

An Ethnography on the Community Based Social Organizations among *Jardagaa Jartee* Society of Oromiyaa Regional State of Ethiopia

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Abstract

This study deals with ethnography on the community based social organizations among *Jardagaa Jartee* Society of Oromiya Regional State of Ethiopia. Even though numerous researches have been conducted on writing on the community based social organizations in the country, there is a clear gap of research conducted on the theme in the study area. The study addressed community based social organizations among *Jardagaa Jartee* Society. To realize the intended objectives of the research, qualitative research approach has been adopted. Both primary and secondary sources of data and different data collection tools were used for the study. The secondary sources used have been clearly cited and acknowledged in the journal.

Keywords: Ethiopia; Oromiya; Jaarteel; Social organization

Introduction

African society has good social organizations that assist them in different situations. These different organizations include family, marriage, kinship, religion, different political organizations, voluntary organizations and community-based labor organizations. These different social organizations play a crucial role in the creating solidarity among these societies. Besides, Ethiopia is a mosaic of people with more than 80 nations and nationalities, each with its own language and culture, different styles and costumes. It has been referred to as 'the land of thousand smiles and the origin of human beings. In Ethiopia there are different social organizations. The functions of different social based institutions are not simple in determining the socio- economic and political aspects of the society. However, the attention of scholars on this area is little. There is no prior study on the theme in the study area. The main objective of the study is to understand different community based social organizations in *Jaardaga Jartee* society. Thus, this research deals with Community based social organizations among the Oromo of *Wallagga* society, particularly among *Jaardaga Jaarte* society.

It is better to discuss about the Oromo before explaining *JJaarte* society. The Oromo are one of the most populous indigenous Cushitic people and the major ethnic groups in Ethiopia. According to Ethiopian CSA of 2007, the total number of the Oromo population is 26,993,933. The male's account 13,595,006 and the females account 13,398,927 of the total number, which means more than 40% of the total population of Ethiopia, is the Oromo [1].

The language of the Oromo society is *Afaan Oromo*, and it belongs to the Cushitic languages and it is closely related to Somali, Afar, and Sidama. Asafa and Harwood [2] described the Oromo as being the founders of democracy. The Oromo have the historical legacy of Gada system, a sociopolitical system described as a democratic social structure. Besides, Asmaron [3] in his book *Oromo democracy; an Indigenous African Political System* described, "the Oromo have developed their own variety of democratic political organization that endured for at least four centuries of record history".

Oromo society is divided into two halves that are major components of the kinship system namely: the Borana and Barentu. Borana was *angafa* (senior) while Barentu was *quxusuu* (junior). These two major groups form major Oromo clans and sub-clans. Asmeron alludes that the *Barentuma* are located mainly in the Eastern part of the country, particularly in the Harar region. He further describes the major

branches of the group being the Yejju, Wollo, Barentu and Arsi. The Borana the senior of the Oromo society has moved toward the north and north west leaving the lower Omo and Gibe river basins to their left. The Borana Oromo are further sub-divided into Tulama and Macha by Awash River on the West [3].

According to Mohammed [4] the term '*Maccaa*' means a very wide and large population. Before the *Maccaa* and *Tulama* have formed their respective Gada centers, they had one Gada center, share a common *Chafe* under a common government and common laws located at Oda Nabe in Fatagar. Besides, Tesema (1980:23) described the geographic location of the *Maccaa* Oromo people. He pointed out that the *Maccaa* are settled in the area found between the Gojeb River in the south, river Abbay in the North and the Dabus and Tullu Walal in the West. Alemayehu [5] argued that later on, the *Maccaa* established new politico-religious center at *Oda Bisil*, which is very comfortable for both human settlement and rearing of cattle. As time elapses, that resulted in increased descendants, the *Maccaa*, in turn, organized into two confederacies. These are the *afre* (four) and *sedecha* (three) confederacies. The *Afre* settled to the south and southwest of *Oda Bisil*, in the present Oromiya National Regional State of Illubabora and Wollega zones as well as in Amahara National Regional State of Wembara and Gojjam zones. While the *Sedecha* settled to south and southeastern of *Oda Bisil* and spread over the Gibe Valley. The following diagram shows oromo peoples' genealogy (Figure 1).

