased. For instance, the Matakoo family, the Gobanaa family, the Dinagdee family (Habtegiorgis), the Garasu Dukii family, and others were among the prominent ones. Though historians and anthropologists have studied the Tulama Oromo, there are several issues of research which have not been addressed yet which many interested Oromo and expatriate scholars have to undertake (Aresen, 1991: 90-115)

The Arsii, Baalee, and Karrayuu Oromo (Southeastern Oromo). These Oromo branches continued their semi-pastoralist occupation and the *gadaa* traditions remained intact with a limited agricultural activities. These groups have been relatively less studied by social scientists and there are ample opportunities for research among these people (Abbas Haji, 1994: 50-84).

The Ituu, Humbeena, and Afran Qallo Oromo of Haraghe (the Eastern Oromo). These became mixed farmers and lived with their *gadaa* system intact. They were highly influenced by the administration of the Harari/Adaree Emirates, but did not give up their cultural *gadaa* practices. Ample research works have been conducted on the Oromo of Haraghe by scholars, but various aspects of their history and culture need to be studied further (Mohammed Hassen, 1991; Asefa Jalata, 1993: 26-286).

The Booranaa and the Gujii Oromo (the Southern Oromo). These Oromo groups are predominantly pastoralists with the *gadaa* practices intact. It is among the Booranaa Oromo and the Gujii that the original *gadaa* institutions continued to operate and survive with its

basic traits even up-to-date. The Mudaa ceremony remained within the Booranaa. There has been three Gumii in Booranaa, namely Gumii Sirricho, Gumii Dalloo, and Gumii Gayoo (conferences of all Oromo representatives used to take place in Booranaa). Booranaa and Gujii area has been a focus of research, particularly by anthropologists. Historical and socio-economic studies, however, have been scarcely undertaken which ought to be done (Bassi, 1996: 158-160).

The Period of 1870-1900

The last quarter of the 19th century was a very crucial period in the history of the Oromo. It was the time when the independent Oromo Monarchies of the Maccaa of the southwest, the Tulama chiefs of central Shawa, the Arsii, Baalee, Booranaa, Gujii, Karrayyu, as well as the Haraghe Oromo of today's eastern Oromia had been conquered and subjugated by king Menilek (later Emperor of Ethiopia 1889-1913). It was especially at this period that the whole of Africa was partitioned among the European Imperialist powers and almost all its peoples had fallen under the control of the European classical colonialism (Marcus, 1969 and 1995; Mekuria, 1988).

This period witnessed the crushing defeat of the Oromo by Menilek II who used the policy of divide and conquer among the Oromo and the modern firearms he had obtained from the Europeans. The Oromo lost their independence and suffered complete suppression of their language and culture. Most of them were transformed into landless *gabbara* (a sort of serfdom). They were alienated from their land, enslaved, and became servants of the *nefixxenyaa* (gun bearers). A few strong Oromo leaders and chiefs who accepted Menilek's rule and cooperated with him gained his favor although temporarily (for instance, Ras Gobanaa, Fitawrari Habtegiorgis, Dejazmach Kumsaa Morodaa, Abbaa Jifaar, and others). In the end, however, most of the Oromo leaders lost from their alliance with the Abyssinian state and their histories were undermined.

The Period of 1900-1935

During this period, the newly conquered Oromo were more or less left to the mercy of the *nefixxenyaa* and the newly appointed regional governors. The state of the Ethiopian empire was in the process of centralizing and consolidating its power. But there was succession problem during Menilek's deteriorating health and in the event of the First World War (1914-1918) which resulted in a coup d'état of Eyasu's government by Ras Tafari (later Emperor Haile Sellasie) and Empress Zawditu. Under the circumstances, the central government had little or no control over the newly conquered Oromo who were under the whims of the notorious governors and garrisoned soldiers. The Oromo paid heavy taxes part of which was sent to the central administration and the remaining portion retained by the governors. This period coincided with the Italian occupation of the Ethiopian Empire in 1936 (Markakis, 1974).

The Period of 1936-1941

This was a short period of the Italian rule in which the Oromo who were conquered about 40-50 years ago by Menilek experienced a European administration. In most Oromo areas, the Italian rule at first was more or less appreciated, particularly because of its land policy as well as the actions the Italian officers took against the *nefixxenyaa*. It was only later on that the Oromo began to hate the Italian colonial rule when it became more and more oppressive (Sbacchi, 1997).

The Period of 1941-1974

After the expulsion of the Italians, Emperor Haile Sellassie was reinstated as a powerful leader of the Ethiopian Empire with the assistance of the British government in 1941. Since then, Haile Sellassie consolidated and strengthened his power from time to time with the help of Britain, America, and other western countries. His government was highly centralized and affected almost all Oromo villages. The power of the Emperor was felt in every locality. Even those semi-autonomous regions such as Jimmaa Abbaa Jifaar, Leeqaa Naqamtee, and others were put under the control of hand-picked governors appointed by the Emperor. In 1955, the 1931 Constitution was reversed. It strengthened and enhanced the system of the central government control. Consequently, the Oromo culture and language were increasingly marginalized. Most people were pushed below the poverty line, particularly because of landlessness, massive eviction (for instance, Arsii, Baalee, and parts of Shawa), and heavy taxation (Perham, 1948; Rubenson, 1976).

Haile Sellassie's harsh rule resulted in the major forces of opposition in the 1960s among the Oromo and the formation of the Maccaa-Tulama Association as well as the Baalee Peasant Rebellion. The leaders of the Maccaa-Tulama were either imprisoned or massacred. General Tadesse Biru, Col. Alemu Qixxeessa, and others were jailed. Mamo Mezemer and Hailemariam Gemadaa were executed. Until recently, the Maccaa-Tulama movement, and the Baalee Peasant Uprising have been either undermined, or not recorded at all. It was particularly, the acute oppression and suppression of the Oromo farmers, mainly in relation to land and the human suffering under Haile Sellassie's regime, that led to the outbreak of the 1974 Revolution and brought an end to the Monarchical government with its Crown rule (Gebru Tareke, 1991).

The Period of 1974-1991

During the initial years of the revolution in Ethiopia, the Oromo had mounting hopes that the economic, political, cultural, and social dominations from which they had suffered for so many years would be lifted. The *Dergue* regime promised a lot, but did very little indeed. To legitimize its government, it proclaimed Socialism and advocated solutions to the nations' and nationalities' problems through the principles of Socialism with the slogan of unity and equality. For the Oromo, however, the only positive step that the *Dergue* took was the Rural Land Proclamation which freed the farmers from the control of the landlords—the majority of them Amhara-Tigrean absentee land owners in Oromia. Too soon, however, the Oromo hopes were dashed when the *Dergue* transformed itself into a bloody dictator.

In the name of safeguarding the unity and the territorial integrity of Ethiopia, the majority of the Oromo in the regular army and those who were forcibly conscripted perished in the wars against Somalia and the 30 years war against the Eritrean Liberation Front. As in the past, Ethiopian historical records remained more or less silent about the contributions made by the Oromo in the war fronts as well as the economic front in the fields of production (Baxter, 1998)

The miseries of the Oromo under the Ethiopian successive regimes grew from bad to worse. Loss of independence, damages against the Oromo language, and culture were so great, but the Oromo miraculously survived loss of identity. In spite of their situations, they have never given up their identity (i.e., no identity crisis)

The fall of the *Dergue* regime in 1991 and the subsequent adoption of the Charter of the Transitional Government (TGE) headed by the EPRDF and supported by several Liberation Movements seem to have ushered in a moment of hope and a new era in the history of the Oromo and other oppressed peoples in the country. But soon, all hopes were dashed when the Charter was violated by the ruling party- EPRDF and the TPLF core began to enjoy a monopoly of economic and political power through its puppet organizations. Since then, the Oromo and other opposition groups continue to suffer from death, imprisonment, torture, harassment, and exile. This has been the place of the Oromo in the history of Ethiopia. Nevertheless, we still hope that someday somehow, based on the relentless and unified struggle, the miseries of the Oromo will end and that they will get their proper and rightful place in history.

Oromo Studies: Problems and Prospects

It is clear that African historiography was dominated by the Euro-centric views which portrayed Africans as people without history and culture until the 1960s. Similarly, Abyssino-centric writers and historians presented the Oromo as people without history and culture. They deliberately distorted, neglected, and undermined Oromo history. For centuries in the past, therefore, particularly until the 1970s and still now, Oromo studies had suffered and continue to suffer from distortions, misrepresentations, and misunderstandings.

There is a general consensus among scholars that Ethiopian studies have for long been characterized by their excessive focus on church and state together with their paraphernalia. This lends itself to expose the fact that it failed to look at history from a correct perspective. Even then, it lacks objectivity and authenticity. Inevitably, this has caused a serious marginalization of the politically submerged and colonized peoples in the country. A case in point has been the Oromo who, not only, have suffered from historiographical injustice, but have also lamentably been portrayed as a people having no history and culture (Mohammed, 1990; Assefa, 1993; Tesema, 1980)

In recent years, however, Oromo and expatriate scholars interested in Oromo studies have made tremendous efforts and significant advances in rectifying this historiographical imbalance focusing on Oromo studies and taking up new themes with critical and analytical approach. They are employing the hitherto neglected methodologies and are refining historical

tools such as oral traditions, oral histories, and historical linguistics, as well as cultural studies and others.

Among the outstanding contributions that have been made by Oromo Studies Association (OSA) along this line is its remarkable publication of the *Journal of Oromo Studies (JOS)*. Several individual scholars have also published invaluable books and articles on the Oromo which have enriched our knowledge and have helped us to understand the society better. A few of these scholars include: Mohaamed Hassen (1990), Mekuria Bulcha (1988), Gadaa Melba (1988), Bonnie Holcomb and Sisai Ibssa (1990), Assafa Jalata (1993), P. W. Baxter and Alessandro Triulzi (1995), Gemtchu Megersa (1995), W/Yohannes Workineh and Gemechu Melka (1995), Balambaras Jabessa Ejjetaa (1993&1994), Mooti Biyya (1996), Asmarom Legesse (1973; 2000), Ezekiel Gabissa (2002), Hamdesa Tusso, Abbas Haji, Guluma Gameda, Daniel Ayana, Benti Getahun, and others.

Special Role of OSA

The beginnings of Oromo studies can be dated to the first half of the 19th century when some Oromo arrived in Europe from the slave markets of the Middle East and Africa in the 1840s which consequently led to the emergence of Oromo studies. Their arrival in Europe brought the Oromo society into contact with the outside world and aroused interest in the study of the Oromo society. The most notable study in this regard was by a German named Karl Tutschek: *The Dictionary of the Galla Language and A Grammar of the Galla Language published in 1844*. These publications helped to introduce *afaan* Oromo to the European world of scholarship (Mekuria Bulcha, 1994: 92).

Some of those Oromo who arrived in Europe also played an important role in contributing to Oromo studies. Among these group of individuals, the work of Onesimos Nesib, a distinguished Oromo, stands as one of the most significant accomplishments *par-excellence*.

In the 20th century, there are some works on the Oromo both by the Oromo in the Diaspora and at home until the establishment of Oromo Studies Association (OSA). OSA played a crucial role in carefully organizing Oromo studies as a distinctive body of knowledge on an international level. When the first issue of OSA the *Journal of Oromo Studies (JOS)* was published in 1993, it was stated, “... a dream come true for the Oromo Studies Association.” JOS, the voice of the Oromo nation, provided a forum for the growth, development, and promotion of Oromo studies in general. It welcomes scientific works on almost all fields of Oromo studies. One of its objectives was to serve as an umbrella for branch associations with their respective journals (JOS, 1993, Vol, No.1).

OSA, although largely dominated by the Oromo in the Diaspora, has made important advances in challenging and exposing the weaknesses of Ethiopian Studies concerning the Oromo and has broken a new ground in setting up a balanced study. OSA took every effort in rectifying the numerous distortions and misrepresentations in Oromo studies. Through the meticulous works of Oromo scholars such derogatory and pejorative names as the *Galla* and discussions on the Oromo origin as strangers to Northeast Africa have all faded away.

(Baxter, 1998: 2) and the Oromo identity has been established with ample authentic historical evidence. In the words of Bonnie Holcomb, "The *Journal of Oromo Studies*, a scholarly voice of Oromos and the Oromo Studies Association has established Oromo scholarship on a strong scientific ground of an international level" (JOS, 1999, Vol 6: i-ii)

In Oromia, there are flourishing studies on the Oromo language, culture, history, traditional institutions, and others. According to Baxter, "The community of students of Oromo has become so wide, and publications so diffused, that members cannot know each other nor keep up with all publications, let alone with serious reviews of new books" (Baxter, 1998: 2-3). These greatly contributed to Oromo studies and made major advances in Oromo historiography. The major problems, however, are that most of these works in Oromia have not yet been published and made available to the public. Most of these works are based on the living traditions of the Oromo, and when published, they are important sources for the Oromo and non-Oromo scholars. Some of the published materials are also not widely circulated or distributed and are expensive. Poor library systems and lack of space are also contributing factors. In this connection, I would like to point out that *JOS* is beyond the reach of Oromo students and scholars. This is true even at the Addis Ababa University, let alone in the higher education institutions of Oromia.

Although most of the works on Oromo studies outside Ethiopia are published, they are not widely distributed in Oromia. Moreover, *JOS*, which is widely known in the USA, is less distributed even in Europe than in Oromia. The distribution and circulation of *JOS* and other published materials such as the *Oromo Commentary* are either suppressed if available, or for the most part non-existent. Most unfortunately, this shows that there is wide information gap between the Oromo in Oromia and those in the Diaspora. This, I think is a very serious problem which OSA, similar other organizations, and concerned individuals have to address.

An earnest attempt needs to be made to facilitate the distribution of such crucial studies as OSA publications, mainly in Oromia. It might also be useful to think of establishing a Public Documentation Center in Oromia which, as far as I am concerned, is overdue and should be taken up as a challenge.

A tough task awaits OSA in making use of the living traditions of the Oromo to develop and enhance Oromo studies. Up to now, a strong attention has been given to a political discourse in order to establish historical justice for the Oromo cause which still needs a careful attention and an in-depth follow-up to convince the international community. But other aspects of the Oromo such as social, economic, and cultural studies also deserve due attention.

Another problem is that most of the articles in *JOS* are written by accomplished scholars with very limited new contributors. Most of the initial contributors have repeatedly published since 1993 with fields of study rotating around history, language, and the Oromo cause (Nationalism). Finally, Oromo studies need to be given a new dynamism of scholarship to explore more fully the still unexplored fields and aspects of the Oromo people.

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The Pride of the Guji-Oromo: An Essay on Cultural Contact and Self-Esteem

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Introduction

The Guji are one of the many branches of the Oromo people who predominantly live in the Guji and Borana zones of the Oromia Regional State, Southern Ethiopia. The Borana, Arsi, Sidama, Gedeo, Burji, Konso, Wolaita, Koyra, Gamo, and Gari are some of the major neighboring groups of the Guji. The Guji-Oromo have been in constant contacts with these neighboring groups from time immemorial.

Guji-Oromo contact with the Amhara¹ and other groups from the North (Tigre, Gurage, etc) started with Menelik's conquest and incorporation of their land into the Ethiopian Empire in the last quarter of the 19th century. Contacts with the *Faranji* (foreigners) started with the Italian conquest of Ethiopia during 1936-1941.

The term culture contact implies the existence of several cultures in mutual contact with one another (Wagner, 1956:92). Thus, the Guji-Oromo experienced three types of general cultural contacts in their history. These are: contacts with their neighboring groups, contacts with Ethiopians from the North who came to the South as empire builders, and contacts with Europeans, particularly the Italians.

One typical result of cultural contact is cultural change. Culture change that arises from cultural contacts manifests itself in variety of ways. These include symbiotic coexistence and mutual respect, hostility and cultural self-esteem, assimilation, accommodation, domination and loss of self-esteem, slavery, and genocide. This paper deals with cultural contacts of the Guji-Oromo at the three levels mentioned above. It discusses changes that have taken place in Guji-Oromo culture as the results of culture contacts and their effects on their pride and self-esteem. In general, attempts are made in this paper to show in what ways and to what degree the indigenous Guji culture has responded to the outside influences, which aspects of the old culture have been changed, what new ideas and social relationships have come into being, and what conflicts have arisen and where they tend to lead.

The Guji-Oromo: An Overview

The Guji (also known as Jam Jam or Jam Jamtu by some of their neighbors) speak Afan Oromo (Oromiffa), one of the most widely spoken languages in Ethiopia, belonging to the Eastern Cushitic language family. While the Oromo in general account for about forty percent of Ethiopia's population, the Guji have a population of more than a million people. The Guji Oromo were conquered and incorporated into the Ethiopian Empire in the 1890s by the

¹ The Guji used to refer to northern Ethiopians in general as "Amhara" regardless of their ethnic origin.

forces of Menelik II (1889-1913). Outside the Oromia Regional State, small pockets of Guji population currently live in the Wando-Gannet area and in the Nach-Sar National Park. The Guji in Wando-Gannet area are fairly assimilated to the Sidama culture with which they have lived for centuries

Unlike some other Oromo groups that constitute a single section, the Guji are a confederation of three independent, but closely related groups known as Uraga, Mati and Hoku. Traditionally, each section had its own territorial boundary and political leader in the form of *abba gada* "an age-grade leader". However, the three groups are interdependent: they regard each other as tied by blood relations, act together in the case of war against neighboring groups, help each other during economic crisis, and conduct *gada* rituals together.

The traditional socio-political organization of the Guji-Oromo was dominated by moiety-clan-lineage-family structure and by the *gada* system, with a *Kallu* "supreme hereditary religious leader" at the apex. There are two non-exogamous moieties known as Kontoma and Darimu. Under these moieties, there are seven non-totemic and exogamous clans in Uraga and Hoku, respectively, and three in Mati. Each clan is divided into a variable number of segments called *mana*, literally means 'house,' which in turn are divided into a great number of patrilineages. The Guji family is an extended patriarchal family. Marriage is based, in most cases, on self-selection and on arrangements made between the families of the bride and the groom. Polygamy, primogeniture, patrilocal residence, and levirate are some other features of the Guji marriage and family system.

Gada is an age-grade system that divides the stages of life of individuals, from childhood to old age, into a series of formal steps. There are thirteen such steps in contemporary Guji society. Transition ceremonies mark the passage from one stage to the next. Within each stage, activities and social roles are formally defined, both in terms of what is permitted and what is forbidden. The ideal length of time in one rank is eight years. In the past, the *gada* system assumed military, economic, legal, and arbitrational responsibilities (see, Asmarom, 1973 and Hinnant, 1977 for detailed description and analysis of the Oromo *gada* system). In recent years, however, the function of the *gada* system in Guji has been reduced to ritual activities, mainly due to the imposition of alien rules.

The Guji have a mixed economy of animal husbandry and crop cultivation in a fertile land that stretches over a wide variety of altitudes. They subsist mainly by growing grains such as barley, corn, *teff* (*eragrostis tef*), pulses, and *enset* (*musa ensete*). Their real wealth, however, consists of cattle, sheep, goats, and horses. Emotions and pride are centered in stock. People who do not own cattle are not considered to be proper Guji (Baxter, 1991:9). Cattle are important, not only for economic purposes, but also for social and ritual life. The social status of a person among the Guji finds its expression in the number of cattle owned. The owner of many heads of cattle is a respected person. Cattle are ritually used for sacrificial purposes.

With regard to religion, the Guji have developed a very complex set of beliefs and practices. They believe in *Waka* 'heaven' and in the existence of *durissa* 'devil'. They have *woyyu* 'sacred shrines' under which prayers and sacrifices are made to *waka*. They also believe in ritual power vested on certain individuals and families. Respectively, the *kallu* 'supreme

religious leader' and *abba gada* are considered as *woyyu* (holy) and *worra kalacha* 'virile family'. Besides these, there are many and varied ritual and religious practices such as oracle, spirit possession, complex divinations and other indigenous beliefs. But, with the introduction of the great world religions and "modernization," Guji traditional beliefs are changing fast. There had been a mass conversion of the Guji farmers into Christianity (Protestantism in particular) and Islam, specially after the 1974 Ethiopian socialist revolution (Tadesse, 1995).

The Guji consider their homeland to be the very ancestral cradle of the Oromo culture. Indeed, many scholars have now concluded that the Oromo originated in and around the areas currently inhabited by the Guji, Borana, and Arsi Oromo on the basis of historical linguistics, oral traditions, and cultural data (See, Haberland, 1963; Lewis, 1966; Asmerom, 1973; Tesema, 1986). It is not, however, clear when and why the Guji were separated from other Oromo groups to form an independent territorial unit.