Jaardaga Jaarte society is one sub-clan of *Macha*. *Jaardagaa Jaarte* is one of the ten districts found in the Horroo Guduru Wollega. Most of the clans who have been living in the *Jardagaa Jaarte* society were the sons of the *Jaawwii* as per to informants. The dominant economic activity of the society is mixed agriculture. The district is rich in different natural resources like *Hangar* river, *Choggo* river, *Okkotee*

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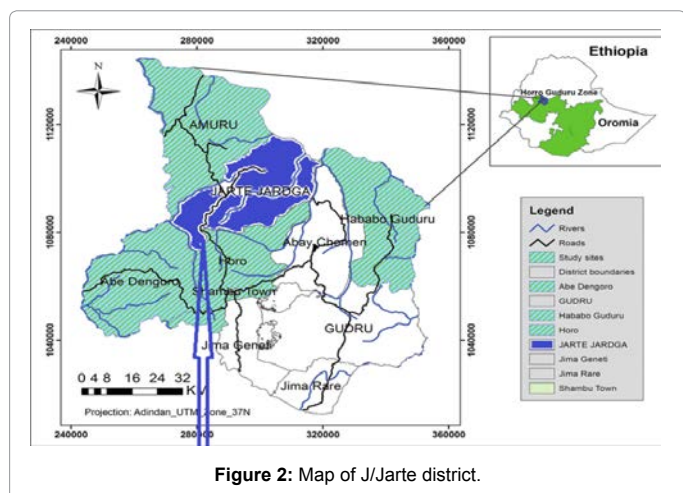
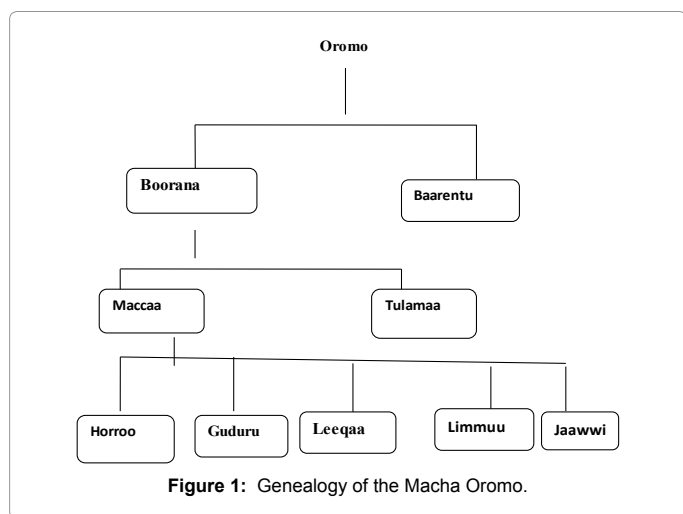
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Mountain, *Hulaa Soogidaa* mountain and *Sadaalee* Mountain are some of the natural heritages found in the area. Also, the district is known in the cultural heritages like *Mishigii* cave that was made by the society to defend the fascist Italian from their lands and society. *Alibo* is the capital town of the district. *Alibo* is found at 52 km from the zonal capital that is *Shaambuu* and 362 km away from Finfinnee (*Addis Ababa*) the capital city of Oromia regional state. The *Jaardaga Jaartee* Woreda has more than 20 village associations. Most of the productive kebele of the districts are Somboo Kumi, Irroo, Akkayuu, Digaluu and Jaardaga village associations. The *J/Jaartee* society is known by their tasty cultural food known as *Chumboo*. *Chumboo* is made of the bread made from the red *teff*, butter and cheese. *Chumboo* is simply we can say modern pizza. The district is bordered in north by Amhara region and Amuru district, in west by *Abedongoro* district, in south by Horroo district and in east in Abbay Chomman district (Figure 2).