Guji-Oromo Contacts (Relations) with their Neighboring Groups and their Self-esteem

The Guji-Oromo are bounded by a number of Oromo (Borana and Arsi) and non-Oromo groups. Contacts among these groups were greatly limited to the bordering areas. Historically, the relationship of the Guji with their neighboring groups (except with the Gedeo) was actively hostile. Warfare was endemic, generally taking the form of mutual raids (Hinnant, 1977:21). The barter trade that had existed among some of these groups (including the Guji) was not developed to the point where it could create significant relations and cooperation among them. Intermarriage among them was not at all encouraged.

Even after Menelik's conquest, the relationships among most of these groups were, to a larger extent, limited to market places and to garrison towns which are neutral zones where different ethnic groups meet and exchange their produce and information about their social and natural environment. Apart from market places and towns, their contacts were limited and the passage into each other's territory was not always safe. In the past, movements outside one's own territory were dangerous. Even today, the problems of inter-ethnic conflicts and wars have not yet been fully solved, although the contemporary scene signifies peaceful coexistence with the neighboring population. The causes and motives of the conflicts and wars were economic, political, and cultural (See, Tadesse, 1988; Tadecha, 1988).

Guji relationship with the Gedeo was different. It was not always harmonious, but was much better than, for example, that with the Borana, Arsi, and Sidama. The better relationship was most probably the result of economic interdependence between them. The Guji obtained the cereals and *enset* they needed from the Gedeo, while the Gedeo in their turn obtained the cattle products they needed from the Guji.²

Due to the minimal contacts and hostile relationships with their neighboring groups, the Guji have developed peaceful relations among themselves. The different Guji *gossa* (i.e. Uraga, Mati, and Hoku) do not fight with each other. The Guji were extremely careful not to

² There was, however, a big conflict and war between the Guji and Gedeo in 1998 over territorial claims induced by the current government's divide and rule policy.

spill Guji blood, and, if it happened, they were always ready to promptly solve the problem to maintain *nagafi tokuma Guji* (the peace and unity of the Guji). They are always allies with each other against outsiders. External pressure seems to have created internal unity and a sense of “us” and “them”. This in turn seems to have enabled Guji to develop positive self-esteem or stereotypes about themselves, which is expressed in variety of ways.

The Guji myth of origin is one area in which their positive self-esteem is vividly expressed. In the Guji myth of origin, the first human beings were created in Adola (center in Guji land), the first people being the Guji themselves, speaking *afan Guji* (Guji language)- the first language of all humans (Hinnant, 1972). According to this myth, all other peoples (except the *faranji*, white-men) came from this area and then each went their own ways, traveling to their present territories.

The myth implies that the Guji are the first people created on earth. In Oromo culture, to be born first in a family is to become *angafa* (first born son) and to be entitled to certain privileges. The eldest son is always of higher rank than his younger brothers. Younger brothers and sisters are expected to respect and obey *angafa*. *Angafa* represents his father in all aspects of life and has considerable power. He is the one who inherits and distributes family assets among his brothers after the death of the father. The myth, thus, implies that Guji should be given respect by others as first-born (*angafa*) human being in the world. It imbues the Guji with feelings of superiority in relation to other groups.

The manner with which the Guji address others is another area in which Guji positive self-esteem and contempt for the others is expressed. The Guji follow a general pattern of calling others (except the Borana and Arsi) as “she” using feminine gender. This is to say that another male is in some sense less than one-self. The only humans referred to with the male pronoun are adult Guji, Borana, and Arsi males. Children of both sexes and men from all other societies are referred to in the feminine. Guji men, then, see themselves as a class apart from the rest of humanity.

The three Oromo groups, i.e. the Guji, Borana, and Arsi used to consider each other as “*Siddi - Saddin*”—three enemies against one another, despite their common origin and culture. Within the framework of “*siddi sadam*,” Guji against Borana and Arsi and the other way round, all consider each other as *akaku*, human beings equivalent to each other who if killed by the enemy awards the killer with honor and fills him with pride tantamount to *mirga* (Tadecha, 1988). *Mirga* is the value attached to an act of bravery which assumes killing or capturing of a man from among the “*Siddi Saddin*” and the killing of four types of wild beasts (an elephant, a lion, a buffalo and a rhinoceros) with the conception that it awards the killer and captor with certain value of social recognition (Tadesse, 1988; Tedecha, 1988).

To the three Oromo groups, except among themselves killing or capturing of a human being from the part of enemy does not amount to *mirga*. By the same token, the Guji call these three as male and the rest as feminine (women).

The Guji also think that they were very fierce fighters. They say fighters meant Guji and considered themselves as great warriors who are not afraid of any other groups. In fact, the Guji are considered aggressive and, therefore, feared by many of their neighboring groups.

In economic life too, the Guji speak as if their form of self-sufficient pastoral (and agro-pastoral) way of life was the only proper one. They take a great pride in the possession of cattle. Others who predominantly engaged in crop cultivation and in other economic activities such as handicrafts and trade are considered poor and white. People who worked on land were considered as *gagurtu* or *gara* (those who do not have knowledge of cattle breeding) and despised. In the Guji color system (symbolism), white is associated with poverty, disease and misfortune while black has many associations including earth, sky, water, grass, *waka* (God) and the Guji themselves (Hinnant, 1972).

Besides these, the Guji have negative attitude towards the manner of speech of some of their neighbors. They say, for example, the Gedeo and Borana like to talk loudly and too much. From their point of view, these groups like to “heat up a talk” (i.e. they talk for a very long time on a very small topic) and the construction of their sentences resembles persons in fight.

Moreover, the Guji do not like the sexual behavior of some of their neighbors. According to Hinnant (1972), the Guji say that Borana wives have intercourse with their lovers if their husbands leave for only five minutes. If the husband returns, the wife orders him not to come in because she is busy (implication that men are weaker than women). In Guji, the husband would enter and take the lovers clothes and beat him.

Furthermore, the Guji believe that some of their neighbors like the Sidama and Burji are *buda* (people with evil eye) and *falfala* (sorcerers) and, therefore, should be avoided. *Buda* is believed to be inherent while *falfala* is acquired. *Buda* and *falfala* are said to have negative effects on their victims and are, therefore, to be condemned. Consequently, the Guji have developed their own ethnic boundary markers like religion, language, and other cultural traits such as clothing, house type, scars on arms and forehead...etc, that make their members identifiable.

In summary, before Menelik's conquest of their land in the 1890s, the Guji were independent people who had limited contacts/relations with their neighboring groups. These limited contacts were in bordering areas where they fought each other for economic, political, and social reasons. Competition over resources and hostility with neighboring groups created the sense of “us” and “them” on the one hand and internal harmony and cooperation among the Guji on the other. This in turn helped Guji to develop positive self-esteem about themselves which is expressed in their myth of origin, in the manner of addressing ‘others’, in warfare, and in economic activities. The Guji assume that their sexual behavior and religious beliefs are much better than that of their neighbors. In general, their status combines seniority and great relative worth with strength and virility (*diruma*) in their view.

In his *Cross-cultural Study of Ethnocentrism* between the Guji and their neighbors, John Hinnant (1972) found that most Guji neighbors have similar negative attitudes toward the Guji and their other neighbors. However, these groups never undertook any program to “civilize” their neighbors. They defended themselves against neighboring group's attack, but they did not consciously try to coerce each other into accepting their own culture. It, thus, seems that when two or more groups of fairly equal power (states) live in contact, they are likely to develop negative attitudes towards each other (may be due to mutual fear and respect

for one another) while developing a positive self-esteem and pride about themselves, which are expressed in a variety of ways.

Conquest and its Impacts on Guji-Oromo Self-esteem

Conquest and its Impacts

Menelik's forces conquered the Guji-Oromo in the 1890s with the assistance of European firearms. Their conquest and incorporation into the Ethiopian Empire caused profound changes in their lives. The Guji ceased to exist as independent and autonomous people; their traditional land holding system was changed; seeds for urbanization were sowed, population increased, and cultural changes occurred. These changes in turn caused significant impacts on Guji socio-economic life and on their self-esteem.

Before the conquest, Guji were independent people who used to administer their socio-political and economic affairs without any foreign interventions. Descent groups collectively owned land. Following the conquest, however, the vast territory over which the Guji once moved freely with their herds was expropriated. Consequently, a large area of land came under the ownership of the government, church, administrators, soldiers, and other settlers from the North and the *naftegna-gabbar* (serfdom) system was established. Under this system, the *naftegna* (literally, gunman or conqueror) was supported by a number of *gabbars* (serfs). It was required that the *gabbar* provided grain and animals for slaughter, along with labor in the field and households of the *naftegna* (Hinnant, 1977; 21-25). The *naftegna* established virtually a colonial relationship over the indigenous Guji, taking their lands and imposing an alien rule on them.

In addition, taxes were collected from each area, parts of which were sent to Menelik's central treasury and the local officials kept parts. At the bottom level, Guji *balabats*, *koros* and *chika shums* were incorporated into the system of the *naftegna* domination to collect taxes, to maintain peace, and administer the law within territories designated by the administration. These local elites were allowed to use government land in exchange for services they rendered to the conquering power. Hinnant (1990:67) recorded Guji understanding of the Menelik's administration as follows:

Mengisti (government) allowed the 'Amhara' to take land and livestock from the Guji. Men were compelled to work in the fields owned by these 'Amhara,' and to 'carry loads on their backs like donkeys'. Their women were sometimes forced to work as domestics in the homes of the townsmen, and to be their mistresses.

One important aspect of Menelik's policy of expansion was the formation of garrison towns in the conquered areas. These towns served as centers from which further expansions could be undertaken. The towns housed soldiers needed to maintain control of the region, along with officials such as tax collectors, judges, and local governors (Hinnant, 1977). Thus, Menelik's attempts to promote garrison towns were motivated by military and political factors. Consequently, his effort did not create urban centers that were economically viable, rather it left the legacy whereby a new type of economically oriented urban system was superimposed

on the traditional structure (Mulatu, 1982). These were parasitic towns which highly depended on the exploitation of farmer's produce for their survival

In addition to the loss of autonomy (independence), the changes in the land tenure system, the establishment of garrison towns, and the gradual increase in population were felt in Guji land after the conquest. Besides the natural increase, settlers from the North and from neighboring groups (who were settled on Guji land by the *naftegna* landlords) have progressively increased population in Guji land. The government provided hardly any services. There were virtually no schools, no clinics, and no roads.

Menelik also made it a policy to spread the culture of his own ethnic group, the Amhara, on the Guji and other conquered peoples of the South. Three of the most important aspects of this culture are Christianity, the Amharic language, and the Abyssinian legal system. Menelik and his generals built churches in all the conquered provinces as centers of 'Christianizing' the 'pagan' inhabitants. Often, too, the 'Amhara' and other converted peoples were planted in the conquered areas as settler colonists to spread elements of the Amhara culture.

Emperor Haile Selassie's government (1930–1936 and 1941–1974) accelerated what had been started by Menelik's administration. Imperial land alienation and economic exploitation continued and more and more northern settlers were brought into the conquered regions of the South, including the Guji land. Outsiders controlled much of the Guji land, but they generally did not live on the land. Rather, they lived in towns, or outside Guji altogether. Guji agents who collected rent and taxes and maintained control represented them on their holdings.

Results of Italian Occupation

During their occupation of Ethiopia between 1936-1941, the Italians initiated a number of changes in the South, including the Guji area. They abolished the *naftegna-gabbar* system and land tax. The Guji (with other people of the South) were given greater freedom to conduct their traditional socio-economic and political practices. Most ethnic groups of the south, including the Guji have retaliated against the *naftegna* for their mal-administration of the South after Menelik's conquest. The action taken is clearly reflected in one of the Guji songs:

Hidhe nu hika Atalan - we were jailed and released by Atala (a Guji Balabat)

Hidhe nu dhana habbashaan - we were jailed and bitten by habashas (Amharas)

Halun soon bate barranna - now it is our time, we have the opportunity to retaliate against them

Due to the short occupation period, the changes initiated by Italians did not last long. When Haile Selassie came back with the British Army to liberate Ethiopia, a few Guji fought on the Italian side against the reinstatement of the oppressive yoke of *naftegna* rule. According to informants, the Guji fared relatively better under the Italian which helped them, at least temporarily, to rebuild the pride and self-esteem that has been eroded under the Menelik and Haile Selassie rules (see below).

Other noteworthy effects of the Italian occupation of the Guji land were the construction of two north-south roads through their territory and the establishment of lumber mills, operated after the war by ex-POWs. The two roads, later improved by the Ethiopian government, ended Guji isolation and integrated them into the national and international economy. The lumber mills offered occasional employment to a few Guji.

Under Haile Selassie's government, assimilation policy was intensified to deliberately and systematically change the ethnic identity of the conquered peoples. A key target of the assimilation policy was the elimination of ethnic boundary markers: language, religion, mode of dress and any socio-cultural institution that readily distinguishes the population.

In Guji, for example, the *gada* system was suppressed, although not fully destroyed. The office of *kallu* which was already a position for life, was granted the additional title of *balabat* and, thus, became a bureaucratic post. The *kallu*, therefore, wielded his *woyyu* powers, but has added the powers of the state (Hinnant, 1990:71). The practice of some other traditions and customs (e.g. traditional Oromo religion) were looked down upon as inferior and evil and, thus, discouraged. The Guji were viewed as primitive, without any useful culture and tradition, lazy, dirty, savage, etc. The ultimate objective was the total absorption of the conquered groups into the dominant Amhara group and culture. Clay and Holcomb (1986:15) summarized the relationship between the Abyssinians (Amhara and Tigre) and the conquered peoples as follows:

The Abyssinians considered their own culture and religion superior to those of the conquered peoples who lived south and east of them and developed a corresponding ideology of superiority. They strove to Amharicize the conquered peoples through various programs: Amharic was taught in the schools and public use of other languages was restricted. Higher education was conditional upon passing exams in Amharic. State support for Coptic Christianity was instituted while Islam was denigrated. The Ethiopian legal code, grounded in ancient Abyssinian texts, replaced indigenous legal systems in the conquered regions. The settlers' economic and political organizations replaced those of pre-existing polities, which were officially denounced as "pagan" and "primitive." In short, the Amhara-created and dominated empire dismantled the pre-conquest economic, political, and social systems of the conquered peoples throughout the Cushitic and Nilotic western, southern, and eastern regions.

Once established by Menelik, the idea of assimilating the conquered peoples was intensified by Haile Selassie's government. Abyssinian moral, norms, values, and beliefs were imposed. Walleign Mekonnen (1969), a student movement leader, expressed the situation very clearly.

Ask anybody what Ethiopian culture is? Ask anybody what Ethiopian language is? Ask anybody what Ethiopian music is? Ask about what Ethiopian religion is? Ask about what the national dress is? It is either Amhara or Amhara-Tigre!! To be a "genuine" Ethiopian one has to speak Amharic, listen to Amharic music, accept

the Amhara-Tigre religion—Orthodox Christianity, and wear the Amhara-Tigre *shamma* in international conferences. In some cases, to be an “Ethiopian,” you will even have to change your name. In short, to be an Ethiopian, you will have to wear an Amhara mask (to use Fanon’s expression).

While the assimilation policy was not successful, the imposition, however, had significant adverse impacts on the pride and self-esteem of the conquered peoples, including the Guji.

The Dergue, a military junta, came to power in 1974 after Emperor Haile Selassie’s fall. It adopted a radical land reform program in 1975. The land reform (with the formation of Peasant Associations (PAs) was the most popular reform among the Guji. It liberated them from age-old feudal exploitation and oppression by abolishing private ownership of land and landlord-tenant relations. Guji farmers were happy (as all landless tenants of the South) to get back the land that had been confiscated by *naftagna*.

The Dergue regime also promised to address the “national question” through a Leninist model. A program of “National Democratic Revolution” was introduced and the principle of national self-determination was declared. The program promised, in principle, the rights of each nation and nationality to develop its own language and culture. In theory, at least, this is a departure from the assimilation policy of the previous regimes to the accommodation of ethnic groups. Accommodation is the formal recognition and support of ethnic group’s identities and socio-cultural differences. The central government does not attempt to create a homogenous population, but works within a framework of ethnic and cultural differences. However, as soon as it consolidated its power, the Dergue regime abrogated the “national question” declarations and began to label any advocacy of national rights as “narrow nationalism.” This reversed the Dergue’s ethnic accommodation policy to the policy of assimilation.

The Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) overthrew the Dergue regime in May 1991 and formed the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) in the summer of the same year. This led to the replacement of the Amhara-led regime by a Tigrean power. The EPRDF produced a constitution (1994) in which “nations, nationalities, and the peoples” in Ethiopia are granted the rights to self-determination including independence.

The constitution emphasized the rights of “nations, nationalities, and peoples” to preserve their identities and to administer their own affairs. The decentralization process has created a federal system of government based on linguistic criteria. Thus, federation is believed to make it possible for “nations, nationalities, and peoples” to exercise self-rule within the framework of greater Ethiopia. It is believed that secessionist sentiments would be weakened and the self-confidence generated by the experience of self-rule would advance the goal of nation building (Seyoum & Yacob, 1999: 97). While the extent to which “nations, nationalities, and peoples” in Ethiopia have achieved self-rule is debatable, the EPRDF government seems to have moved from assimilation policy to accommodation, at least in theory.

Guji-Oromo Self-esteem after the Conquest

At first, the Guji-Oromo were less directly affected by the conquest and incorporation into the Ethiopian Empire due to the weak local administrative machinery in the countryside. They lived on the periphery of the new empire and central control of them and their resources was not actualized. There were no major movements of outsiders, including landlords, to the countryside. Ethnically and linguistically, the countryside was virtually homogenous Guji, although Amhara and non-Guji population gradually started to live in the few small towns along the main roads. A few Ethiopian Orthodox Churches dotted in the garrison towns, but these were irrelevant to the life of the Guji communities.

Gradually, however, a number of basic changes have occurred. The landlords alienated the vast territory over which the Guji once moved freely with their herds. Warfare and cattle raiding between the Guji and the societies on its borders have been suppressed by the Ethiopian administration. Small towns and villages populated by outsiders started to serve as administrative centers and as sources of information concerning the outside world.

Later, as the Ethiopian government strengthened its grasp on the area and consolidated its power, economic exploitation and political domination were institutionalized. Some of the Guji socio-cultural and political institutions (e.g. gada system, traditional religious practices) were forbidden and gradually weakened.

The Amharic language, Orthodox Christianity, and Abyssinian legal system were imposed. The attempt was to impose everything Abyssinian on the southern peoples and call it Ethiopian. The education system was discriminating and geared to the needs of the rulers. The schools were intended for the glorification and propagation of the Abyssinian culture, history, and values. They were engaged in creating a national identity, an Amhara one (Gadaa Melbaa, 1988). The Guji and other conquered people were given educational opportunities as part of the assimilation program. Clinics and hospitals were built in towns and cities and the main beneficiaries were non-Guji dwellers.

In general, attempts were made by Ethiopian government to create some sort of inferiority complex on the conquered population, including the Guji. For northerners, subject people who clung to their traditional, social, and cultural values could only marginally be integrated to the state. This has led a few Guji, particularly those who live around urban centers, to loose self-esteem and assimilate into the Abyssinian culture in order to be accepted in the system. The loss of self-esteem in Guji-Oromo was expressed in personal name changes to the Amhara names, in conversion to Orthodox Christianity, in refusal by a few Guji individuals to speak their own language, in changes of clothing, and in other areas of culture. However, an overwhelming majority of the Guji population has not been integrated into the new social formation and has no real pride in or loyalty to the Ethiopian State. With gradual increase in the level of consciousness, even the few Guji who were 'assimilated' are going back to their traditional cultural practices. Nowadays, there is great interest and liking for the Guji (Oromo) language and culture more than any other language and culture.

Conclusion

When there are collisions between two or more cultures, something is bound to happen; and world history has shown that the responses cover a wide range. The change produced in one culture by its encounter with another is acculturation. But, as correctly observed by Farb (1968:260), rarely is the exchange of culture traits an equal one, and never does one culture emerge entirely untouched; the encounter almost always results in an increased similarity between the two cultures, leaving one of them dominant. In some cases, assimilation may proceed. In other cases, one culture may be overwhelmed physically, but not assimilated by the other. The latter was what most often happened to the conquered peoples in Ethiopia.

Guji's contact with the Amhara and their conquest and incorporation into the Ethiopian Empire brought them to powerful state relation which was assisted by the European powers of the day. Following the conquest, the Guji lost control over most of their land and their produce. Garrison posts, which were later developed into urban centers were established for control. Amhara language and culture was imposed to assimilate them. Guji socio-cultural and political institutions (e.g., *gada*, *kallu*, traditional religion, and legal system) were suppressed, although not fully destroyed. These changes gradually reduced Guji to semi-slave tenants and poverty economically, and to the decline of their indigenous institutions and self-esteem culturally.

However, the Guji and most other conquered peoples of the South were not assimilated significantly to the Amhara culture. The question naturally arises why the Amhara could not assimilate the conquered population within a century or so. Many reasons can be given.

- a) As a result of the territorial expansion of the empire, a variety of ethnic and national groups with diverse cultural and linguistic background were added to the existing Christian Amhara-Tigre kingdom. Consequently, the Amhara-Tigre became numerically a small group (minority) in the new empire to assimilate more than 70 percent of landmass and about 70 percent of population of the present-day empire within a century. Assimilation is usually a slow and uncertain process.
- b) The Amhara settlers possessed no traditions and institutions (like, for example, the Oromo *guddifachaa*³/adoption or *mogassa* system) for complete social integration. The Guji-Oromo and other conquered population associated closely with the Amhara soon found themselves confronted by a social system in which they might on occasion be courteously and even kindly treated. Yet, no Amhara family found it in their tradition to adopt an Oromo or any other conquered person as an equal member of the family group.
- c) Many conquered peoples do not simply want to give up their ethnic identity and imposing one's own culture on others is no more tolerable.

³ See Ayalew Duressa (2002) for a detailed study of the Oromo *guddifachaa*/adoption system. Using *guddifacha* and *mogassa* systems the Oromo have assimilated millions of people within a few centuries.

- d) Modernization (e.g. urbanization, industrialization, modern education, etc.) under the Amhara rule was at its lowest stage of development to bring about substantive integration into a dominant mainstream culture
- e) Assimilation has worked around the world when it was not forced. But at almost no time in the history of Ethiopia were the conquered groups afforded similar opportunities for voluntary assimilation. Abyssinians always want to assimilate others through ridiculing, defamation, character assassination, excommunication, discrimination against equal opportunities, intimidation, and through creating inferiority complex on them

Thus, contacts between the Amhara and the conquered groups, including the Guji did not inevitably result in assimilation. Despite the attempts to assimilation, most groups still cling to their old ways and retain a good number of their customs. Yet their cultures have been influenced by the Amhara culture, while *maintaining their own identities*. The Amhara culture in its turn has also been influenced by the conquered people's culture as encounters of this kind are almost always dual in character.

Starting from 1950s and 1960s, however, resentments against economic exploitation and politico-cultural domination of the conquered groups have become challenges to the Ethiopian governments. Many groups are militarily resisting annexation and absorption by the Ethiopian government that has striped them of their identity, land, and other resources. Facing absorption and subjugation at the hands of the state, many groups have no other choice than to militarily resist the state invasion. The goal of most conquered groups is to regain or maintain local control over their territory, resources, peoples, and communities (Reader, 1987)

Due to this problem, recently there is a gradual move by Ethiopian government from the policy of assimilation towards the policy of accommodation. The success or failure of this policy in bringing about economic equity, political participation, socio-cultural justice, and ethnic self-esteem is to be seen. The ball is in the hands of the elites of the ruling ethnic group/s. If the ruling elites work towards genuine democratic rights and social and cultural expressions of different groups in the country, there will be a fairly good possibility for Ethiopian peoples to live and work together. However, beginning from the time of conquest, more than 85 percent of all important government positions⁴ in the country were taken by the Abyssinian (Amhara-Tigre) elites and their culture was imposed as Ethiopian culture (see for instance, Galperin, 1979; Arka, 2002: 123-156; Keller, 1988:35]. For Abyssinians, all that is found in their region is exclusively theirs and what is in Oromia and in the South is communal from which they also want to take the lion's share. In short, a significant number of Ethiopians have been completely isolated from Ethiopian political, economic, and social life because of their ethnic, religious or regional background.

The Abyssinians and the conquered groups may decide to live together or to stay apart depending on the behavior of the elites of the ruling ethnic group(s). But cultural differences provide no moral justification for one group to deny to the other equal opportunity and the

⁴ These, among others, include ministerial, ambassadorial and high rank military positions

rewards of the larger society. If the full acceptance of the Guji and other conquered people by Abyssinians is contingent upon the disappearance of cultural differences, it will not be accorded in the foreseeable future. Ethnic and cultural differences are far more resilient and significant than what they have believed. Besides this, in viewing cultural differences primarily as disabilities, Abyssinians may neglect their positive aspects. Ethnic pluralism, if handled properly, is an asset to the well being of a nation. Moreover, rights of different ethnic groups to preserve their socio-cultural systems should be respected if that is their choice. Thus, there is a need to maintain some kind of balance between the hegemonic Amhara-Tigre group interests and the rapidly growing nationalism of the Oromo and other conquered peoples of the South. Without the recognition of these and other relevant issues and realization on the part of the state, the chance for successful social development and political stability would indeed remain to be gloomy.

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Pluralization in Afaan Oromo

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Introduction

In Afaan Oromo, plural is a category of a grammatical number that indicates that a noun, pronoun, determiner, or an adjective refers to two or more persons, animals, or things. For instance, normally a person says, “Lakkobsi mana ishee 310 dha” (Her house number is 310). If this same person is talking about a woman who has more than two houses, however, linguistically speaking he is expected to say, “Lakkobsi manneetii ishee 222, 223, fi 224 dha” (Her house numbers are 222, 223, and 224).

Until the early 1970’s, Afaan Oromo had remained mostly a spoken language. As such, it seems that using the plural forms had not been common because in conversation, when people talk face to face, there was no need for formality. In conversation, saying, “Maqaa ijoollee isaa beektaa” (*Do you know the name of his children) is in fact more natural than saying, “Maqaalee ijoollee isaa beektaa (Do you know the names of his children)?

Of course, even in conversation, in some situations a speaker has to use a plural form. After returning home late at night, a head of a family who has two or more horses would not ask his son, “Farda galchiteettaa” (Have you brought in a horse)? In this context, he has to use the plural form and say, “Fardeen galchiteettaa” (Have you brought in the horses)?

Has using the plural forms in writing become more popular since the advent of writing in Afaan Oromo? The major purpose of this paper is to study the plural forms of nouns and adjectives as used in one Oromo newspaper. The source of data for the study is *Bariisaa*, a four-column, twelve-page government-owned, weekly newspaper. The size of each page is 16"x 12". There are two major reasons why *Bariisaa* has been selected. One, it has been in circulation continuously for over ten years. Two, not only does it use accurate *qubee*, Oromo writing system [see pronunciation key at the end of this paper], but also it covers a wide variety of subjects including weekly local and international news, economic, social, cultural activities, and sports.

A careful tally of all the plural forms obtained from twenty-eight issues of *Bariisaa*, covering the period from July 7, 2000, to January 26, 2001, are on the writer’s files. But because of their enormity, the data collected from all the twenty-eight issues are not included here. Instead, only the data collected from four, December issues are listed under A, B, C, and D to serve as samples. The data listed under E and F are from all the 28 issues of the newspaper.

The Findings

There are four plural markers in Afaan Oromo. They are **-oota**, **-ota**, **-lee**, and **-wwan**.

List A: Plural Nouns that end in **-oota** [115 (41.5 %)]

The following generalizations/rules are useful

Rule 1

The plural marker **-oota** is suffixed after removing the final vowel/vowels from the singular noun

Examples:

nama - namoota	person(s)
waggaa - waggoota	year(s)
harree - harroota	donkey(s)
dubartii - dubartoota	woman/women
Oromoo - Oromoota	Oromo(s)
barattuu - barattoota	female student(s)

Rule 2

The plural marker **-oota** is suffixed to a singular noun only when there is a **short vowel** in the syllable that immediately precedes the final syllable of a singular noun

Examples:

yakka - yakkoota	crime(s)
akaakayyuu - akaakayyoota	grand father(s)
jecha - jechoota	word(s)
mirga - mirgoota	right(s)
qottoo - qottoota	axe(s)
qotee bulaa/qottee bultuu – qotee/qottee buloota	farmer(s)

The above rules apply even to foreign words used in Afaan Oromo.

Examples:

doktorii - doktoroota	doctor(s)
gaazexaa - gaazexoota	newspaper(s)
kilabii - kilaboota	club(s)
komishinariii - komishinaroota	commissioner(s)
kontraakterii - kontraakteroota	contract(s)
corporeeshinii - corporeeshinoota	corporation(s)
misaa'elii - misaa'eloota	missile(s)
poolisii - poolisoota	police man/men/woman/women

Rule 3

In Afaan Oromo, two separate words are used to indicate agentive, i.e., doer or causer of an action. One is for female and the other one is for male. For instance, the agentive barsiisaa (teacher) refers to male, whereas barsiistuu refers to female. In such cases, **-oota** is suffixed to barsiistu, not to barsiisaa. In other words, the plural noun is formed from the agentive that refers to females, but the resultant plural form applies to both male and female. NB. The agentive noun that refers to females comes after a slash in this paper

Example:

barataa/barattuu (abbreviated to: barat- aa/-tuu)	
barattoota	male/female student(s)
hidhataa/hidhattuu (abbreviated to hidhat-aa/-tuu)	
– hidhattoota	armed person(s)
dhukkubsataa/dhukkubsattuu (abbreviated to:	
dhukkubsat-aa/-tuu – dhkkubsattoota)	patient(s)

Below is the entire list of singular nouns that end in **-oota**. The gloss and the frequency [f] with which each occurred in the December issues are also given. Actually, the f, which is not important to this study, is written down just in passing. The entire list is provided to show how consistent **Rule 2** and **3** above are

Singular – plural (male/female)	gloss	f
akaakayyuu – akaakayyoota	grandfather(s)	3
aramaa – aramoota	weed(s)	1
artistii – artistoota	artist(s)	3
bakka bu'aa – bakka bu'oota	representative(s)	5
barat-aa/-tuu – barattoota	student(s)	3
barreeffamaa – barreeffamoota	pamphlet(s)	6
beelada – beeladoota	cow (cattle)	7
biyya – biyyoota	country(ries)	39
booji'am-aa/-tuu – booji'amtoota	prisoner(s) of war	22
buufata – buufatoota	station(s)	2
daawwat-aa/-tuu – daawwattoota	tourist(s)	3
daldal-aa/-tuu – daldaltoota	merchant(s)	1
damee – damoota	branch(es)	2
deeggar-aa/-tuu – dorgomtoota	supporter(s)	1
doktora – doktoroota	doctor(s)	6
dorgom-aa/-tuu – dorgomtoota	competitor(s)	2
dubartii – dubartoota	woman/women	54
dubbis-aa/-s(f)tuu – dubbis(f)toota	reader(s)	4
dhaabbata – dhaabbatoota	organization(s)	1

JOURNAL OF OROMO STUDIES

dhaadess-aa/-ituu – dhaadessitoota	fundamentalist(s)	4
dhala – dhaloota	generation(s)	2
dhimma – dhimmoota	affair(s)	11
dhug-aa/-duu – dhugdoota	drinker(s)	1
dhukkuba – dhukkuboota	disease(s)	8
dhukkubsat-aa/-tuu – dhukkubsattoota	patient(s)	14
erg-aa/-ituu – ergitoota	exporter(s)	1
faranjii – faranjoota	foreigner(s)	1
fayyada-maa/-mtuu – fayyadamtoota	beneficiary(ies)	3
fira – firoota	relative(s)	3
fooyya'aa – fooya'oota	the improved one(s)	1
gaazexaa – gaazexoota	newspaper(s)	2
ganda – gandoota	neighborhood(s)	27
gargaara-maa/-mtuu – gargaaramtoota	care receiver(s)	5
gorsituu – gorsitoota	advisor(s)	1
gosa – gosoota	tribe(s)	4
guddat-aa/-tuu – guddattoota	junior(s)	6
guddis-aa/-tuu – guddistoota	developer(s)	1
guyyaa – guyyoota	day(s)	7
haarawaa – haarawoota	the new one(s)	1
Haadiyyaa – Haadiyyoota	person(s) of Hadiyyaa nation	1
hidham-aa/-tuu – hidhamtoota	prisoner(s)	3
hidhat-aa/-tuu – hidhattoota armed	person(s)	3
himatam-aa/-tuu – himatamtoota	defendant(s)	5
hiriyyaa – hiriyyoota	peer(s)	3
hojii dhab-aa/-duu hojii dhabdoota	unemployed person(s)	1
hojjat-aa/-tuu – hojjattoota	worker(s)	12
hoomish-aa/-tuu – hoomishtoota	producer(s)	2
hordof-aa/-tuu – hordoftoota	follower(s)	7
hubam-aa/-mtuu – hubamtoota	injured person(s)	3
humna – humnoota	force(s)	2
isportess-aa/-ituu – isporteessitoota	sports person(s)	1
itti gaafatam-aa/-tuu person(s)	accountable	1
iiyyat-aa/-tuu – iiyyattoota	plaintiff(s)	1
jecha – jechoota	word(s)	2
ji'a – ji'oota	month(s)	1
kaadhimam-aa/-tuu – kaadhimamtoota	candidate(s)	31
keessummaa – keessumoota	guest(s)	3
kilabii – kilaboota	club(s)	58
kiliniikii – kilinikoota	clinics	4
konkolaachis-aa/-tuu – konkolaachistoota	driver(s)	3
kontraakterii – kontraakteroota	contract(s)	2

korporeeshinii – korporeeshinoota	corporation(s)	1
leenjifam-aa/-tuu – leenjifamtoota	trainee(s)	4
leenjis-aa/-tuu – leenjistoota	trainer(s) or coach(es)	8
loltuu – loltoota	soldier(s)	11
maammil-aa/-tuu – maammiltoota	client(s)	4
maanguddoo – maanguddoota	senior citizen(s)	7
madda – maddoota	river(s)	1
maxxans-aa/-ituu – maxxansitoota	publisher(s)	1
miidhag-aa/-duu – miidhagdoota	beautiful one(s)	1
miidham-aa/-tuu –	the disabled one(s)	9
ministira – ministiroota	minister(s)	1
mirga – mirgoota	right(s)	10
misaa'elii – misaa'eloota	missile(s)	1
mo'at-aa/-tuu – mo'attoota	winner(s)	3
mootummaa – mootummoota	government(s)	18
morkat-aa/-tuu –morkattoota	competitor(s)	2
morm-aa/-ituu – mormitoota	opposition group(s)	2
musurraa – mussurroota	bride(s)	1
nagaa eegsis-aa/-tuu – nagaa eegsistoota	peace keeper(s)	1
nama – namoota	person(s)	94
oggan-aa/-tuu – oggantoota	leader(s)	4
Oromoo – Oromoota	Oromo(s)	4
pirojektii – pirojektoota	piroject(s)	12
poolisii – poolisoota	police man/woman (men/women)	6
qo'at-aa/-tu – qo'attoota	researcher(s)	1
qonnaan bul-aa/-tuu – qonnaan bultoota	farmer(s)	1
qotat-aa/-tuu – qotattoota	person(s) who farm for self	94
qotee/qottee bul-aa/-tuu – qotee/qottee bultoota	farmer(s)	1
qottoo – qottoota	axe(s)	13
ragaa – ragoota	proof(s) or evidence(s)	1
rakkat-aa/-tuu – rakkattoota	poor one(s)	3
rakkina – rakkinoota	problem(s)	1
riqicha – riqichoota	bridge(s)	1
saayintistii – saayintistoota	scientist(s)	3
sababii – sababoota	reason(s)	1
sablammii – sablammoota	related group(s)	1
sirna – sirnoota	political system(s)	1
Shaabiyaa – Shaabiyoota	member(s) Eritrean pol party	5
taajjab-aa/-duu – taajjabdoota	observer(s) of elections	1
tajaajila – tajaajiloota	service(s)	1
tajaajilam-aa/-tuu – tajaajilamtoota	person(s) served	1

taphat-aa/-tuu – taphattoota	player(s) of a game	8
tiks-aa/-ituu – tiksitoota	herdsman (men-woman -women)	1
torban – torbanoota	week(s)	2
ummata – ummatoota	society(ties)	10
waamam-aa/-tuu – waamamtoota	person(s) accountable	1
waggaa – waggoota	year(s)	38
Walaayitaa – Walaayitoota	person(s) of Walaayita origin	1
waldaa – waldoota	meeting center(s)	1
wanbadee – wanbadoota	thug(s)	1
wanta – wantoota	thing(s)	2
weerar-aa/-tuu weerartoota	invader(s)	1
xirinyii – xirinyoota civet	cat(s)	5
yakkam-aa/-tuu – yakkamtoota	criminal(s)	2

List B: Plural Nouns that end in -ota [51 (18 4 %)]

Rule 1

Unlike Rule 2 under List A, the plural marker **-ota** is suffixed only when there is a **long vowel** in the syllable that immediately precedes the final syllable of a singular noun.

Examples:

Filisxeemii – Filisxeemota	Palestinian(s)
hoolaa – hoolota	sheep – sheep
hoteela – hoteelota	hotel(s)
Islaama – Islaamota	Moslem(s)
Jasiyuutii – Jasiyuutota	Jesuit(s)
misiyoonii – misiyoonota	Missionary(ries)
teessoo – teessota	address(es)

Rule 2

Like **-oota**, the plural marker **-ota** is suffixed only after getting rid of the final vowel/vowels of a singular noun

Examples:

kitaaba – kitaabota	book(s)
dhaalaa – dhaalota	heir(s)
eelee – eelota	griddle(s)
ankaaboo – ankaabota	gourd(s)
oftuultuu – oftuultota	chauvinist(s)

Rule 3

As in rule 3 under list A, here too, the plural is formed from agentive noun that refers to a female. Below is a list of all the plural nouns that end in **-oota**. These nouns

are from the December issues of *Bariisaa*. The list proves that Rule 2 under list B is 100% consistent. NB The agentive that refers to females comes after a slash. See rule 3 under list A for details regarding agentive.

Singular – Plural (Male/Female)	Gloss	f
abukaatoo – abukaatota	advocate(s)	1
Afrikaanii – Afrikaanota	African(s)	1
arjoom-aa/-tuu – arjoomtota	generous donor(s)	5
atileetii – atileetota	athletics	10
ayihuudii – ayihuudota	Jewish person(s)	2
ayyaana – ayyaanota	deity(ties); spirit(s)	1
baankii – baankota	bank(s)	10
bakka buutuu – bakka buuota		1
barsiis-aa/-tuu – barsiistota	teacher(s)	3
carraaq-aa/-xuu – carraaqxota	person(s) who strive(s)	2
daawwachiis-aa/-tuu – daawwachiiftota	tourist guide(s)	1
dhaal-aa/-tuu – dhaaltota	hair(s)	9
dhiira – dhiirota	man/men	1
dimokiraata – dimokraatota	democrat(s)	1
dipilomaatii – diplomaatota	diplomat(s)	1
doonii – doonota	ship(s)	1
dura taa'aa/dura teessuu – dura teessota	chair person(s)	1
duul-aa/-tuu – duultota	soldier(s)	1
eeg-aa/-duu – eegdota	guard(s)	1
embaasii – embaasota	embassy(sies)	2
fakkaataa – fakaaatota	picture(s)	1
Filisxeemii – Filisxeemota	Palestinian(s)	1
galaana – galaanota	river(s)	2
gargaar-aa/-tuu – gargaartota	aid giver(s)	1
hirmaat-aa/-tuu – hirmaattota	participant(s)	3
hoolaa – hoolota	sheep	2
hospitaala – hospitaalota	hospital(s)	6
Isilaama – Isilaamota	Muslim(s)	1
Itoophiyaanii – Itoophiyaanota	Ethiopian(s)	1
jiraat-aa/-tuu – jiraattoa	inhabitant(s)	4
Kambaataa – Kambaatota	person(s) of Kambaata nation	1
kara deem-aa/-tuu – kata deemtota	traveler(s)	1
Kiristaana – Kiristaanota	Christian(s)	1
kitaaba – kitaabota	book(s)	2
magaala – magaalota	city(ties)	11

miseensa – miseensota	member(s) of a party, etc.	19
misiyoona – misiiyoonota	missionary(ies)	1
mootii – mootota	chief(s)	1
oftuul-aa/-tuu – oftuultota	chauvinist(s)	1
ogeessa – ogeessota	professional(s)	17
ogeeyyii – ogeeyyota	profession(s)	8
qaama – qaamota	body(dies), i.e. group of persons	4
qondaala – qondaalota	leader(s)	1
raawwachiis-aa/-s(f)tuu – raawwachiiftota	executive(s)	1
saam-aa/-tuu –saamtota	looter(s)	1
seera – seeroota	law(s)	2
Sidaamoo – Sidaamota	person(s) of Sidaamo nation	1
taankii – taankota	tank(s)	1
tuuta – tuutota	team(s)	5
ulfaat-aa/-tuu – ulfaattota	respectable person(s)	2
waanta – waantota	thing(s)	5
walfaana yaadaa – walfaanota yaada	logical thinking	1

List C: Nouns that end in –wwan [84 (30.3%)]

This plural marker is not used in this writer's dialect. The following rules are based on his observation, not on his native ability

Rule 1

The plural marker **-wwan** is suffixed without removing the final vowel/vowels of the singular noun