The Oromo in general and *J/Jaarte* in particular has different social organizations vibrating in the society. These different social organizations either voluntary or non-voluntary, they have been played a crucial role in the society. However, there is no prior study on the voluntary community based social organizations in the *J/Jaartee* society. Thus, this paper fills this gap through studying the community based social organizations among the *Jardagaa Jarree* society of Horroo society.



Materials and Methods

This paper employed both primary and secondary methods of data collection. The primary methods are collected via observation, interview, and focus group discussion. Also, this study used secondary methods of data collection and the secondary methods were properly acknowledged in the paper. The secondary data were collected from books, journal and reports of different office of the study area.

Community based organizations in the *jardaga jarree* society

As the case of other Oromo communities, the *Jartee* have different community-based organizations established at different levels ranging from the small village associations to those structured at district level. *Hafuusha* (*Iddir*), *Daboo*, *Dadoo*, and *Qixxee* are some of the community based voluntary associations and labor organization found among the *Jartee*.

Hafuusha is a voluntary self-help association often established between households found in close villages. *Hafuusha* is often a self-funded voluntary association whose source of capital is raised from its members in money and in kind on monthly bases. These saved money help members of the *Hafuusha* on different occasion. The saved money by the *Hafuusha* members is insurance for the members of the associations according to interview with some informants. The *Jartee* society practices the *Hafuusha* for different purposes. The *Jartee* society practiced the *Hafuusha* to lend a hand both on times of good and bad. During the good times like the celebration of wedding ceremony and different occasional celebrations *Gorobbee*¹ people found in the same *Hafuusha*, assist each other doing different works. For example, when wedding ceremony takes place in one house the other members of *Hafuusha* contribute foods and drinks like *Farsoo* (local beer), *Injera*, *Araaqee* (liquor) or in the form of house hold materials for those families who prepare marriage ceremony.

In a similar manner, members of one *Hafuusha* help each other at times of troubles as in cases of sickness and death of a family member. At occasions of mourning, members of *Hafuusha* association feed the grieving family for two to three weeks taking turns. Also, members of the *Hafuusha* serve the family who lost their family member, through different activities like farming, threshing, harvesting, especially on those occasions when the member of the family passed away happens to be a male breadwinner.

Furthermore, the *Hafuusha* also lends money to members and non-members who are intending to start up a small business and this is done in a form of what is locally called *bu'aa* (profit). This *bu'aa* given to the people out sides the *Hafuusha* association and the person who took the loan return the money with profits. Generally, *Hafuusha* is an association has been playing crucial roles in the community in the form of the socio-economic aspects among the Oromo.

Another, labor organization among the *Jartee* is *Dadoo*. *Dadoo* is a voluntary based labor association in which a group of people ranging from eight to ten of the same age group organize themselves and collaborate in different works mainly related to agricultural activities like harvesting, preparation land for the farm, forestation and clearances of the forests. The host of the *Dadoo* is often expected to throw a feast. In most occasions the *Warra Dadoo* (those taking part in the *Dadoo*) are served with roasted maize, bread and drinks *Araaqee* and *Farsoo*. As a way of expressing ones gratitude, the people participating

¹*Gorobbee* is a women ceremony that the *Jartee* society practices once a year. The *Gorobbee* is mostly practiced in the July. The society perceives *Gorobbee* ceremony kept the healthy and the productivity of females.

in the labor party will be rewarded one pot of local beer, one sheep, or one goat that slaughtered for the members in the name efficient person. This is a common practice among the *Jarree* society. In line with this, Temesgen [6] mentioned *Daadoo* is organized to undertake different activities, in most gender specific, although not always, to undertake different activities.