Examples:

boolla – boollawwan	hole(s)
seena – seenaawwan	history(ies)
bakkee – bakkeewwan	field(s)
hojii – hojiiwwan	activity(ies)
kaayoo – kaayooowwan	objective(s)
biqiltuu – biqiltuuwwan	plant(s)

Rule 2

All **-wwan** ending plural nouns tallied are non-agentive

Examples:

dhootuu – dhootuuwwan	land mine(s)
odeeffannoo – odeeffannoowwan	piece(s) of information
sagantaa – sagantaawwan	program(s)
tu'oo – tu'ooowwan	pole(s)
uccuu – uccuuwwan	clothes

Here is the entire list of **-wwan**-ending plural nouns from the December issues of *Bariisa*

Singular – Plural	Gloss	f
ajjechaa – ajjechaawwan	killings(s)	1
baallama – baallamaawwan	appointment(s)	1
baatii – baatiiwwan	month(s)	1
baaxii – baaxiiwwan	roof(s)	1
bakkee – bakkeewwan	field(s)	10
balaa – balaawwan	accident(s)	1
ballaa – ballaawwan	blind (the blind)	1
balleessaa – baleessaawwan	mistake(s)	1
biqiltuu – biqiltuuwwan	plant(s)	3
boolla – boollaawwan	hole(s)	5
bu'aa – bu'aawwan	benefit(s)	1
bulchiinsa – bulchiinsaawwan	administration(s)	2
burqaa – burqaawwan	source(s)	5
buufata – buufataawwan	station(s)	5
caffee – caffeeewwan	parliament(s)	1
daandii – daandiiwwan	lane(s)	9
dambii – dambiiwwan	rule(s)	1
damee – dameewwan	branch(es)	1
dhaabbata – dhaabbataawwan	organization(s)	1
dhaddacha – dhaddachawwan	court(s)	1
dhibee – dhibeewwan	disease(s)	7
dirree – dirreeewwan	field(s)	1
duree – dureewwan	rich person(s)	1
eela – eelawwan	water hole(s)	1
embaasii – embaasiiwwan	embassy(ssies)	1
faayidaa – faayidaawwan	use(s)	1
fakkii – fakkiwwan	picture(s)	11
gaaffii – gaaffiiwwan	question(s)	3
gaaree – gaareewwan	team(s)	7
galchii – galchiiwwan	score(s) in soccer	9
galii – galiwwan	soccer goal(s)	3
galma – galmawwan	hall(s)	4
gamoo – gamoowwan	wall(s)	1
garee – gareewwan	team(s)	1
gocha – gochawwan	deed(s)	2
gosa – gosawwan	tribe(s)	1
haala – haalawwan	situation(s)	2
haatü – haatiiwwan	mother(s)	1

JOURNAL OF OROMO STUDIES

haatiwarraa-haatiwarraawwan	house wife(ves)	1
hambaa – hambaawwan	leftover(s)	1
haroo – haroowwan	lake(s)	3
hiree – hireewwan	share(s)	1
hojjii – hojiiwaan	activity(ies)	14
ijaarsa – ijaarsawwan	construction(s)	1
ijoollee – ijoolleewwan	children (ijoollee is pl, too)	1
ilbiisa – ilbiisawwan	germ(s)	3
ispoortii – ispoortiiwwan	sport(s)	5
jaallee – jaalleewwan	dear(s), sign of affection	1
jaatanii – jaataniiwwan	hurried activity(ties)	1
kaayyoo – kaayyoowwan	objective(s)	2
keellaa – keellaawwan	check-point(s)	7
koree – koreewwan	committee(s)	1
lammii – lamiiwwan	blood relation(s)	8
lukkuu – lukkuuwwan	chicken(s)	1
maatii – maatiiwwan	families	1
madaaliyaa-madaaliyaawwan	medal(s)	1
malli – malliwwan	tactic(s)	1
marsaa – marsaawwan	cyle(s)	1
miidhaa – miidhaawwan	injury(ries)	1
miiltoo – miiltoowwan	companion(s) on a journey	1
naannaa – naannaawwan	surrounding(s)	1
naannoo – naannoowwan	neighbor hood(s)	2
piraamidii – piraamidiiwwan	pyramid(s)	2
pirojecktii – pirojecktiiwwan	piroject(s)	2
qabeenyaa – qabeenyaawwan	resource(s)	2
qabxii – qabxiiwwan	point(s)	1
qorannoo – qorannoowwan	research(es)	1
ragaa – ragaawwan	evidence(s)	1
rakkoo – rakkoowwan	problem(s)	5
saawwaa – saawwan	cows/cows	3
sababii – sababiiwwan	reason(s)	4
sanyii – sanyiiwwan	seed(s)	8
siree – sireewwan	bed(s)	1
sochii – sochiiwwan	movement(s)	9
tajaajila – tajaajilawwan	service(s)	2
tapha – taphawwan	game(s)	4
tattaaffii – tattaaffiiwwan	effort(s)	1
waliigaltee – waliigalteewwan	understanding each other	2
walmorkii – walmorkiiwwan	competing with each other	20
wiirtuu – wiirtuuwwan	center(s)	1

xiyyeeffanna –xiyyeeffanawwan	focusing	3
yaada – yaadawwan	thought(s)	8
yaalii – yaaliwwan	intention(s)	4
yeeroo – yeeroowwan	time(s)	1

List D: Plural Nouns that end in -lee [27 (9.7 %)]

The plural marker **-lee**, which incidentally the speakers of this writer's dialect prefer to **-wwan**, is suffixed without removing the final vowel/vowels of the singular noun

Examples:

burqaa – burqaalee	source(s)
ulaagaa – ulaagaalee	criterion(criteria)
biiroo – biiroolee	office(s)

In rare cases, however, there is a deviation from this general principle. Sometimes, the final vowel is modified before suffixing **-lee**. For instance, the final “a” in “qaama” is replaced by “o” before suffixing **-lee**: qaama – qaamolee. Sometimes, another vowel is added to the already existing final vowel of a singular noun. Example: buufata becomes buufataalee. In some cases, one of the two final vowels is omitted: Example: jabbii (calf) becomes jabbilee (calves). In short, **-lee** is an erratic plural marker.

The following is a list of all **-lee** ending plural nouns, all taken from the December issues. Incidentally, like **-wwan**, all singular-plural nouns tallied are non agentive.

Singular – Plural	Gloss	f
aanaa – aanaalee	administrative district(s)	23
aanaa – aanolee	administrative district(s)	3
barruu – barruulee	minutes or written record(s)	2
biiroo – biiroolee	office(s)	2
buufata – buufataalee	station(s)	1
caasaa – caasaalee	organizational structure(s)	2
daandii – daandiilee	road(s)	1
damee – dameelee	branch(es)	1
dhaabbii – dhaabbilee	organization(s)	32
galmee – galmeelee	hall(s)	1
godina – godinaalee	borough(s)	12
hambaa – hamboolee	left over(s)	1
hayyuu – hayyuulee	elitist(s)	2
kitaaba – kitaabolee	book(s)	1
lammii – lammiilee	blood relation(s)	5
meeshaa – meeshaalee	products	19
naannoo – naannoolee	neighbor hood(s)	18
paartii – paartiilee	political party(ties)	4

qaama – qaamolee	body(dies)	4
qabxii – qabxiilee	point(s)	3
ragaa – ragaalee	evidence(s)	5
rakkoo – rakkoolee	problem(s)	16
sagantaa – sagantaalee	program(s)	3
sochii – sochiilee	movement(s)	3
sublammii – sublammiiilee	closely related group(s)	1
ulaagaa – ulaagaalee	criterion (criteria)	1
waajjira – waajjiraalee	office(s)	3

List E: Irregular Plural Nouns

The irregular plural nouns are those that do not fit into the **-oota**, **-ota**, **-wwan**, or **-lee** category. All the irregular plural nouns observed in the twenty-eight *Barisaa* newspapers are listed below:

Singular/Plural	Gloss	f
abbaa/abbootii	father(s)	58
bineen-sa/-tii/bineeyyi	wild animal(s)	6
biraa/ biro	other(s) pronoun?	94
daa'ima/daa'imman	child-children	93
dubra/dubran	girl(s)	1
farda/fardee	horse(s)	5
fayyadam-aa/-tuu fayyadamoo	beneficiary(ries)	3
gaangee/gaangolii	mule(s)	1
galma/galmee	hall(s)	4
haadha/haadholii	mother(s)	19
ijoollee	children	187
jaarsa/jaarsolii	old man(men)	25
laga/lagee	river(s)	22
maatii/maatii	family member(s)	63
mana/mannee	house(s)	292
muka/mukee	tree(s)	8
obbole-ssa/-ttii obbolaa	brother(s)/sister(s)	4
ogee-ssa/-ttii ogeeyyii	professional(s)	11
sa'a/loon	cow(s)/cattle	10
sa'a/saawwa	cow(s)/cattle	1
sa'a/saayya	cow(s)/cattle	3
shamara/shamarran	young girl(s)	2
wicoo/wicoolii	chick(s)	1

As shown above, the irregular forms apart, the plural of the countable nouns tallied is formed by adding - **oota**, - **ota**, - **wwan**, or - **lee**. But the uncountable or mass nouns do not have plural form. Such nouns include:

- (a) **Fluids or semi-fluids:** aannan (milk), araqee (liquor), bishaan (water), bokkaa (rain), buna (coffee), dafqa (sweat), dhadhaa (butter), farsoo (beer), gorora (saliva), imimmaan (sweat), marqaa (porridge), shaayee (tea).
- (b) **Solids:** biyyoo (soil), buddeena (bread), foon (meat), jirbii (cotton), lafa (land)
- (c) **Gases:** aara (smoke), afuura (breath).
- (d) **Particles:** atara (pea), baaqilaa (broad bean), boloqee/dafee (bean) daakuu (flour), daaraa (ash), garbuu (barley), owwaara (dust), qamadii (wheat), shumburaa (chick-pea).
- (e) **Abstractions:** bareedina/miidhagina (beauty), beekumsa (knowledge), gammachuu (happiness), kolfa (laughter), mugaatii (dozing off), rafiitii (sleep), wal'aalina (ignorance).

Some of the above mass nouns, especially the ones under (a), (b), and (d), may be followed by unit expressions such as kilograms, or any container in which they are placed and measured. But the form of the unit used for measuring it is not pluralized. For instance, in “bishaan uuroo lama” (*two jar of water) the form of the unit “uuroo” remains intact. So does “kiiloo” in kaleessa dhadhaa kiiloo kudhanin bite (Yesterday I bought ten kilograms of butter).

List F: Plural Adjectives and Determiners

An adjective normally follows the word it modifies. If the word it modifies is singular, the adjective, too, has to be singular. Likewise, if the modified is plural the adjective has to be plural also.

Example:

Mana guddaa qaba (House big he has)

Mannee guguddoo/gurguddoo/guguddaa qaba (Houses big he has)

Gender is marked in adjectives in Afaan Oromo. In some adjectives, the feminine form is inflected to mark gender.

Examples:

sangaa diimaa (ox red)

sa'a diimtuu (cow red)

Others have the same form for both feminine and masculine.

sangaa adii (ox white)

sa'a adii (cow white)

Adjectives usually form their plural as follows:

(a) by duplicating the first syllable and geminating the initial consonant in the 1st syllable.

Examples:

dhibee darbaa (disease contagious)

dhibeewwan daddarboo (diseases contagious)

(b) by not changing form: adjectives that modify non count/mass nouns are singular.

Examples:

bishaan booruu (water muddy)

foon dheedhii (meat raw)

(c) in the sample being reported, by suffixing **-oo, -oota, -yyii**

Examples:

jabaa – jaboo

qaqqaloo – qaqqalloota

farra – farroota

hoji dhabeessa – hoji dhabeeyyii

The following list of singular-plural adjectives and determiner-determiners are obtained from the twenty-eight newspapers. As can be seen in the list, the same singular form can have different plural forms:

Singular (Male/Female)	Plural	Gloss	f
ala gal-aa/-tuu	ala galeeyyii	homeless person(s)	1
badaa	badoo	spoiled	1
bal'aa	bal'oo	wide	1
barbaachisaa	barbaachisoo	necessary	1
beek-aa/-tuu	beekoo	knowledgeable	1
beekam-aa/-tuu	bebbeekamoo	well known	1
beekam-aa/-tuu	beekamoo	well known	16
bitam-aa/-tuu	bitamoo	bribed person(s)	1
cab-aa/-duu	caccaboo	broken	1
cim-aa/-tuu	ciccim-aa/-tuu	strong	1
cimaa	ciccimmoo	strong	14
cimaa	cimoo	strong	3
dadhab-aa/-duu	dadhaboo	weak(the weak)	1
darbaa	daddarboo	transmittable	11
dargaggee-ssa/-ttii	dargaggoota/dargaggoo	young person(s)	31
diimaa	diddiimaa	red	1
dura	dursoo	prior	3
duree-ssa/-ttii	dureeyyii	rich(the rich)	13
duubatti haf-aa/-tuu	dubatti hafoo	backward	1

farra	farroota	sinister	1
fayya bulee-ssa/-ttii	fayya buleeyyii	healthy	1
fayyaqabee-ssa/-ttii	fayyaqabeeyyii	healthy	1
furdaa	fufurdoota	fat	1
gabaabaa	gaggabaaboo	short	2
gaggab-aa/-duu	gaggaboo	greedy	1
gara laafe-ssa/-ttii	garalaafeyyii	kind hearted	1
gargaaram-aa/-tuu	gargaaramoo	assisted	1
gog-aa/-duu	goggogaa	dried	6
guddaa	guguddaa	big/large	1
guddaa	guguddoo	big/large	42
guddaa	gurgddoo	big/large	8
haaraa	hahaarawaa	new	3
haaraa	hahaaroo	new	2
hamaa	hamoo	tough	2
hiyyee-ssa/-ttii	hiyyeeyyii	poor(the poor)	5
hoji dhabee-ssa/-ttii	hojiddhabeeeyyii	unemployed	3
humna dhabee-ssa/-ttii	humnaddhabeeeyyii	powerless	1
jaal'atam-aa/-tuu	jaal'atamoo	loved	1
jab-aa/-duu	jaboo	strong(the strong)	1
jab-aa/-duu	jajjaboo	strong(the strong)	3
kabajam-aa/-tuu	kabajamoo	(the)respectable	1
kana	kanneen	this/these	523
kun	kunnee	this/these	127
kun	kunnii	this/these	118
kun	kunnuu	this/these	1
lubbuqab-eessa/-ttii	lubbu qabeeyyi	living thing(s)	2
olaan-aa/-tuu	olaanoo	high	4
qajeel-aa/-tuu	qajeelloo	straightforward	3
qallaa	qaqqalloota	thin	1
qophaayaa	qophaawoo	ready	1
seena qabee-ssa/-ttii	seenaqabeeyyii	history-maker(s)	1
soore-ssa/-ttii	sooreeyyii	rich (the rich)	1
ulfaa-taa/-tuu	ulfaatoo	(the) respectable	1
xaxam-aa/-tuu	xaxamoo	tangled	1
xinnaa	xixinnaa	the small one(s)	1
xiqqaa	xixiqqaa	small one(s)	14
xiqqoo	xixiqqoo	small one(s)	21

As can be seen from List F, some singular adjectives have more than one plural form. The reason for this could be the different linguistic backgrounds from which each contributor to the newspaper comes. In such cases, unless they believe there is a shade of difference in

meaning, the editors have an excellent opportunity to encourage some sort of uniformity because in language there should be conformity

The above is true for nouns also. Here is a list of a singular noun that has two or more plural forms:

daandii – daandilee, daandiiwwan
damee – dameelee, dameewwan
galma – galmee, galmeelee, galmeewwan
gosa – gosoota, gosawwan
hambaa – hamboolee, hambaawwan
haadha – haadhoolii, haatiiwwan
lammii – lammiilee, lammiiwwan
naannoo – naannolee, naannoowwan
pirojektii – pirojektoota, pirojektiiwwan
qabxii – qabxiilee, qabxiwwan
ragaa – ragoota, ragaalee, ragaawwan
rakkoo – rakkoolee, rakkoowwan
sababii – sababoota, sababiiwwan
sochii – sochiilee, sochiiwwan

Conclusions

This is an ongoing research. Making an accurate conclusion is not possible until data from different regions of Oromiyaa are collected. However, on the basis of the data tallied from the four issues of *Bariisaa* newspaper, the most commonly used plural markers in Afaan Oromo are **-oota** (41.4%), **-wwan** (30.2%), **-ota** (18.7%), and **-lee** (9.7%). Another important finding is that it is now possible to predict the environment in which **-oota** and **-ota** can occur. Without any exception, **-oota** is suffixed only when there is a short vowel in the syllable that immediately precedes the final syllable of a singular noun. On the contrary, the plural marker **-ota** is suffixed only when there is a long vowel in the syllable that immediately precedes the final syllable of a singular noun. Also, it has been possible to collect and present a number of irregular nouns and adjectives from the twenty-eight newspapers tallied.

Pronunciation Key

Consonants

Fifteen consonant symbols (and the sound they represent) are similar to those of the English letters. They are **b, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, r, s, t, w, y**

Three consonants are not English sounds. They are

c – is glottalized palatal
q – is glottalized velar
x – is glottalized alveolar dental

Five consonants are diagraphs. They are

ch – is the same as “ch” in church

dh – is glottalized alveolar

ny – is the same as “gn” in cognac; it is nasal, palatal

ph – is glottalized labial

sh – is the same as “sh” in dish

Vowels

There are five short and five long vowels.

Short Vowels: a, e, i, o, u

a – is a ubiquitous sound that is pronounced as the **u** in the English word **mumble**. Word finally, however, it is pronounced as the **a** in **ago**. In other words, it is a schwa or /ʊ/ word finally. Example: *muka* /mukʊ/ (wood)

e – is pronounced as the **e** in the English word **desk**, e.g., *gemmoo*

i – is pronounced as the **i** in the English word **sit**, e.g., *bituu*

o – is pronounced as the **o** in **lost** (BBC English), e.g., *bor*

u – is pronounced as the **u** in the English word **put**, e.g., *butii*

Long Vowels: aa, ee, ii, oo, uu

aa – is pronounced approximately as in **farm**, e.g., *mataa*

ee – is pronounced approximately as in **care**, e.g., *beela*

ii – is pronounced approximately as in **deep**, e.g., *aiisuu*

oo – is pronounced approximately as in **boat**, e.g., *booru*

uu – is pronounced approximately as in **moon**, e.g., *buutii*

Human Rights Violations and Famine in Ethiopia

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Abstract

Framing Ethiopian famines (particularly famine in Oromia) within the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, I argue that the root cause of the cyclic occurrence of famine that the world community has witnessed in 1972/73, 1985/86, 1999/2000 and recently in 2002/2003 is a product of human rights violations. Historical analyses show that famine in Oromia is very similar to the great Irish and the Indian famines under British colonial rule. After an introduction to the history of colonial rule in Oromia, I argue that principal ideas of human rights are interwoven with concepts of empowerment such that, if the people in Oromia were empowered in their affairs, they could have minimized the magnitude of the problem even if they could not totally avert famine.

I. Introduction

Human rights and sustainable human development are interrelated and interdependent. Lately, development is understood as sustainable human development and it situates people at the center. Humans are seen as both a means and an end of development.¹ In other words, development addresses human beings in relation to both resource management and participation.²

A related idea is the concept of empowerment. Human rights can be understood as part of Freire's idea of empowerment.³ In 1972, the Brazilian scholar Paulo Freire developed a way of learning and teaching in which he encouraged students to participate and which he referred to as knowledge production and validation. Freire's ideas emphasized the identification of community needs by the community itself and collective action to promote social change. In Freirean terms, freedom means unmasking the social and cultural mechanism of power as a basis for engagement in emancipatory action. Freire's theory implies that public problems are very often defined by influences and how laws and policies are constructed and interpreted. This suggests that people need to unmask hidden realities in order to define and redefine their problems in order to achieve freedom. As Freire argued, realities are socially constructed and story telling is a powerful means for changing mind-sets. This type of empowerment

¹ United Nations Development Program (January 1998), "Integrating human rights with sustainable development," A UNDP policy document.

² <http://www.undp.org/governance/humanrights.htm>

³ Freire, Paulo (1972), "Pedagogy of the Oppressed, New York: Seabury Press.

facilitates opportunities for individuals and groups to work creatively to restore their wellbeing. This concept of empowerment has been adopted, broadened, and redefined as part of the movement to authorize the people on their affairs.⁴

Consistent with Freire's idea of empowerment, Amartya Sen emphasizes that freedom of one kind assists the realization of freedom of other kinds⁵ In his perspective, sustainable socio-economic transformation requires a government that is democratic both in form and substance. An example used by Sen is India's experience as a country plagued by famine during colonial times. India changed its destiny after opting for democracy, though it continues to experience crop failures Sen like Freire, argues that democratic governance has to be transparent and accountable to its people. In Sen's view, famine is not just a biological phenomenon measured in terms of individual or collective body mass or in the number of deaths; rather, it is a long-term systemic capacity deprivation and it is preventable tragedy.

My argument in this paper follows that of Sen. I contend that famines occur in situations involving systemic human rights violations, and I use the experience of the Ethiopian Empire to illustrate the point that famine is the result of these systemic capacity deprivations. The incapacitating effects of human rights violations can be wide. The scope of this paper is, however, limited to the rights defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and its provisions. For example, the UDHR states that everyone has the right to education. In this case, I will discuss how unfulfilled human rights to education have affected the Oromo people's capacities for creativity. Taken together, my argument is that compliance with these principles of human rights would "empower" the subjugated peoples in the Ethiopian Empire and allow them to break out of the cycle of famine.

Since 1972, famine has affected Ethiopia several times. For the 1972/73 famine, the media, political analysts, and citizens blamed Emperor Haile Selassie and the monarchic system. This famine triggered the student movement that led to the collapse of the monarchy. The 1985/86 famine was blamed on an expensive and ill-perceived socialist strategy of development and the civil war initiated by the military regime⁶ Following the collapse of the Socialist block, the military government of Ethiopia also crumbled in 1991. At this time, one of the guerilla forces, the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF), took power in Ethiopia. Thereafter, famine has visited Ethiopia in 1994/95 and 1999/2000. As this paper is being written in 2002/2003, over 15 million people are dependent on food donated from the Western world. This recurrence of famine in Ethiopia has initiated my examination of the explanations given by consecutive Ethiopian regimes for these famines.

This paper is divided into two major parts. Focusing on its recurrent famines, the first part looks at the historical development of Ethiopia. In this section, I will examine the political

⁴ Bruce G. Simons-Morton & Aria Davis Crump (1996), "Empowerment: The Process and the Outcome," *Health Education Quarterly*, Vol. 23(3): 290-292.

⁵ Sen, Amartyan (1999), *Development as Freedom*, Anchor Books, A Division of Random House, Inc New York, p. 123.

⁶ Keller, Edmond J (1992), "Drought, War, and the Politics of Famine in Ethiopia and Eritrea," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 30(4) 609-624

power relations in Ethiopia that contribute to political instability, war, environmental degradation and famine. The second section examines human rights provisions of the UNDHR and argues that compliance with these principles is essential to avert famine.

II. A Critical History of Ethiopia

I. A History of Slave Trafficking and Genocide

Ethiopia is the name that was eventually given to the geographic region created when Abyssinia, a cluster of small kingdoms in northeast Africa, expanded in the mid-1800s by conquering independent nations in the region using firearms provided by European powers.⁷ Thus, Ethiopia is a multinational empire. The word Ethiopia reflects its colonial nature, in that it is derived from two Greek words, *aitho* ('burn') and *ops* ('face').⁸ Therefore, Ethiopia means 'burned face people'. In this case, the name is a manifestation of a desire to control and manipulate Abyssinia, the only African country that participated in the 1884/85 Berlin Conference, historically known as the "scramble for Africa." European colonialists endorsed and even facilitated the Abyssinian desire to be an empire builder in the Horn of Africa.

Messay Kebede, an Abyssinian scholar, argues that the African colonial power of Abyssinia competed with European empire builders. According to Kebede, the expectations of the European colonizers from Abyssinia were very high. He quotes a Paris Journal, *La Liberté*: "All European countries will be obliged to make a place for this new brother who steps forth ready to play in the dark continent the role of Japan in the Far East."⁹ Herbert Blundell, in his narrative about his journey through Abyssinia to the Nile, suggests that although the British and the French had agreed not to lay a hand on Harar (Eastern Oromia) they were 'sniffing around' for it when the city of Harar was annexed by Abyssinia. Blundell described it this way: "Harar, in fact, is a bone dropped by England while she was growling at France and picked from under their noses by Abyssinia."¹⁰

The involvement of Abyssinia in human trafficking rivaled their European counterparts. According to Chris Prouty and colleagues,¹¹ between the years 1800 and 1850, Abyssinia supplied over 1,250,000 people to the European slave market. The people who were sold into slavery were those who were conquered by Abyssinians in the given time intervals and after. In 1935, when Italy invaded Ethiopia, they claimed to have abolished slavery and reported that 125,000 were freed and placed in the village of Liberty. On April 21, 1919, a US diplomat wrote:

⁷ Holcomb, Bonnie and Ibssa, Sisay (1990), *The Invention of Ethiopia, The Making of a Dependent Colonial State in North Africa*, Trenton, NJ: The Red Sea Press.

⁸ Catholic Encyclopedia <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05566a.htm>.

⁹ Addis Tribune Online, <http://www.addistribune.com>

¹⁰ Blundell, Herbert (1900), "A Journey Through Abyssinia to The Nile," *The Geographic Journal*, No. 2, February, XV p101

¹¹ Chris Prouty and Eugene Rosenfeld (1981), *Historical Dictionary of Ethiopia*, London: The Scarecrow Press

Much of the present slave-raiding is said to occur among the Boran [Oromo] people in southern Abyssinia, in Kaffa province, and in the region of Lake Rudolph on both sides of frontier. The large and rich province of Kaffa is said to have been converted in a few years from a land of industrious people producing great quantities of agricultural and pastoral products, into a land of wilderness with only a few people remaining, and these spending their time hidden in the jungle to escape the notice of raiding or marauding bands of so-called Abyssinian soldiers.¹²

Bulcha suggests that Horn of Africa slave trade was a joint entrepreneurship between Christian Abyssinia and the Moslem Arabian Peninsula. Bulcha states that the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 brought northeast Africa nearer to European human traffickers who supplied the Abyssinian rulers with firearms which they paid for with revenue collected from the slave trade and which they used to expand their colonial lands.¹³ According to Newman, Plowden, who was head of the British forces sent to help the Abyssinian king Theodros, was killed in one of the campaigns waged against the Oromo. Newman stated in 1936 that in the war against the Galla, Theodros used various punishments such as cutting off either or both hands or feet, with or without the gouging out of the eyes which had long been a prominent feature in Ethiopian warfare and was not yet considered out of date.¹⁴ On the population of the region before and after the Abyssinian colonial wars, Newman comments:

The extent to which these areas have been depopulated is shown by the fact that prior to its conquest, the population of Kaffa was estimated at 1,500,000, but owing to the slave trade and removal of the population by [the] gabar system, it has been reduced to 20,000. In the same way, the slave trade in men, women, and children has so reduced the population of Gimirra that dropped in five years from 100,000 to 20,000 inhabitants.¹⁵

Between 1850 and 1870, the French historian Martial de Salviac estimated that the Oromo population was about 10 million. In 1900 he reported that only half survived the Abyssinian war of occupation.¹⁶ Similarly, Gelmo Abbas, an Oromo historian, reported indiscriminate killing of Oromos in the Arsi region by Abyssinian King Minilik II. In the village known as Anolee, Minilik II had mutilated the hands of the Oromo men and the breasts of Oromo women indiscriminately.

¹² Starrett, Steffanson & Starrett, Ronald, (1976), Documents on Ethiopian Politics, Vol. -I, The Decline of Menilik II to the Emergence of Ras Tafari, later known as Haile Selassie: 1910-1919, Salisbury, N.C, Documentary Publications p 180

¹³ Bulcha, Mekuria (2002), *The Making of the Oromo Diaspora, A Historical Sociology of Forced Migration*, Minneapolis, Minnesota, Kirk House Publishers.

¹⁴ Newman, E.W.P., *Ethiopian Realities*, Allen and Unwin, London, 1936 pp:19 and 26

¹⁵ *Ibid.* page 93-94.

¹⁶ de Slaviac cited in Gadaa Melba (1980), *Oromia: An Introduction*, Khartoum, Sudan Independent Publisher.

As the Abyssinians took control of certain regions, they evicted the local people and stationed their army on the top of hills to make sure they could see the enemy from a distance. Gradually, these military garrisons became centers of colonial power with colonial names. For example, the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa is a colonial name for Finfine

As it was and is the case in many colonized countries, the Oromo people and the other indigenous people who were conquered by Abyssinia lost the right to own their land and resources. According to Melba Gadaa,¹⁷ the Abyssinians and their churches owned 75 percent of the lands in Oromia until 1975 despite the fact that their population was insignificant. Abyssinia permitted only a few individuals who were known as collaborators and agents to own the remaining 25 percent of the farmland. As a result, Oromo farmers had to give one quarter of all their harvests each year to the Abyssinians. In other regions of the Empire, the situation was reported to be even worse than the Oromo case. For example, on April 12, 1919, an American diplomat wrote:

All true Abyssinians are soldiers, and the entire country is thus divided among them. No soldier works, but is supported by peasants living in the particular district allotted to him as chief. He not only collects his own living from the peasants, but collects a small percentage (nominally 10%) of the results of their labor which he passes on to his immediate chief; and the process theoretically continues from smaller to greater chiefs until the emperor is reached. ... There is accordingly much injustice to peasants, who are actually no more than serfs. Most of these serfs are not true Abyssinians, but are member of the Galla, Dankali, Somali, and other subject tribes conquered in time past by the Christian Abyssinians.¹⁸

2. Contemporary Ethiopian Governance and Language Policy

The current Ethiopian regime presents itself as a democratic government and claims that the empire that was built at the beginning of last century is a federal state. It is crucial to examine and understand the constitution of the country in terms of language policies to understand whether it is an empire or a federal state. Presently, the Ethiopian Empire stretches between 3.8° and 14.8° latitude and 32° and 48° longitude. The empire constitutes nine regional governments which are theoretically vested with authority for self-administration: Afar, Amahara, Benshangul/Gumuz, Gambella, Harari, Oromiya, Somali, and Tigray. It also includes Southern nations and nationalities and peoples as well as two chartered cities, Addis Ababa and Dire-Dawa (see, fig 1)

The Oromia region surrounds the Dire-Dawa administrative council (see, fig 2), the Addis Ababa (Finfine) administrative region, and Harari. In all cases, Amaharic is the working language. However, in the city of Dire-Dawa, 48 percent of the residents are Oromo, 27.7

¹⁷ Gadaa Melba (1988), *Oromia: An Introduction*, Khartoum, Sudan, Independent Publisher.

¹⁸ Starrett Steffansn and Starrett, Ronald (1976), "Documents on Ethiopian Politics," Vol-I, *The Decline of Menilik II to the emergence of Ras Tafari, later known as Haile Selassie 1910-1919*, Salisbury, N.C., Documentary Publications.

percent are Amhara, 13.9 percent Somali, and the rest belong to other groups. The ethnic composition of the Harari national regional state is 52.3 percent Oromo, 32.6 percent Amhara, 7.1 percent Harari and 3.2 percent Gurages. As one can see from figures 1 and 2, the above-mentioned cities are surrounded by Oromos region. That is, the majority of the residents of these cities are Oromo nationals who have aspirations to be part of Oromia.

Figure 1

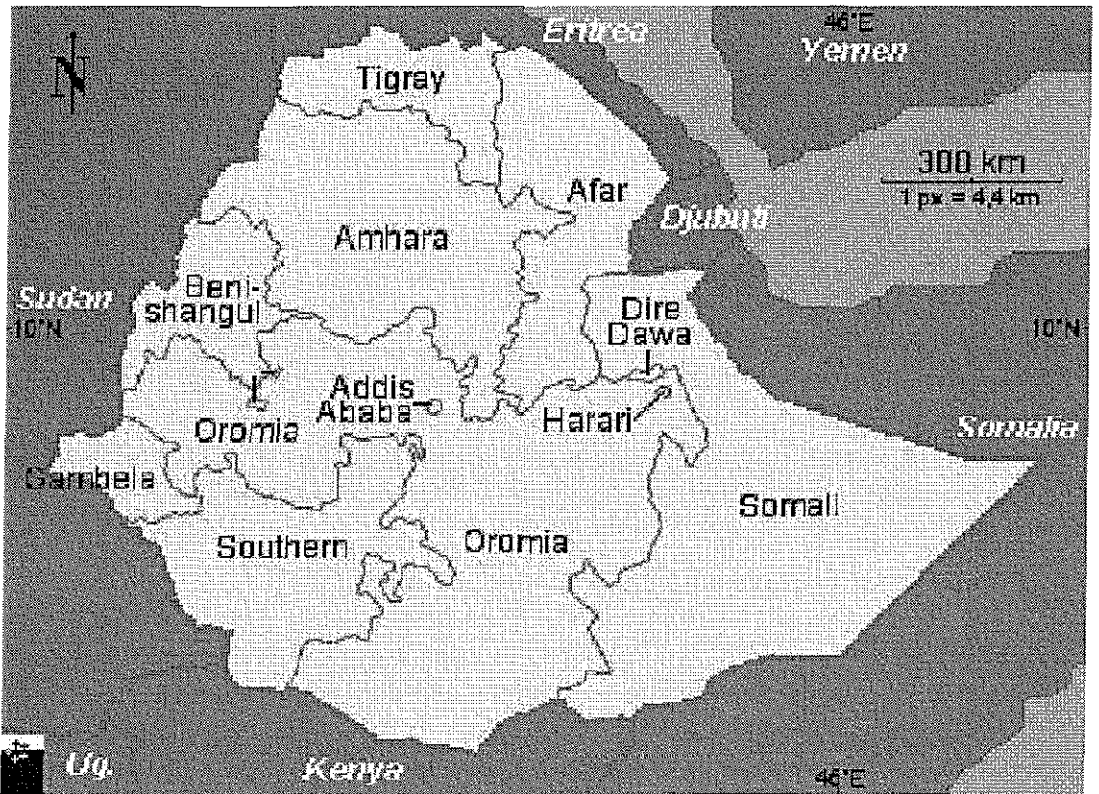


Figure 1 shows regional boundaries of Ethiopia as of TPLF government

Figure 2

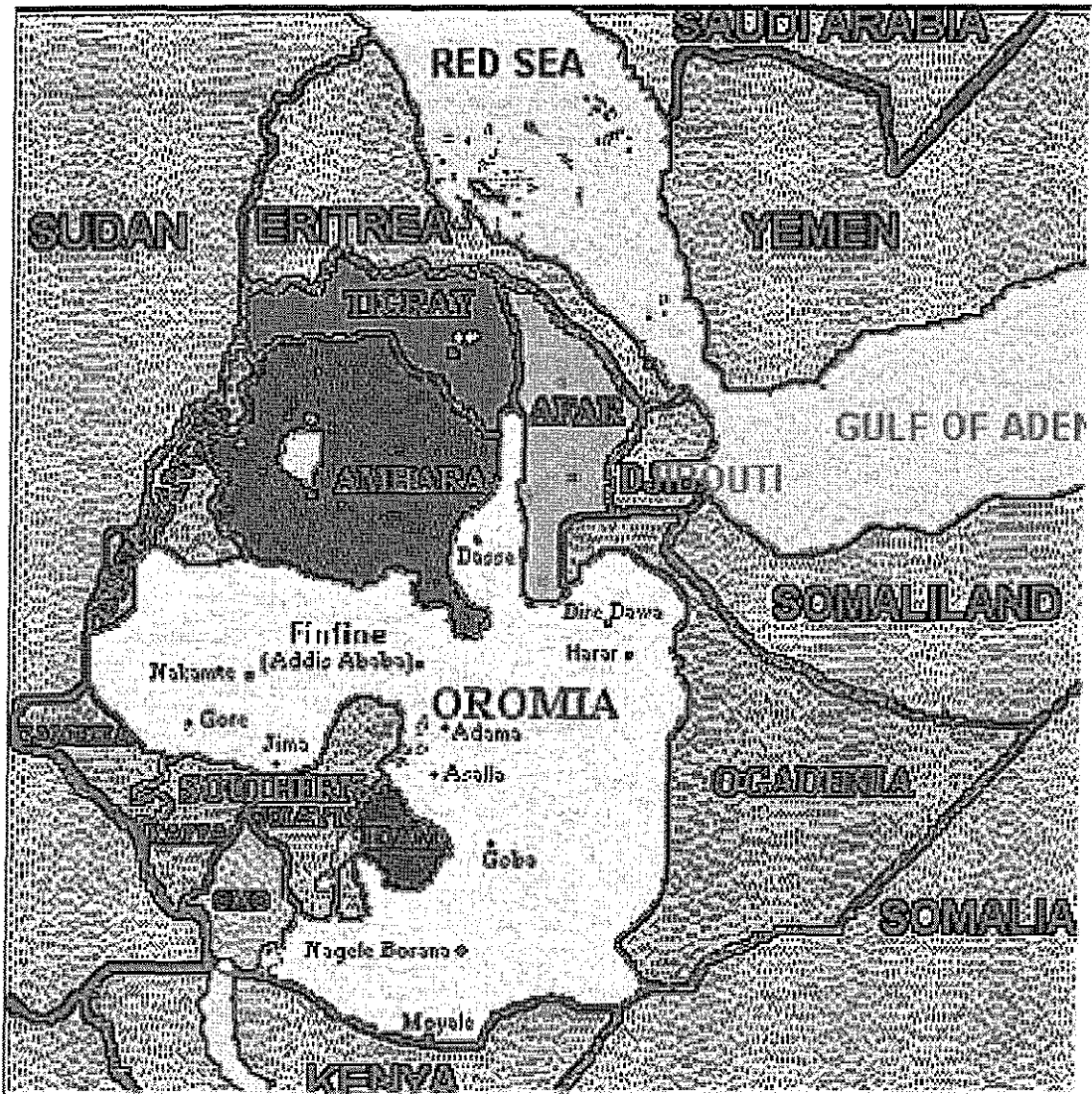


Figure 2 shows regional boundaries as of OLF the main opposition party.

In colonial conquest and in the quest for freedom, the question of language is obviously of great importance. One of the areas where Abyssinian colonial power relations can be clearly seen is in language policy. In Ethiopia, there are three main language groups: Cushitic, Abyssinian, (Semitic), and Nilotic. The Cushitic language groups are the most popular and they share common grammatical structures and vocabularies. The Abyssinian language group is the second largest. Though it is less popular than *Afaan Oromo*, Amharic is the national or working language. Cushitic and Nilotic language groups are indigenous to Africa, while Abyssinian languages are from Asia Minor.

Until 1991, no other languages, but Amharic was used in government offices and work. The most recent constitution, adopted on December 8, 1994, states that the working language of the Federal Government of Ethiopia is Amharic.¹⁹ The same constitution allows selected regional administrations such as Afar, Amhara, Oromia, Somali, and Tigray to use their own languages as working languages. However, three administrative regions, Benshangul/Gumuz, Gambella and the Southern Nations and Nationalities with a population of over 12 million people and the two chartered cities (Addis Ababa and Dire-Dawa), are denied the right to use their local languages. They are required to use Amharic as a working language, though the great majority of the people in the region do not speak it.

3. History of Famine in Ethiopia

As mentioned above, in 1972/73, Northern Oromia (Wollo) was affected by a famine which claimed the lives of over 200,000 people, mostly women and children. The majority of the victims were Oromo and Afar people.²⁰ Emperor Haile Selassie who was part of the Amhara ruling class kept the situation secret from the local and international media and prohibited movements from the famine-affected area of the North to the fertile region of the South and central regions of Oromia.²¹ The Oromo and the Afar people in Wollo were struggling against the regime as they reclaimed the rights to lands confiscated by the ruling class. As the struggle continued for several years, it triggered the 1972/73 famine.

The 1984/85 famine was the result of a systemic punishment in which the military government of Ethiopia attempted to win the war with TPLF forces. Hendrie has commented that the 1984/5 Ethiopian famine was the result of a situation involving internal warfare or violence. By her observation, the worst-hit regions were Tigray, Wollo and to a lesser degree, Eritrea and Gonder. Accordingly, rebel activity hampered distribution of emergency foods in all these areas.²² Clay and Holcomb have given a detailed information about the situation, making it clear that this famine was the direct consequence of government programs that adversely affected food production in the Oromia region. Among the government policies that affected food production were conscriptions to the military which involved imprisonment and killings, which in turn led to a decline in the labor force.²³ Solberg noted that, as the people in the given regions were starving, the Ethiopian government celebrated its tenth anniversary on which they spent approximately 200 million US dollars.²⁴

¹⁹ Ethiopian Constitution adopted December 8, 1994, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

²⁰ Mohammed Hassen (2001), *Oromo Nationalism and The Ethiopian State: Presented at: Remaking Cultural Identities in the Horn of Africa A Workshop on and Beyond Nation-States*, Columbia University, April 6, 2001

²¹ Sen, Amartya (1981), *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, page 96

²² Hendrie, Barbara (1997), "Knowledge and Power: A Critique of an International Relief Operation" *Disasters*, 21(1):57-76

²³ Clay, Jason and Bonnie Holcomb (1986), *Politics and The Ethiopian Famine 1984-1985*, Cambridge, MA, Cultural Survival Inc

²⁴ Solberg, Richard (1991), *Miracle in Ethiopia: A Partnership Response to Famine*, New York, Friendship Press

The 1999/2000 famine occurred because of Ethiopia's war with Eritrea in which over 10 million people were affected by the famine, most of them not Tigray nationals. Several donors were reluctant to provide food, as they did not want to be seen subsidizing the war²⁵ In 2002, after over a decade of massive imprisonment, harassment and killings in Oromia by Tigrayan Liberation Front (TPLF) forces and after two years of war with Eritrea that claimed the lives of over 100,000 people and \$3 billion US, 15 million people faced starvation Oromia is the worst-hit region in what is referred to as a "Green Famine"²⁶ To understand the problem, one needs to understand the Ethiopian political system. The nationality in power is not the nationality that is affected most by the recent famine.