Daboo is another community-based labor organization practiced among the *Jarree* society. *Daboo* is a voluntary association often held to help persons who need assistance from their neighboring community. This groups self help is often initiated to help people who cannot finish their works on the time. Customarily, the *Daboo* labor organization take places on the works like farming, harvesting crops, building houses and clearing forest. Unlike that of *Dadoo* which is based on mutual labor exchange, in the case of *Daboo* there is no sense of expectation.

The families, who call the neighbor for support, often prepare food and drinks. In relation to the other labor organizations, the feast prepared during *Daboo* labor organization tends to be diverse. The cultural cuisine in the locality *Chumboo*, and *Murataa* (row meat) will be served on the occasion. Furthermore, local drinks like *Araquee(Liquer)* and *Farsoo* (local beer) are prepared and served to those who participated in the *Daboo*. The people who come for *Daboo* are often served well due to the fact that the *Daboo* labor organization is a voluntary help for people who need labor and that there is no expected return labor help from the person who get support from the neighbor community.

Qaboo is a voluntary based labor organization found among the *Jarree* society. It shares similarities with both the *Dadoo* and *Daboo* labor organizations in the sense that the members are often people who formed groups out of interest. The difference is mainly in relation to the time required. *Qaboo* is not a full day labor organization; but on the occasion people help the person who needs assistance for a maximum of two to three hours. *Qaboo* is also practiced during the farming and harvesting times in the *Jarree* society. Among the study society, *Qaboo* is arranged by young and energetic individuals to help the elders, women, disables (both physical and mental) and any other parts of the society who need support.

Qixxee is a charitable labor organization in which *Jarree* society practiced for the mutual benefit of the participating parties. In the *Qixxee* labor there must be two people having different properties. In this joint venture one of the participants might contribute land while the other person contributes labor or oxen. And the two persons form the *Qixxee* labor organization help each other and equally benefit from the products. Also, the expenses like cost of fertilizers and chemicals, and other inputs are all shared equally. Regarding the time, *Qixxee* can range from one day to one year and more than one year among the *Jarree* society.

Kinship and social organizations of the *jarree* society

Family: Among the *Jarree* society, the nuclear family is called locally *Maatii* and it comprises the husband, wife, and unmarried children and the extended family called the *Warraa*. *Warraa* consists of the nuclear family, the fathers' brother, father sister, grandmother and grandfather.

The family members have their own roles and responsibilities. The *Abbaa Warraa* (father) is the head of the family in the society. The *Abbaa Warraa* manages the activities of his families' members. The obligation of the *Abbaa Warraa* among the *Jarree* Oromo society is actively engaging in agricultural tasks, providing to his family the basic

home, building fence, sowing, harvesting and threshing the crops. The *Abbaa Warraa* is traditionally responsible for the field works while the household works of the domestic sphere are the liability of the *Haadha Warraa* (mother).

Among the *Jarree* next to the father, the *Hadhaa Warraa* has the responsibility of managing the family members. The mother in the family is expected to take care of young children, looking after cattle and domestic animals, preparing the food for the families, preparing Local beer, collecting the wood, fetching the water and working on other different household works. In addition to their domestic activities, women often support their husbands on different outdoor activities like agriculture and marketing. Due to this reason's mothers in *Jarree* society as in most communities are often overloaded on both domestic chores and other agricultural activities.

Children on their part have their own roles in the *Maatii* (family). The *Ilma Angafaa* (senior boy) has the dominant share of activities in the *Maatii* next to his father and mother. The senior boy helps his father in field works like keeping the cattle, ploughing land, harvesting the crops and building fence. While the senior daughter helps her mother with domestic works like preparing food, fetching water and taking care of younger siblings. In addition to this, the female children help their father in the fieldworks mainly in such activities as harvesting and threshing. Among the *Jarree* community, male children in the *maatii* help their father and female children mostly help their mother with domestic works. The children of one household have their own roles and duty depending on the age.