As the 2002 Ethiopian famine is publicized, Alibi Idang, the Editor of the Daily Trust (Abuja) expressed his discontent with Ethiopian leaders about the cyclic occurrence of famine: We must not cover up this truth in an attempt to appear socially correct I know that all religions teach about charity or the need to be our brothers' keeper. I am also aware that kindness does not only consist in giving money and food. . . [T]he best gift may be ideas And this is what I am offering to Ethiopians: wear your thinking cap, think hard and you will find a solution to your perennial hunger . . . We love to fight meaningless wars and consume products that are harmful to our health . . . In a land where the majority of the people are poor and malnourished, you will behold magnificent palaces in which the dining tables are weighed down by exotic and expensive foods and fruits²⁷ Idang also offered advice for the people who would be willing to help Ethiopia during the famine

This is a time that hard and unpleasant truth will help Ethiopia more than appealing to the people's sense of generosity The world will do Ethiopia a great good if it shows that blessed, but unhappy country how it can fish for itself rather than depend on miserable fish offerings

4. Forest Fire and Preparation for the 1999/2000 Ethio-Eritrean War

In 1999, the opposition parties and the public charged the TPLF government with deliberately burning natural forests in Oromia²⁸ Students concerned about the environmental and social impacts of such forest burnings organized themselves to fight the fire, first in Ambo, then in many other cities However, the Ethiopian government, alleged to be responsible for the fire that consumed over a million hectares of forests banned students from fighting the fire To silence those concerned, the government security forces killed two, wounded six, and detained over 1000 students in Ambo alone In April 2000, thousands of students and hundreds of teachers were kidnapped and disappeared from their schools, dormitories, and

²⁵ Hammond, Laura and Maxwell, Daniel (2002), "The Ethiopian Crisis of 1999-2000: Lessons Learned, Questions Unanswered" *Disaster* 26(3): 262-279

²⁶ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/2307369.stm>

²⁷ Idang Alibi Editorial, Daily Trust Nov 30, 2002, <http://www.allafrica.com/stories/printable/200211300144.html>

²⁸ <http://www.oromia.org/Articles/article031.htm>

streets in several cities and towns of Oromia²⁹ The fire resulted in immense ecological and economic damage It had immediate and enormous future impact on Oromia and regions beyond

The TPLF government's motive in burning the natural forests of Oromia was explained as military strategy—that they were preparing for the war against Eritrea They burned Oromian forests for over three months on the pretext of preventing the forest from serving as a hiding place for guerilla forces However, the Oromo people see the forest as their source of food and that they are socially and spiritually connected with it The forest fire destabilized thousands of people as it consumed their homes, farms, and farm animals Shortly after, the government of Ethiopia declared that millions of people would die if the international community did not provide food for the region affected by the fire As very often it happens, the world community poured in food donations without questioning the root cause of the problem However, while the world community poured in emergency food to the affected regions and encouraged the settling of the border dispute peacefully with Eritrea, the Ethiopian government started one of the bloodiest wars recorded in history As millions of people, mainly Somali and the Oromo, were starving to death, healthy young Oromo men were forced to die in senseless and unnecessary battles

More than a year after Ethiopia and Eritrea signed a cease-fire agreement ending their brutal two and a half-year border conflict, it was reported that hundreds of bodies of soldiers were still lying at the front line The United Nations has appealed to both countries to collect the bodies from the front lines Reflecting on the extent to which the regimes of these states are irresponsible to their people, UN spokesman Jean Victor stated in a diplomatic language: "These are the remains of human beings who had families countries, and were people"³⁰

5. Climate and Natural Environment of Oromia

To avoid taking responsibility and being held accountable, consecutive Ethiopian regimes justify the cause of famine in terms of the environment To refute these rationalizations, I would like to briefly review the climate and environmental conditions in Oromia, the area that is currently affected the most by the famine In 1884, Ravenstein documented the environment of the Horn of Africa He reported "there exists no region on the continent equal in extent or richer in promise of reward to a bold explorer than the country of the Somal and Galla [Oromo]"³¹ Eleven years later, Donaldson Smith concurred with Revenstein and suggested that the country as a whole and the soil in this region would delight the heart of an English farmer³² In 1900, Herbert Blundell gave descriptive evidence about the climate, soil, population and capacities of that rich region of Oromia that had just fallen under Abyssinia

²⁹ Personal communication with student protesters, 2000.

³⁰ Nita Bhalla, BBC News, "UN in Horn corpse appeal" October 19, 2001.

³¹ Ravenstein E.G. (1884), Somal and Galla Land; Embodying Information Collected by Rev. Thomas Wakefield", *Journal of the "Royal Geographical Society Proceedings*, N.S.6.

³² Donaldson Smith (1895), "Dr. Donaldson Smith's Expedition to Somaliland," *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V, Feb. 124-129.

rule. Based on these observations, he presumed that the region would some day prove a great acquisition not only to Abyssinia, but also, to bordering countries.³³ Referring to the Oromo people, he said, they were producers and cultivators, and an industrious folk. Further, he stated that if they were not so oppressed and heavily taxed by the Abyssinians, they would produce even more.³⁴

Writing about the environmental policy of Ethiopia, Hoben affirms that Ethiopia is relatively well-endowed with natural resources by African standards. He also observed that indigenous southern Ethiopia farming systems were more sustainable previous to the past century when they were altered by Abyssinian conquest. Hobben witnessed that until 1975, indigenous people were forced to give their labor to Abyssinians conquerors. This put pressure on the local environment, as the Abyssinians did not intend to maintain and enhance the long-term productivity of the land. The dominant worldviews of northern Ethiopian (Amhara and Tigrean) societies focus on military rather than agricultural affairs.³⁵ In other words, Abyssinians are more preoccupied with controlling the people whom they conquer than with their socio-economic transformation. One of the ways in which Abyssinia maintains this control is through legitimizing their religion which affects the work ethic. Recently, the *Ethiopian Herald* Newspaper reported that in Gojjam of the Amhara region, there are 295 out of 365 days of religious holidays, or unproductive days.³⁶ Although the non-Abyssinians do not share Abyssinian religious beliefs if they are caught working on their farms during the so-called religious holidays, they are penalized.

6. Human Rights and Famine

In summary, the culprit behind famine is neither nature nor climate. The lack of rain does not explain the famine. Ethiopia experiences famine frequently despite the fact that hundreds of major rivers and thousands of streams supply water to both Ethiopia and the surrounding regions of Sudan and Egypt. In contrast to Ethiopia, Egypt with a climate that only involves relatively small rainfall, manages to feed its large population and even exports food that is entirely based on Nile irrigation.

According to the UN Emergency Unit for Ethiopia, the Oromia Regional Council called an emergency meeting in November 2002 to evaluate the situation of food shortage in the region. At the meeting, the representative of the region stated "10 years ago, the region had a much better food situation than it has today." He stressed that there was no time in the history of the Oromia region when the food scarcity had been as critical as the present.³⁷ The current famine in Oromia is comparable in many ways to the great Irish famine which

³³ Blundell, Herbert (1900), "A Journey through Abyssinia to the Nile," *The Geographical Journal*, XV, No. 2 97-121

³⁴ Ibid Page 264-273

³⁵ Hoben, Allan (1995), "Paradigms and Politics: The Cultural Construction of Environmental Policy in Ethiopia," *World Development*, 23, No (6): 1007-1021

³⁶ *The Ethiopian Herald*, LIX, 035, 20th October, 2002, Page 2

³⁷ UN Emergency Unit for Ethiopia (UN-EUE) Week ending 08 November 2002 update

decimated the Irish people. The socio-economic and political relations between Abyssinia and Oromia correspond with the relations between Britain and Ireland in the year 1840, which was the year of the great Irish famine under the British rule.³⁸ Just as Britain considered Ireland to be a hostile nation, the Abyssinians do not see starving Oromo and Somali children as their citizens: they see them as people who in the near future might threaten their power.³⁹

Sen writes that the occurrence of famine depends on the alienation of the rulers from those ruled and the distance between the governors and the governed.⁴⁰ The sense of distance between the rulers and the ruled is a crucial feature of reoccurrence of Ethiopian famine. To apply Sen's theory to the Ethiopian case, the different regions and peoples affected by famine need to be considered. As discussed above, the 1972/73 famine affected the Oromo and Afar people in Wollo who faced famine as punishment for their demand for the right to own land. The 1985/86 famine affected the Tigray region, as they struggled for autonomous status. In 1991, as they took the power, the Tigray minority regime asserted autonomous status for the people of the Tigrean region and controlled the political and economic infrastructure of the empire. The 1995/96 and 2000/2002 famines have affected the Oromia and Somali (Ogden) regions that have been struggling for the self-determination of their people.

III. Ethiopia's Human Rights Record As Seen Through UDHR Principles

This section of the paper systematically examines Ethiopia's human rights record by commenting on the actions of the government in the light of the founding principles of the U. N's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article by article.

Article 1: Freedom from Discrimination

Article 1 states that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of equity. Article 2 rejects discrimination of any kind such as that based on race, color, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status.

Let us now examine whether or not these rights are violated in Ethiopia. On May 18, 1999, the *Guardian* newspaper reported that the ruling party of Ethiopia, the TPLF, had used Oromo peasants as human minesweepers in the war against Eritrea. David Hirst put the case in this way:

If the conduct of war is a measure of the government's fitness and ability to rule, then Tsorona is a terrible indictment of the TPLF. It was Oromo peasants it selected as human minesweepers and Tigrayan officers who shot them from the rear. Yet, it showed hardly less contempt for its own people. Local Tigrayan villagers

³⁸ Sen, Amartya (1999), *Development as Freedom*, Anchor Books, A Division of Random House, Inc. New York.

³⁹ <http://www.Oromia-org/hqloitu3.html>.

⁴⁰ Sen, Amartya (1999), *Development as Freedom*, New York, Anchor Books/Random House, Inc.

were pressed into that suicidal baggage train and mainly Tigrean soldiers died in the tanks that were entrusted to no other nationality.⁴¹

After over 130,000 people were killed, Ethiopia and Eritrea finally agreed to settle their border dispute. By then, the war had already consumed, not only human beings that had died at the war front, but also enormous resources. Loltu explains the motives of Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of Ethiopia and the leader of the TPLF, who declared war against Eritrea as follows:

*By eliminating the Oromo threat at the front lines, Meles kills two birds in one battle. Actually, to him, it is like a cockfight. Meles would be delighted to see both fighters disable each other for life. So, when people ask how Meles could send his own people into such incredible danger in these wars, it is clear that they do not understand his plan. Meles does not regard the foot soldiers sent to assail the Eritrean to be his "own people" at all. They are the ones who want their own self-determination. The war with Eritrea provides both the perfect excuse to snatch these young nationalists out of Oromia and parts of the south and the perfect opportunity to send them unprotected in great numbers against the Eritreans.*⁴²

In **Ethiopia: A Post-Cold War African State**, Vestal states that the desire to monopolize political power drives the ruling party in Ethiopia to routinely set one ethnic group against another, disrupting the coexistence of different ethnic groups.⁴³ For example, according to the recent Human Rights Watch report in Tepi, member of two minority ethnic groups, the Sheko and Majenger, clashed with the government officials and eighteen civilians and one official died. In the following days, the government security forces killed more than hundred civilians, arrested about thousand people and left over 5,800 people homeless.⁴⁴ As I have suggested earlier, the disruption caused by TPLF policies includes direct interference with the sustenance of the people explains the cause of current and past famines, at least in part.

The involuntary recruitment of young men into the military and security forces has considerably affected the ratio of women to men. According to Shana, in the 1993 Ethiopian census, the people of Shekecho were nearly one million, of which 75 percent were female and only 25 percent were male. In addition, 66 percent of the population was under the age of 30 years.⁴⁵

Article 1 affirming the equality of human beings and their dignity and article 2 assuring the right to life, liberty, and security of persons were violated when the Ethiopian government forcefully recruited the Oromo farmers as minesweepers. Among the people killed in the

⁴¹ David Hirst, "Tzorana on the Eritrea-Ethiopian border," *Guardian*, Tuesday May 18, 1999.

⁴² <http://www.Oromia-org/hqloltu3.html>

⁴³ Theodore M. Vestal (1999), *Ethiopia: A Post-Cold War African State*, Westport, CT: Praeger.

⁴⁴ Human Rights Watch World Report 2003: Africa: Ethiopia <http://www.hrw.org/wr2k3/africa5.html>

⁴⁵ Shana Achame (1997), in Hamesso Y. Seyoum, Truman Trevor, Erena M. Temesgen (eds) London, TSC Publishers, *Untold Stories of Shekecho People, from Ethiopia Conquest and the Quest for Freedom and Democracy*

Eritrean war, most were Oromo farmers who left behind their family members for generations. Losses of such vast productive human resources significantly negatively affect the incomes of both family members and their communities. Neither are the families of these individuals who died entitled to compensation.

Article 3: The Right to Life and Liberty

Article 3 states that everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security. However, according to the 1992 Amnesty International report, over 30,000 Oromo nationals were arrested following the Oromo Liberation Front's (OLF) withdrawal from a transitional government. Oromo Support Groups (OSG) reported that from 1991 to 2002, the organization recorded 2,915 extra-judicial killings and 854 disappearances of civilians suspected of supporting groups opposing the Ethiopian government. Thousands of civilians have been imprisoned. Torture and rape of prisoners are commonplace. There are currently more than 30,000 political prisoners in the Oromia region and 100,000 Oromos have fled the country.⁴⁶ Those who were killed, arrested, and disappeared, or fled the country are those who foresaw the tragedy and opposed the policies of the current government in Ethiopia.

Most of these political prisoners and those who fled the country are from the well-educated groups (teachers, lawyers, doctors, and Oromo intellectuals, in general) who have been forced to migrate to neighboring countries and the Western world. This mass political imprisonment, killing, firing from positions, and migration has resulted in a severe shortage of educated workers in Oromia and very serious social and political problems in Oromo society, including the exacerbation of the current famine and the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Article 7: Ownership of Property

Article 7 states that everyone has the right to own property alone and in association with others. According to an Amnesty International Urgent Action letter,⁴⁷ about 150 Oromo students from Addis Ababa University had been in police custody from 22 December 2000 to 12 January 2001. The letter asserts that thousands of people of Oromo nationality have been detained in Ethiopia without charge or trial, following several peaceful demonstrations against the government's decision to move the Oromia regional capital from Addis Ababa (Finfine) to Nazareth (Adama). In this case, the TPLF is uprooting the Oromo people from their home city and denying them their right to collective ownership of the land as well as of the city infrastructures and heritage sites. Indeed, the TPLF intends to prevent access to the advantages that the city provides the Oromo.

Similar to the Oromo relocation order, the Sidama people were also told to leave their city Hawasa, in July 2002. The Sidama people made a peaceful demonstration opposing the eviction order and claimed the collective right to their home city. In response, the Ethiopian security forces fired on them, killing 25 and wounding 26.⁴⁸ In both the Oromo and the

⁴⁶ <http://www.oromo.org/osg/pr37.htm>.

⁴⁷ Amnesty International Urgent Action, AI INDEX:AFR 25/001/2001, 12 January 2001.

⁴⁸ <http://www.hrw.org/press/2002/06/ethiopia061102.htm>

Sidama cases, the government has denied collective property rights and heritage sites in a way that resembles the pre-1840 famine period when Irish rural society was destabilized by landlords' eviction orders.⁴⁹

Bulcha (2001) has argued that the Ethiopian government settles and resettles people just for the purpose of intermingling different ethnic groups and assimilating them and making them fit into the dominant Abyssinian culture. The government either evicts the indigenous peoples or simply "shuffles" them.⁵⁰ Thus the famine has been deliberately exacerbated by the state as a weapon to force the people into submission.⁵¹ Uprooting the settlers and the settled people creates unhealthy competition between them on farm and grazing land as well as other resources⁵² which then leads to confrontation and violence.

In Ethiopia, there is no law or practice of compensating relocated farmers evicted from their land. According to Hoben (1995), over the past decade, the Ministry of Education has evicted approximately 80,000 households for its school building programs. The Ministry of Coffee and Tea has evicted over 15,000, water projects 29,000, state farms over 90,000, and the Ministry of Agriculture has evicted over 38,000 people. The collective farming project and villagization program evicted over two million households, or 8 to 10 million people. More than one half million households were also moved from the north to the west, allegedly because of the 1984/85 famine.⁵³ This fact contributed considerably to the 1984/85 famine and possibly played a role in the current one.

Article 19: Rights of Information and Expression

Article 19 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."⁵⁴ Information is knowledge. Knowledge is power. In its turn, sharing information is empowering. For example, social, economic, and farm planning require accurate information about events and the environment. This places a special

⁴⁹ O'Neill, Tim (2000), *Famine Evictions: From: Famine, Land and Culture in Ireland* edited by Carla King, University College, Dublin Press, Dublin. According to O'Neill about 900,000 families were evicted within 50 years. In the Irish case, the reason for the eviction orders was the landlord intention to exploit the famine as an opportunity to clear their lands from several small holdings and turn them into large and more lucrative units.

⁵⁰ Bulcha, Mekuria (2001), "Famine as an Instrument for Nation-Building and State Consolidation: Ethiopia's Resettlement and Villagization Programs of 1978-1991 in Retrospect," *The Journal of Oromo Studies*, 8, (1 and 2) July, 111-154.

⁵¹ Institute for Christian Economics (1985), "Planned Famine in Ethiopia," *Biblical Economics Today*, Vol. VIII, No. 3, April/May page 1-4.

⁵² Clay, Jason and Holcomb, Bonnie, *Holcomb(1986), Politics and the Ethiopian Famine of 1984-1985*, Cultural Survival, Inc, Cambridge, MA 02138.

⁵³ Hoben, Allan (1995), "Paradigms and Politics: The cultural Construction of Environmental Policy in Ethiopia," *World Development*, 23 (6): 1007-1021.

⁵⁴ <http://www.hrw.org/universal.html>

consideration on the availability of information through independent presses, radio, and television media. For journalists and independent researchers, systematic collection of information and reporting on community problems and activities increases the prospects for empowerment.

How do violations of Article 19 contribute to famine? Suppression of the free press makes the government immune from criticism and political pressure that can be translated into policy changes. For example, the 1972-73 famine that affected a small region of Oromia and Afar⁵⁵ was not at the time known to the public. In addition, the government security forces apparently restricted the movement of the people affected by the famine.⁵⁶ If the public had access to information, the effect of the famine could have been minimized if not averted. Tilahun Gesesse, the poet, blamed Emperor Haile Selassie in his song,

Walo teribo indeziya siyalq When Wollo was starved and perished
Bedibiq nebere manim sayawuq It was secret, no one had known about it.

In April and May of 2002, thousands of students throughout Oromia participated in peaceful demonstrations to make known that the government's educational and agricultural policies were disastrous.⁵⁷ The student demonstrators pointed out that the unusually low prices for agricultural products and high prices for fertilizers were severely affecting Oromo farmers. They charged that the government forced farmers to dump their farm outputs at low prices and to pay for high-priced fertilizers supplied by business conglomerates owned and operated by the regime. To silence the voice of concerned students, government security forces gunned down these peaceful demonstrators.⁵⁸ Arguably, if there were democracy and observance of human rights in Ethiopia, the government would have addressed the concerns of the students and taken measures to avoid the current famine. Instead, hundreds were imprisoned and many students were denied access to further schooling. The UN Integrated Regional Information Networks has confirmed that students' claims were correct. That is, they have reported that the major problems of food production in Gojam as elsewhere in Ethiopia were caused by the failure of the agricultural extension policies package and the heavy indebtedness of farmers as well as the low cereal prices last year and the policy of collective punishments to farmers.⁵⁹

Article 20: Freedom of Assembly and Association

Article 20 of the UN UDHR states that everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.⁶⁰ Principally, this article authorizes people to get organized to define

⁵⁵ Sen, Amartya (1981), *Poverty and Famines, An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*, Oxford Clarendon Press

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 87.

⁵⁷ <http://www.hrw.org/press/2002/05/ethiopia052202.htm>

⁵⁸ *Ibid*.

⁵⁹ UN Integrated Regional Information Networks (October 30, 2002), "UN Urges End to Collective Punishment for Farmers," <http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200210300050.html>

⁶⁰ <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>.

the social, economic, political, environmental, and health problems affecting them. This right is violated in Ethiopia. For example, Huluka (2002) has pointed that farmers in Western Oromia harvest more corn than the amount locally consumed. However, the farmers are not allowed to organize and ship their products to other parts of Oromia where there are shortages. They are forced to sell at low prices to a government-controlled grain board.⁶¹ This policy also discourages Oromo farmers from producing more grain to avert this famine.

In the 1999/2000 famine that affected the Oromia, Ogaden, and Afar regions, Hammond, et al (2002) reported that the situation was made more critical by the lack of information in the region. As a result, the Somali region was reported to receive food aid equivalent to only 20 percent of its actual needs.⁶² However, the regional Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) such as the Oromo Relief Association (ORA) and the Ogaden Welfare Society (OWS) with years of experience in carrying out relief work and able to provide reliable information about the given regions were not allowed to function. This was done to deny grassroots level participation.

Article 21: Governmental Representation

Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “everyone has the right to take part in the government of his/her country, directly, or through freely chosen representatives.”⁶³ The article suggests that people should be involved not only locally, but also nationally, participating in the governmental decision-making process. This type of participation includes socio-economic and health planning through budgeting by prioritizing where public money should be spent. Representation in the decision making process is a very basic idea in human rights thinking and it is violated in Ethiopia.⁶⁴ Major opposition groups have boycotted elections for fear of persecution and those parties which participated in elections have seen their members and supporters arrested and killed.⁶⁵ Even those non-Tigray individuals who are handpicked by TPLF officers are not empowered to make any effort to protect the interests of their constituents. For example, an Oromo national who served as the Speaker of the House of Federation at one point decided to vacate her position to seek political asylum in US. In her statement, Mako said:

I cannot in clear conscience represent Oromia in the Federal Council and remain the speaker of the house of federation because my continued existence in my post will only give the false impression that the Oromos are represented in the

⁶¹ Huluka, Gobana (2002), “Ethiopian Government Agricultural Policy and Price Control”, Presented at the 17th Oromo Studies Association Conference at Howard University, Washington DC

⁶² Hammond, Laura and Maxwell, Daniel (2002), “The Ethiopian Crisis of 1999-2000: Lessons Learned, Questions Unanswered,” *Disaster*, 26 (3): 262-279.

⁶³ <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>

⁶⁴ Tronvoll, Kjeti (2001), “Voting, Violence, and Violations: Peasant Voices on the Flawed Elections in Hadiya, Southern Ethiopia,” *J of Modern African Studies*, 39(4): 697-716

⁶⁵ http://www.humanrights.uio.no/forskning/publ/wp/wp_2001_14.htm

government. I have decided to vacate my position as a Speaker of the House of Federation and seek political asylum in the United States.⁶⁶

An independent Norwegian human rights researcher, Tronvoll, who observed an election in Ethiopia has recorded that the TPLF controls the regional affairs of other nationalities:

The most notable manner of control is applied through the presence of Tigrayan advisors at regional and local administrative levels. These advisors are never in a formal decision making position, but 'advise' the local ethnic representatives who fill the formal positions.⁶⁷

The author noted that such 'advising' is not mentioned on any organizational charts, nor described in any official decision-making documents. The person alleged as an advisor is always a Tigray national and the person does not acknowledge his position if he is asked; however, all decisions are essentially made with the consent of the advisor. Publicly, the TPLF government portrays Ethiopia as a federal state, however, undercover it controls all of the affairs of all regions.

Article 23: Free Choice of Employment

According to Article 23, everyone has the right to work, free choice of employment, just and favorable conditions of work, and protection against unemployment.⁶⁸ The idea behind Article 23 is to forbid discrimination at work places. This article is violated in Ethiopia. In 1991, when the TPLF took power, they disbanded over half a million people from the armed forces who had served the previous government with no compensations. Dismantling this army was not intended to reduce the size of the army. It was undertaken to give preference to Tigray nationals. As a consequence, although the Tigray population constitutes only about five percent of the Ethiopian people, the majority of those in the standing army, particularly the military officers, are Tigray nationals.

Article 25: Right to a Basic Standard of Living

Article 25 describes the right to a standard of living adequate for health and wellbeing. This article obligates the government to give priority to expenditures on health care and education. However, the two-and-half-year war with Eritrea cost Ethiopia \$2.9 billion US (Ethiopian Economic Policy Research Institute, 2001). During this time, military expenditures were reported to be 49.8 percent of the country's total annual expenditure. The estimated cost of destroyed public and social infrastructure was well over \$200m.⁶⁹ Currently, the TPLF spends a million dollars every day on security and military activities.

⁶⁶ <http://www.oromiaonline.com/News/AlmazMakoJoinsOLF.htm>.

⁶⁷ Tronvoll, Kjeti (2001), "Voting, Violence and Violations: Peasant Voices on the Flawed Elections in Hadiya, Southern Ethiopia," *J. of Modern African Studies*, 39(4): 697-716

⁶⁸ <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>.

⁶⁹ Nita Bhalla in Addis Ababa, BBC News, "War devastated Ethiopian Economy" Tuesday, 7th August, 2001.

Not only is a basic standard of living not assured, but also food is often used as a disciplining tool. For example, it has been reported that in the Hadiya region, relief food is used to extract political support from the people. If the people sympathize with opposition groups, the government deliberately leaves them to die from starvation.⁷⁰ The local administrative unit known as the Kebele is used as tool of intelligence and surveillance. In contrast, terracing and reforestation projects have been actively promoted through the mobilization of the local peasant association in Tigray, the home country of the TPLF⁷¹

Article 26: The Right to Education

Article 26 deals with the right to education. The article suggests that education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Education empowers the learner through a process of providing information and consciousness-raising about their needs and the circumstances in which they live. Based on the information the learner gains, he/she develops critical skills to assess his/her socio-economic and environmental circumstances. Information is a resource and a powerful problem-solving tool.

Is Article 26 violated in Ethiopia? According to a UNICEF report,⁷² the Ethiopian literacy rate is about 35 percent. The high illiteracy rate signals lack of access and a resistance to being absorbed into the dominant Abyssinian culture. The Oromo majority are on a quest to be educated in their native languages. In May, 2002, for example, Oromo students throughout Oromia demanded their basic human rights as set forth by the UN and its branch organization such as UNESCO to be educated in their native languages. The human rights violations perpetrated by the Ethiopian government against peaceful student demonstrators who demanded these rights have been recorded by human rights observers.⁷³

Not all forms of education empower students. Colonial education is intended to control the learner. Education for empowerment must go beyond the acquisition of knowledge and operate from the premise that humans not only have the ability to know reality, but they also have the capacity for critical reflection and action. Therefore, education aimed at developing this capacity must be promoted. To understand how any given policy benefits some and harms others is an important step toward action. People in Ethiopia need education to deal with many social issues such as children being exploited through prostitution, farmers hurt by the diversion of water supplies, military recruitment, forced labor, and not knowing the law.

⁷⁰ Ironvold, Kjeti (2001), "Voting, Violence and Violations: Peasant Voices on the Flawed Elections in Hadiya, Southern Ethiopia," *J. of Modern African Studies*, 39 (4): 697-716

⁷¹ Hoben, Allan (1995), "Paradigms and Politics: The cultural Construction of Environmental Policy in Ethiopia," *World Development*, Vol 23 (6):1007-1021.

⁷² <http://unesco.org/statsen/statistics/indicators/I-pages/literacy/lit2300.asp?ano=1995,8/22/01>

⁷³ <http://www.hrw.org/press/2002/05/ethiopia052202.htm>

The native language is the most effective tool in such empowerment and so, this right is sought by the Oromo students to assure the ability to address all other human rights

IV. Discussion

Human suffering is unacceptable. Human rights and development are intertwined. There cannot be lasting progress in one without progress in the other. In my culture, Oromo teachings about *nagaa* (peace) and *fayya* (health) include the peace and health of neighbors and peaceful and healthy environments.⁷⁴ According to these teachings, every one should constantly seek peace and health, for oneself, and also for others. For me, it is problematic that the UDHR principles present human beings as autonomous entities rather than being interdependent with other individuals and groups. However, these principles are a valuable starting point from which to extend the scope of human rights to make it universal as it claims and designates it to “mend communities’ wellbeing.”

The role of human rights in empowering individuals and communities cannot be underestimated. The necessary conditions for people to sustain themselves with basics such as food, shelter, health, education, and security depends on whether or not they are empowered in their affairs. To prevent famine and bring socio-economic transformation in Ethiopia, the people must be empowered and human rights respected.

It is indicative that the idea of human rights stands in opposition to that of an abrupt revolutionary change.⁷⁵ Ethiopia could learn from Botswana. Botswana is a good example of how respect for human rights, democracy, accountability, and transparency makes significant differences in the lives of citizens. Botswana has not engaged in civil or international war either prior to or after independence from Britain in 1966. It is a country that has sought to develop along peaceful lines and has the reputation of being a successful democracy on the continent of Africa. In its development plans, Botswana has always promoted the significance of education in achieving its goal of peace building based on the four national principles of democracy, development, self-reliance, and unity.⁷⁶

There are many people in the West and even in African countries who are reluctant to explore whether or not the idea of human rights and democracy can be applicable in Africa and if it can be one of the solutions for Africa’s socio-economic problems. Such skepticism very often comes from African leaders themselves. They imply that democracy is alien to Africa, denying that prior to colonialism, there was participatory government. I refute notions that there were no participatory democracies in Africa prior to colonialism. I contend that Africans had family and community-centered societies and that such societies embodied concepts of *participatory democracy that were disturbed by colonialism and neo-colonialism.*

⁷⁴ Oromo Elders blessing

⁷⁵ McIntyre Richard (2003), *Globalism, “Human Rights and the Problem of Individualism,” Human Rights & Human Welfare*, Vol. 3:1

⁷⁶ Human Rights Watch, “Analysis of the Current Fighting and its Relation to Famine in Sudan,” HRW World Report 2001

Remarkably, I would argue Africans developed a democratic system of governance long before Europeans. For example, the Oromo democratic system of governance known as “Gada,” has been practiced for over 500 years.⁷⁷ Oral historians would date it several centuries earlier.⁷⁸ In the Gada system, participation is not just a “right,” but it is “mandatory.” Membership in the community and recruitment for leadership starts from birth and takes 40 years before the person assumes office. Leadership quality is measured not on how the person performed in a speech on election days as Western democracies, but on assessment of the leadership demonstrated during the life-span of the individual.

Indeed, it has been documented that many indigenous African institutions were seriously compromised by colonialism. The colonizers substituted appointed chiefs for indigenous democratic systems of governance. These colonial appointees were accountable to those who placed them in power and consequently, such individuals served to disempower their own people. To cite an example, the concept of Gada was systematically invalidated and replaced with chieftain rule by the British colonial forces in the southern part of Oromo country which is now part of Kenya.⁷⁹

It is bad faith to assume that the adoption of the principles of human rights and democracy would not bring social changes. Western democracy has brought changes and it will continue to bring changes. For example, the achievements of civil right movements in the USA can be seen as partly the result of competition between the two political parties to attract voters. Social and economic transformation requires social structure that motivates and rewards individuals and groups who creatively work for individual satisfaction, for collective benefits and/or to penalize or discredit corrupt and dictatorial leaderships.

There are several problems in Western democracies. In the Western world, for example, the media are controlled by corporate interest and individual opinion is hardly heard. Though there is a guarantee of the right to organize and elect leaders, there is not full participation in voting. Thus the ideal of democracy is unfulfilled. However, this should not deter us from seeking democracy and human rights. I have described in detail in this paper how, in Ethiopia, people are denied basic human rights. I have argued that if the people are empowered to get organized and participate in the decision-making processes, a positive change would be fostered. I believe that corrupt dictators cannot hold onto power forever and that the tragic cyclic occurrence of famine in Ethiopia can be avoided.

In summary, I have suggested that the major reason for Ethiopian famines is not climate or environment, but human rights violations that incapacitate individuals and communities. The 1995/96 and 2000/2002 Ethiopian famines which affected the Oromia region clearly

⁷⁶⁷⁷ Legesse Asmarom (2000) *Oromo Democracy, an indigenous African Political system*, NJ: Red Sea Press

⁷⁸ Ruda, M. Gemechu (1993), *Knowledge, Identity, and Colonizing Structure: The Case of the Oromo in East and Northeast Africa*, Ph.D. Thesis, submitted to The Department of Anthropology, University of London School of Oriental and African Studies.

⁷⁹ Legesse Asmarom (2000), *Oromo Democracy, an Indigenous African Political System*, NJ: Red Sea Press

illustrate the impact of an oppressive government's policies towards that region. Since it is the most productive region in the country, lack of food is not the major problem. The current famine in Oromia under the TPLF government should be seen and understood in parallel with the Irish and Indian famines under British rule. The truth is that all colonial oppression is the same and does not lead to justice, socioeconomic, and environmental transformation. Amartya Sen has described the problem as the distance between those who govern and who are governed. As long as this distance exists in Ethiopia, there will be famine. There is such a great distance between the ruler and the ruled in Ethiopia that the TPLF rejected the Eritrean government's offer to use its Red Sea port to transport food aid to starving people⁸⁰ who were not Tigrayan. This situation shows that human rights and empowerment are not luxuries; they are the primary life sustenance tools that all human beings deserve.

European colonization in Africa ought to be seen for what it was. In Ethiopia, the Abyssinians were supported by European colonizers in their empire-building and entrepreneurship. Their purpose was to exploit the human and natural resources of the region as a colonial agents of Europe, an indirect colonization which persists to this day. Colonial relations between the Britain and the Irish and the Ukraine and Russia have now been acknowledged, while the colonial relation between Abyssinia, Oromia, and other independent peoples conquered by Abyssinia has not. Former European colonizers themselves have drafted and endorsed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. However, in this case, they have failed to abide by these principles. Instead, they continue to finance and provide military and political support to Abyssinian colonial forces, thus depriving the people of the very basic human rights they say they hold so dear.

Finally, not only does our understanding of the nature of famine have to change, but also the language we use to refer to it. If we continue to describe people who are starving as 'victims' of environmental disaster, it is more difficult to accept the idea that famine is a human-made and preventable tragedy and to see that it can be brought under control by empowering the affected peoples. The tactic of Ethiopian and Euro-American media of explaining famine as an environmental disaster serves to remove any guilt and responsibility for atrocities being committed on politically marginalized peoples.

*Acknowledgement: I would like to thank Dr. Linda Muzzin for the language editing.

⁸⁰ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/2488499.stm>.

Some Medical Side Effects of Khat Addiction: A Review of Literature

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Introduction

Khat, the leaves of *Catha edulis*, is widely used as a stimulant in East Africa, the Arab Peninsula, and Afghanistan. In Oromia, the tradition of chewing *khat* goes back many centuries. The earliest scientific report concerning *khat* was in the 18th century by the botanist Peter Forskal (Baasher, 1980). The commonest mode of administration of *khat* is by chewing while it is still fresh, or in a form of wet residue of crushed leaves. However, it can be taken as a tea and occasionally smoked to achieve its stimulant effect. It is known by many different names; for instance, “*jimaa*,” “*barccaa*,” and “*miraa*” are few examples.

In Oromia, *khat* was previously known to grow mainly in the Eastern and central part of the country; but in recent years, it has been introduced to all parts of the country. *Khat* consumption was traditionally limited to certain segments of the society such as traders, urban dwellers, adolescents, and young men. At present, however, *khat* has become so popular among all sections of the society. For instance, a survey conducted in Buta Jiraa, a rural community, found out that of the people studied 55.7% reported lifetime chewing of *khat*. Eighty percent of the chewers stated the reason for using *khat* was to attain a good level of concentration for different activities such as reading and prayer (Alem et al, 1999). Further more, a survey carried out on secondary school pupils in Agaro, Western Oromia, described a current *khat* chewing habit in 64.9% and the most frequent users were found to be between the age of 15 and 22 years (Adugna et al, 1994).

Migrant population from East and Southern Africa, as well as Afghanistan, Yemen, and Madagascar now residing in Europe and North America also continue using *khat* on regular basis. The habit of *khat* chewing compounded with the difficulties of migration has been linked to an increase in poor health and social problems. However, it is also viewed as a positive factor in maintaining a sense of community and identity for most of these people who are refugees as it is chewed in company.

In the past twenty years, important progress has been made in understanding the pharmacological basis for the effects of *Khat*. As a result, our knowledge about *khat* has been enhanced to a certain extent. The purpose of this review is to describe the pharmacology of *khat* and to summarize the potential adverse effects of habitual *khat* chewing. Knowledge of its pharmacology and morbidities associated with its use may provide an insight into its effect on public health and the potential for the development of a strategy for limiting the use of *khat* in Oromia and elsewhere.

Pharmacology of Khat

It is now known that that the central nervous system stimulation by khat is mainly due to the presence of *alkaloid cathinone* in the leaves and experiments indicate that this substance is a natural amphetamine (Kalix, 1992) It has been confirmed by laboratory animal experiments and clinical human experiment that *cathinone* produces amphetamine like objective and subjective effects In fact, it was demonstrated that *cathinone* operates through the same mechanism as amphetamine, i.e. it acts by releasing catecholamines from presynaptic storage sites Thus, much of experimental evidence indicates that *cathinone* is the main psychoactive constituent of khat leaf (Connor et al., 2002; Hassan et al., 2000).

Samples of the most important markets of Oromia, Kenya, North Yemen and Madagascar were analysed with high-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) concerning their *cathinone/khatamine/* content (*phenyl propyl and phenyl pentenylamines*). Accordingly, in many samples a good correlation between the amount of *cathinone*, and quality estimation (price) by dealers and consumers was found (Geissshusler and Brenneisen, 1987)

The Effects of Khat

A considerable body of evidence gathered on clinical and experimental pharmacology of khat concludes that it has an amphetamine-like type of effects Khat increases alertness, ability to concentrate, confidence, friendliness, contentment and flow of ideas (Kennedy, 1987) In particular, khat ingestion, like amphetamine, produces sympathetic activation, anorexia, increased intellectual efficiency and alertness. Studies have shown that chewing khat leads to increase in temperature, raised pulse rate and blood pressure, extra-systoles, increased respiratory rate, increased libido and impotence (Brenneisen et al., 1990).

Health Consequences of Khat Chewing

Gastro-intestinal tract problems are common These include anorexia, constipation, malnutrition and weight loss Khat chewing delays gastric emptying of semi-solid meal The sympathomimetic action of *cathinone* in khat is believed to cause the delay and therefore constipation (Heymann, et al., 1995). Dyspepsia and duodenal ulcer are also known to be induced by khat (Raja'a, et al., 2001). Chronic khat using is significantly associated with development of hemorrhoids requiring surgical treatment (Al-Hadrani, 2000) Bioavailability of certain medications may be reduced by Khat A clinical trial has shown that Ampicillin, an antibiotics, bioavailability was significantly reduced when taken 2 hours after khat chewing session (Attef, et al., 1997)

Epidemiological surveys indicate a strong correlation between khat chewing and oral cancer, especially in subjects with history of khat chewing for a period of 25 years or more (Soufi, et al., 1991). Khat consumption causes genetic damage in humans. These suggest that khat, especially when accompanied with alcohol and tobacco consumption might be a potential cause of oral malignancy (Kassie, et al., 2001).

Perhaps the most significant unwanted effects associated with khat chewing are mental health problems Few sessions of khat chewing can lead to sleeplessness, nervousness and

nightmares (Kennedy, 1987). There is a tendency to querulous-ness with lability of mood and increased anxiety and tension. Habitual khat chewing results in functional mood disorder of reactive depression. A paranoid psychosis, resembling amphetamine psychosis, caused by khat has been well described. Natural history of khat psychosis shows that the symptoms require vigorous treatment with antipsychotics (Jager and Sireling, 1994; Yousf, et al., 1995). Hypomanic illnesses are also induced by khat. In conclusion, khat might precipitate psychiatric disorders in vulnerable subjects and it can exacerbate symptoms in patients with pre-existing psychiatric disorder.

Historically, khat has been used for medicinal purposes as well as an aphrodisiac. However, it is most valued for its stimulant effect and used for recreational purposes. Khat chewing sessions are often combined with tobacco smoking during the sessions and alcohol intake at the end of the sessions as a form of termination of the effects of khat known as “cabsii” i.e. to counteract its stimulant and insomniac effects. Khat chewing on its own and with the above combination can expose young people to risky sexual behaviour increasing exposure to sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS.