Marriage practices: According to Asmarom [3], the Oromo practice exogamous marriage. He asserted, "Exogamy and preferential marriage are examples of structural linkage that gives rise to vast numbers of kinship bonds between moieties". In line with this, Gemechu and Asefa [7] discussed that Oromos have a traditional marriage ceremony that descended from earlier times (antiquities). As marriage is considered a social contract with a significant value to the society, a great social value is attached to the very wedding ceremony. According to the document from *Jarree* district culture and tourism office (2017), there are many forms of marriages practiced among in the society. These are *Naqataa* (betrothal) *Aseenna*, *Butii* (abduction) and *Sabati Marii*.

Naqataa is the most popular and formal type of marriage among the *Jarree* society. This form of marriage is arranged by the family of the boy based on the consent of their son. *Naqataa* form of marriage is based on the consent of both the families of the couples' and the couples themselves.

Buti (abduction) is another form of the marriage practiced rarely among the community due to its currently illegal status all over the country. *Buti* is illegal and force full marriage practiced by the boy and the friends of the boy abducting a young girl without the willingness of the girl. This form of marriage happens in most cases when a girl does not accept the proposal for marriage.

Another form of the marriage practiced among the *Jarree* society is *Aseenna*. The societies sometimes call it *Satatii*. It is the form of marriage when the boy and the girl arranged their marriage without the consent of their family. This is often the case in situations when one of the families fails to accept the proposed marriage. Recently, *Aseenna* form of marriage is highly practiced in *Jarree* society. According to my informants, *Aseenna* type of marriage is popularly practiced among the *Jarree* society due to its relative low cost.

Sabbat Marii is an old form of marriage among the *Jarree* society. Gemechu and Asefa, [7] define *Sabbat Marii* as "being an indirect,

forceful marriage. It is asking a girl for marriage, which is often done by breaching appointment arrangements or it, is asking a girl for marriage without prior arrangement". In line with this, among the *Jartee* society *Sabbat Marii* is a marriage that happened with in the short periods. However, recently these forms of marriage rare.

Dhala is inheritance of the wife. It is another form of marriage among the *Jartee* society. This form of marriage happened in the society when the husband of the woman died. The widows on those instances are married to her husband's brothers, her brother in law. Nowadays, these kinds of the marriage practice have become minimum in the society due the expansion of sexual transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS.

Decent system: Oromo society has patrilineal descent patterns and the patrilocal settlement patterns [8,9]. In a similar manner, the *Jartee* society practiced the patrilineal and patrilocal patterns. In the study area, the new couple's residence is near the husband's family homesteads. Hultin [10] argued that there is a relationship between the land and the man in the Macha society. He discussed the son inherits his father's land and live on the land. Similarly, among the *Jartee* when a young boy is married, his father provides him a plot of land for the son as a way of startup capital for building his house and own his own independent farm. This construction of independent home most of the time takes places after wedding ceremony. On the wedding ceremony the relatives of the family, provide different household materials for the newly married couples. The house materials provided for the new couples both by the bride groups and by groom groups. This helps the newly married young couples as the starting point for their newly constructed home.

In the study area some time the newly married couples, might stay with their grooms' family. This happens when the family of the grooms has only one son. In another occasions this takes places at the time when the family of the boy are too old and are in situations when the son needs to reside close by for assistance. Thus, the *Jartee* society practices patrilocal system. Customarily, newly born children trace their generations through their fathers' line. The children who are born out of wedlock often take the name of their mother's father.

***Fira Barii*:** The phrase "*Fira Barii*" is derived from two words that mean '*Fira*' and '*Barii*'. Literally, *Fira* means relative and '*Barii*' means to come to know. '*Fira Barii*' hence means, "getting to know one's own relatives". In the study area, *Fira Barii* is one of social networks that organized with the purpose of marinating a social network between kin members and those who have blood ties.