Khat is also associated with infertility. It induces impotence. Furthermore, khat causes lower semen volume, sperm count, sperm motility index and percentage of normal spermatozoa in addicts (El-Shoura, et al., 1995). Khat chewing during pregnancy is associated with low birth weight compared to non-chewing mothers (Eriksson, et al., 1991). Inhibition of lactation has been reported in khat-chewing mothers, possibly resulting from increased dopamine production.

Hassan, et al (2000), reported a significant and progressive rise in systolic and diastolic blood pressure and heart rate during 3 hour period of chewing fresh khat in healthy volunteers and levels had not returned to baseline 1 hour after chewing had ceased. Khat chewing is considered a risk factor for the occurrence of myocardial infarction especially in individuals who are susceptible to the disease (Alkadi, et al., 2002). It is recommended that persons with cardiovascular diseases must avoid khat.

Khat Dependency

World Health Organization expert committee on drug dependence considers khat as potential substance of abuse (WHO Tech Rep Ser. 2003; Szendrei, 1980). In habitual consumption khat dependence can develop. The main features of addiction to khat include craving and tolerance to the sympathomimetic and neuroendocrine effects of Khat (Nencini and Ahmed, 1989). To date, there is no definite abstinence syndrome described but if any this may be mild. Kennedy (1987) considers that heavy khat chewers experience true withdrawal symptoms of profound lassitude, anergia, difficulty in initiating their normal activities and slight trembling several days after stopping to chew. Most authors, however, conclude that khat dependence is psychological and that there are no true physical withdrawal symptoms associated with cessation of khat use (Giannini, et al., 1986).

In an experimental setting, however, a study has shown that rats continued intravenous self-administration of *cathinone* suggestive of it being an effective positive reinforcer (Gosnell, et al., 1996). In humans one protective factor against developing strong khat dependence

appears to be the bulk of volume of khat leaves that limits the ingestion of high quantities of the active ingredients.

Giannine and Nakoneczie (1995) reported bromocriptine, dopamine antagonist drug usually used to treat cocaine addiction, was given to a patient known to suffer from khat addiction and successfully detoxified him over a four-week period of time. Literature on how to treat khat dependence is scanty and there is a need for a standardization of treatment programme for khat addiction to support those dependent on khat and motivated to stop using it

Social Consequences of Khat Chewing

The proliferation of khat chewing culture in Oromia at the present could be a consequence of an ever-deepening poverty. Most have no long-term employment prospects and perhaps enticed through boredom into chewing khat on regular basis as an aid to get them through the working day. This could mean that they form a lifetime habit and damage their health

Individuals often divert their income on khat expenses, neglecting their families' needs. Khat has further implication as a causal factor in family discord and divorce. A reduction in working hours spent on chewing khat is considerable. Though khat addiction is mild in contrast to amphetamine abuse such a habit can lead to progression onto other highly addictive drugs such as marijuana and opiates.

In Oromia and other khat growing countries, as an internal and external market for khat increases resource diversion toward the production and trade of khat will have a negative economic impact. There is some evidence that suggests khat growing is taking over coffee plantation in some parts of Oromia. This seems to be the product of falling coffee price and increasing demand for khat. The cultivation of khat will inevitably result in decreased production of other more essential crops such as cereals, promoting malnutrition and disease. It also leads to low productivity of the population due to poor health and the after-effects of khat (Kalix, 1987).

On the other hand, khat trade can be of a major source of revenue for Oromia. In addition, khat chewing sessions can provide an opportunity for communication where serious exchange of opinion and information can take place. However, from the above literature review it can be concluded that the morbidities associated with khat chewing outweigh its economic benefits. At present no doubt khat has an economic importance in Oromian economy and its control may be difficult. Therefore, policies restricting the use and cultivation of khat should be approached with caution, lest it becomes a major public health problem in Oromia and elsewhere in the near future

Recommendations

1. The public should be provided with information on health risks associated with khat chewing habit

- 2 Harm reduction strategies such as trying to stop taking khat, reduction of the quantity of khat used with intervals between sessions should be recommended to those dependent on khat
- 3 Avoid other drugs or alcohol during or after khat chewing sessions.
- 4 Avoid excessive smoking during khat chewing sessions and try eating a balanced diet.
- 5 High risk individuals such as pregnant and breast feeding mothers, people with known mental health problems and cardiovascular diseases should avoid khat altogether

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Fighting Against the Injustice of the State and Globalization: Comparing the African American and Oromo Movements

by Asafa Jalata, Palgrave: New York, 2001, pp. 216, \$49.95 cloth.

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This book compares the injustices perpetrated against black Americans who were forced from their homes in Africa, shipped to the Americas by Europeans, sold into slavery, and the Oromo nation who were colonized by the Ethiopians and subjected into conditions worse than slavery in their own country, Oromia. It is also about the rise of African-American and Oromo nationalism in response to those injustices. Apparently, skin color was an important factor for the injustices in the first case, while arrogance inflated with a sense of superiority based on a yet-to-be-established connections to biblical stories are the major causes of injustice in the second case. Jalata, however, provides yet new dimensions for the understanding of the injustices in both communities. He takes it beyond the rhetoric of race in America and Habasha arrogance and "superiority complex" in Ethiopia. Central to his argument for the injustices are the forces of globalization and the state, the dominant groups' apparent control of power, and economy and the social structures in both countries, where the victims were reduced into a state of powerlessness.

The author also argues that the European-dominated world system, not only enslaved Africans and shipped them to the New World, but also subjected them to multi-faceted oppression and racism in the United States. Jalata then finds a parallel experience in the Oromo people who were colonized by the Ethiopians with the support of the very Europeans who brought African slaves to the New World. Similarly, Abyssinian colonialism used ethnic domination and suppression (or the Ethiopian version of US racism) as instruments of oppression. The author consistently maintains that the dominant groups in both societies made structural assimilation difficult to their respective victims. Yet, he recognizes that those who succeeded in joining the mainstream society (by collaboration, or by other avenues of personal successes such as education, or assimilation) did not make any difference in the status of the majority of their racial/ethnic groups, vis-à-vis, the establishment.

There are unique historical experiences in each case, though African Americans were taken away from their land as slaves, lived on the land of their white masters with no social structures initially common to them, but struggled to create one against all odds. Without territorial identity on their side, African Americans were more united by the color of their skin and common experiences. In contrast, Oromos were conquered, but remained in their homelands, with their social structures much threatened, but not totally destroyed; moreover, unlike African Americans, the Oromos retained their language.

Jalata's well-documented argument holds accountable: first, the European-dominated world system that began to take roots approximately in the fifteenth century (following the

triumph of mercantilism in Europe) and later by its successor, the “Anglo-American” system. To help his readers understand these global developments and their injustices, the author pulled together a host of theories and concepts from various authors; he even made an interesting use of the works of prominent scholars some of whom are often at odds to one another in their theoretical orientations - such as Immanuel Wallerstein and Theda Skocpol (on global systems), and Ernest Gelner and Anthony Smith (on nationalism) For the part on Oromo movement and nationalism, the author largely pulled his own works together and gave them a context to fit into his comparative analysis.

Jalata strongly argues that African-American and Oromo movements against the injustices of the state and globalization were essentially a matter of cultural and political survival, of forging a collective/national identity in the midst of adverse situations, and of national liberation. Due to differences in their backgrounds when they arrived as slaves, African Americans had to create a new identity based on their recollections and common experiences (enslavement, racial slavery, and disempowerment) *in order to construct a new and collective identity (“African American peoplehood”)*. Consequently, African Americans (slaves) succeeded in creating and recreating their African past and translating them to their life and using them as instruments of national struggle in the New World despite their diverse origins. This creation and recreation of the past helped them survive the worst of times in their long history. Finally, after a long journey in their struggle, African Americans have at least made considerable gains.

To the contrary, the Oromos did not have a problem of that magnitude in retracing their identity and the author correctly argues that the Oromo are still open to all aspects of Gada (an egalitarian socio-political organization that kept the Oromo society intact and democratic) values and ready to revitalize it, should they overcome the injustices of Ethiopian colonialism. Due to the nature of the adversary, however, the Oromos have still a long way to go. The heavy-handedness of the enemy has apparently made the journey longer for Oromo nationalists. Despite enemy onslaught on the on Oromo identity, the author forcefully argues that *Oromos have never ceased to uphold a sense of oneness*. This was so because of Gada traditions and the orderliness of the Oromo society which allowed a democratic social and religious organization that its colonizers were never able to destroy from the minds of the people; it remained the core of Oromo identity and was never erased from the memory of the people.

The degree to which global factors were equally responsible for bringing African Americans under white domination and Oromos under Abyssinian colonialism remains debatable. But, it is true that Euro-Ethiopian alliance created the Ethiopian empire and US-Ethiopian alliance maintained the empire. If it were not for this alliance, this notorious black-on-black colonialism would not have prevailed or survived at all.

Given the nature of the Ethiopian state, the practicability of “revolutionary multicultural democracy” as a solution to Oromo question is also debatable. To begin with, the concept is not new and the TPLF waved the flag of revolutionary democracy (and the author recognizes this) long before it entered Addis Ababa and used it to legitimize its grip on power. “Revolutionary multicultural democracy” is too crude even conceptually let alone being

practicable in societies like Ethiopia where a host of factors complicate the struggle for national liberation. Moreover, genuine democracies are becoming difficult even in mono-cultural societies (groups) let alone in multicultural societies. Tigrayans in Tigray and in Eritrea are mono-cultural groups; yet they could not forge a democratic state and, today, they are mortal enemies. Why has multicultural democracy failed to work in bi-cultural Czechoslovakia where the Czechs and the Slovaks voted for a democratic divorce rather than for a “democratic living together”? Why has it failed to keep the USSR and Yugoslavia together? Only divided between the Greeks and the Turks, why have the Cypriots failed to unanimously vote in favor of unity? If “revolutionary multicultural democracy” were to work, particularly in countries like Ethiopia, it has to pass the test at mono or bi-cultural levels. Something that failed at those levels, however attractive and catchy concept it is, is unlikely to work better in multicultural societies. Therefore, “revolutionary multicultural democracy” remains at best a mere academic exercise and a theoretical discourse; at the worst, it is an unfortunate diversion from the major focus of total liberation. In the end, it dilutes the Oromo urge for independence.

Although global forces may continue to dominate for foreseeable future, it should be noted that emphasizing global factors of oppression undermines the local factors which are worse in the case of the Oromos. The Oromos have to liberate themselves first from the state whose injustice to them is excruciatingly more painful than the injustices currently meted to them by global forces. It is like the story of the monkey which had thorns all over her body and asked the removal of those on her buttocks when she was offered help.

The author should be congratulated on several grounds for braving to take up a challenging task of comparing the experiences of African American and Oromo movements. First, he substantiates his arguments with frequent quotations from other works, often 5-6 or more in each paragraph depending on its size. In most cases, he completes his own sentences with quotations from other authors, thus taking his readers directly into the body of his sources. Second, he provides detailed information on the geography of African American resistance from old slave states in the South to modern urban industrial centers in the North and all over. He also provides a similar geography of Oromo movement that extended from Wallo in the North to Borana in the South, from Harar in the East to Wallagga in the West. Third, he provides the chronology of resistance in both cases: from the date the first slaves arrived in the early seventeenth century in what later became the United States for the African Americans, and from the sixteenth century to the present for the Oromos. Fourth, the author makes compelling arguments on the changing ideologies of successive Ethiopian regimes to subjugate the Oromos. He notes that: “Christianity, socialism, and democracy have been used in a political discourse by successive Habasha [Abyssinian] ruling classes to legitimize the Ethiopian state power without changing its authoritarianism and terrorism [p. 85]” Finally, Jalata bravely articulates the details of US foreign policy that undermined the just cause of the Oromo people and supported Ethiopian governments, a reflection of its racist policies towards African Americans at home. He is even more articulate on the unfortunate fact that some African Americans who succeeded in moving up in the white-dominated political structure of the United States became instruments of the racist policies of White America towards the Oromo people. Among others, he cites the example of Susan Rice, Undersecretary

of State for African Affairs during the Clinton administration, who went to the extent of labeling the OLF (Oromo Liberation Front) as a terrorist organization and Oromo movements as Islamic fundamentalists. It is, indeed, sad to see such African Americans who have more in common with the Oromo people support the Ethiopian government that has brutalized the Oromo.

The author has undoubtedly produced a challenging piece. First, the book is challenging to the academia because it offers a new direction to Oromo studies and to Oromo nationalism by placing them in a broader comparative perspective. Second, his brave conclusion that: "Habasha and Oromos cannot coexist peacefully within a single state system since they have contradictory national projects, (p 149)" is a serious challenge to some members of the Oromo liberation struggle, particularly to those who recently waved a white flag of capitulation. Jalata has provided them a detailed liberation strategy, a strategy of determination and courage, of vision and hope that only a total mobilization of Oromo natural and human resources and know-how can liberate Oromia. His perceptive outline of the strategies of liberation is a wake-up call for Oromo nationalists. Both liberators and capitulationists need to seriously examine Jalata's strategies if they really mean to liberate Oromia.

Breaking the Silence: Sexual Health Education of Adolescents in the Modernizing Development Society. The Case of Nakamte High School, Ethiopia

by Chaltu Deressa Gasso, University of Joensuu: University Publications in Social Sciences, No. 59, 2003.

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In this important dissertation published by the University of Joensuu, Finland, Chaltu Deressa Gasso discusses adolescent sex education in Ethiopia by putting it in the context of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, social-economic underdevelopment, rapid urbanisation, globalisation, and traditional as well as societal norms and taboos concerning sex in the country's traditions. Using primary and secondary sources of information, the author explores and analyzes the knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of reproductive health practices of high school students in Nakamte, a city (pop 50,000) in the western part of the regional state of Oromia. She notes that adolescents' sex habits are changing as a result of mass media information and globalisation of certain cultures; yet young people are not given adequate information that could convince them to practice safe sex.

Chaltu maintains that lack of adequate reproductive health information is not only a cause for a very high rate of unwanted pregnancies among adolescent girls, but also of rampant health problems affecting a large section of the sexually active population in Ethiopia. She points out that Ethiopia is among the 10 African countries that are severely affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Among young pregnant mothers visiting clinics in Ethiopian cities, the incidence of HIV infection ranges between 12 and 21 percent. About 13 percent of the students in Addis Ababa high schools are reported to be HIV positive; most of the deaths caused by AIDS in the country are among young people. Illicit abortions combined with lack of access to reproductive health services lead to a high maternal mortality rate of about 1,270 per 100,000 births in the age group of 15 to 19 years. Chaltu indicates that this is three times the rate for women between the ages of 20 to 34 years. She argues that although the government has established a national HIV/AIDS control program, the efforts that are being made to mitigate the epidemic are inadequate and uncoordinated.

The author observes the high incidence of HIV/AIDS cases in Ethiopia partly by the prevailing poverty, dislocation caused by war, changes in the habits and attitudes of the younger generation, and the weakening of extended family and solidarity systems. She locates her study of the Ethiopian adolescents' situation within the theoretical perspectives used Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens, and several other sociologists in studying 'the risk society,' and 'reflexive modernity' as well as networks theories.

Justifying her choice of these theoretical approaches, Chaltu argues that reflexive modernity and social network theories are appropriate tools to unravel the dilemmas that individuals face and the choices they have in making decision about their sexual relations in

this age of rapid urbanisation, individualization, and globalisation which are also affecting most of the African societies. She contends that the presence or absence and the strength or weakness of social networks play fundamental roles in adolescents' sexual behaviour, while reflexive modernity demands increasing consciousness and behaviour adjustment to their changing life situations. She states that modernity involves erosions of traditional values in societies in which it occurs; traditions and religions are no more instances where individuals look for guidance when making the decisions about their daily lives. They are forced to make their own decisions based on their own judgements. However, since making one's own decisions involves also risks, the individual finds himself/herself in a situation which Chaltu calls ontological insecurity, drawing on Anthony Giddens' theory. Here, ontological insecurity refers to uncertainties the individual would feel about the outcomes of the decision he/she makes.

Discussing women's dilemmas regarding safe sex, motherhood, and status, Chaltu states that giving birth to a child is the duty of woman in many African societies because having children, not only enables keep her husband, but also gives her status in the society. This means that even when a woman knows that her husband is unfaithful, she is supposed to remain silent and continue her normal sexual relations without any protection. Given the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the country today, this is tantamount to putting her life at risk. In this connection, the author emphasizes the role holistic information on sexuality and reproductive health in general, and the importance of girls' education, in particular. She notes that Ethiopia has one of the lowest literacy rates in the world (only about 20 percent of the women and 30 percent of the men can read and write) and indicates that education is an empowering factor and that educated women can make independent and rational decisions about their lives.

She argues that, in Ethiopia, cultural barriers to girls' education and gender inequality are embedded in the social system and that changing them is a slow process. While indicating the complexity of the relationship between social traditions and reproductive health, she also emphasizes that even though traditional societies place taboos on sex, it may not mean that they do not give sexual information to their young members. On the contrary, it is when traditional sexual education is eroded and information on safe sex is not covered in modern education that adolescents are exposed to risks. Therefore, when and where parents are not equipped to provide their children with vital life information or when their knowledge is devalued due to the changing situations, the entire responsibility lies with the educational system. She notes that it is here that the Ethiopian educational system is lagging behind.

Chaltu's proposition that the Ethiopian educational system has failed in informing adolescents is supported by information she gathered at the Naqamte Comprehensive High School from 722 respondents (461 boys and 261 girls) between the age of 14 and 23 years. The results of this survey indicate the majority (52 percent) of the respondents lacked any knowledge of contraceptives and safe sex methods. Although 40 percent of the boys and 10 percent of the girls have had sexual intercourse at the time of the survey, the majority did not take any precaution against infection or unwanted pregnancy. Only one-third of those who had practiced sexual intercourse used condoms or other safe sex methods. The main reasons

given for indulging in unprotected sex were lack of information or lack of knowledge about contraceptive methods, lack of access to condoms (they are expensive and/or unavailable), and condom's negative effect on partner's sexual satisfaction.

The study indicates that the majority of the respondents were positive about sex education in the schools. Thus 77 percent of the sample population reported their interest in the inclusion of contraception information in the school curriculum. There is no difference between male and female respondents on this count. However, there are significant differences when age and religion are taken into account. The younger age groups are more interested than the older ones. Nearly all of the respondents confessing Islam (95 percent) and the majority of Orthodox Christians (85 percent) are interested. It seems that there is some resistance among Catholics and Protestants (33 percent and 25 percent, respectively) against the idea of including sexual education in school curriculum.

One of the interesting results of the survey is the significant difference of opinion between males and females regarding premarital sex. While premarital sex for boys is rejected by 20 percent of the male respondents, 35 percent of them also reject premarital sex for girls. Among the female respondents 44 percent were against male premarital sex and 46 percent against female premarital sex. Though frequent incidences of premarital sex and unwanted pregnancies among adolescent girls are well known, abortion is illegal in Ethiopia. It is also well known that the consequences of illegally induced abortion used by many young girls are devastating. Hence legalizing abortion is a question of life and death for many young girls. But what do the adolescent in the Nakamte Comprehensive High School say? The survey results indicate that respondents' views about abortion are divided. The majority of the boys (58 percent) and less than half (49 percent) of the girls consider abortion as something that only bad girls commit.

Chaltu compares the results of her survey with previous studies that were made on the subject in Ethiopia and in other countries around the world. In most cases, her findings confirm the results of studies made by other researchers. One of the interesting results of her study is the relationship between the religious background of adolescents and their sexual practices and behavior. It suggests that religion and religious leaders still retain a significant influence in shaping and guiding adolescents' sexual behavior. The study also confirmed the fact that high school students in Ethiopia, boys in particular, are sexually active and that many of them do not use of contraceptive to protect themselves and partners from infectious diseases.

Chaltu's book also raises questions that need further research. One of these is the difference between respondents in the youngest age group (14-16) and those in the older age brackets. The former seem not only more positive about contraceptives, but also more informed about contraceptives methods than the latter. Whether the difference is real or spurious is difficult to judge based on the statistics given in her book. The other point that the reader may find intriguing concerns the relationship between safe sex and the price of condoms mentioned by the informants. What is the price of a packet of condoms in Nakamte? Do adolescents have pocket money in Ethiopia? How expensive are the prices of contraceptives in relation to average family incomes? Answers to these questions and by extension some

information about the economic situation of the average household in Nakamte town could have enlightened the reader

In summary, the book is a welcome contribution to a growing information on adolescent attitudes, views, and practices regarding safe sex. Chaltu covers a vast amount of relevant literature and research results. This has added much depth to her study, supplementing her survey results. The study is action-oriented. It is well connected to other studies made in Ethiopia and elsewhere. Theoretically, the study is well anchored. The comparative approach used by the author is interesting and informative. The Ethiopian situation is not only compared with similar situations in Africa, but also with non-African cases. I recommend the book to policy makers, researchers, educators, and others working with adolescents in Ethiopia.