According to my informants, the need to come with such social network goes back to an incident that is described to have occurred a long time ago. This was a history of two relatives who used to reside in different parts of the region and who never maintained contact. The children of these two families hardly knew each other. Their children had relationship and ended up in marriage. But, according to the norms of the society, marriage that takes place between the close relatives forbidden. This kind of marriage in the society considered as *haaramuu*, a cursed act that might result in negative consequences. The *Jartee* society began the practice *Fira Barii* with the main purpose of avoiding a *haaramuu* happening to a family member and to evade the incest taboo in the society.

Fira Barii takes place once a year. *Fira Barii* is arranged in a given people who are relatives, rich and live with each other in the one home stead. These rich people bring the cows, crops and cash for the feasts and drinks prepared on the ceremony. Relatives up to seven generation

attend the *Fira Barii* ceremony. This is due to the fact that the people who found in the seven generations are considered as relatives among the *Jartee* of Wollega society.

As *Fira Barii* is prepared during the time of dry season, numerous people participate in the ceremony to know their relative. The youth who are not married are often motivated to attend the ceremony. On this day, peoples who host the ceremony prepare different feasts of local drinks like *Farsoo*, and *Araqee* for the society who came to attend the *Fira Barii* ceremony.

As per my informants, one of the dominant sub-clan in the study area is *Ashayyaa*. *Ashayyaa* has four children *Ushoo*, *Giboo*, *Qunachoo* and *Fiche*. *Ushoo* is the senior and *Fiche* is the junior. The people found under each son of the *Ashayyaa* sit in front of one another. The four elders selected from the decedents of the sons of *Ashayyaa* bless the ceremony. Following the blessing, peoples from four sons of the *Ashayyaa* stand from their seat and mix amongst themselves. This is to symbolize their unity and being of near ancestor.

After that, the people eat and drinks. Also, on *Fira Barii* day the local dancing as *dhichisaa*, *geerarsaa* and other entreating activities as jokes take place. On the ceremony ends with blessings of elders. Before departure, people reach at a consensus on the time, venue of the next *Fira Barii*.

Fira Barii beyond its main purpose of keeping the commonality of relatives, it is also a self-help organization meant to sustain a member of a family who is discreetly in need of support at one level of his/her life. On the day of this ceremony, people coming from different area bring things like the cows, goat, sheep and money. The money and resources collected in the *Fira Barii* are in most instances given to poor people from their relatives and part of it is also saved. In some instances the money is also used to inanties a joint family business whereby they buy common property. So, the *Fira Barii* has additional economical advantages besides its significance of social networks [11].

Discussion and Conclusion

This paper deals with an ethnography of community based social organizations among Oromiya regional state of Ethiopia in the case of *Jardagaa Jartee* society. The *Jaartee* society lives in the north eastern part of the country. The *Jaartee* society is under clan of the *Meccaa* Oromo. The leading economic activity of the society is agriculture and animals' husbandry. The main objective of the study to understand community based social organizations among the *Jardagaa Jartee* society. The researcher has been employed both primary and secondary methods of data collection.

The well-known community-based organizations in the study area were *Hafoosha* (*Iddir*), *Daboo*, *Dadoo*, and *Qixxee*. *Hafoosha* is often a self-funded voluntary association whose source of capital is raised from its members in money and in kind. Another community-based organization is *Dadoo* that is a voluntary based labor association in which a group of people ranging from eight to ten of the same age group organize themselves and collaborate in different works mainly related to agricultural activities. Also, the *Jaartee* society practices the *daboo* a voluntary association often held to help persons who need assistance from their neighboring community. *Qaboo* is not a full day labor organization; but on the occasion people help the person who needs assistance for a maximum of two to three hours. This form of labor organization is practiced helping peoples in needs like disables. *On the other hand*, the society practices *Qixxee* labor organizations where two persons form the *Qixxee* labor organization help each other and equally benefit from the products.

Like other Oromo society the Jaartee society are extended family. They practice the are patrilineal descent system. Also, the Oromo in general and *Jaartee* society in particular are exogamous society. one can't marry from his/her clan. If one married from the relative the society will call the person as *haramuu*. Among the Jaartee society marriage relatives were highly forbinne. Inorder to avoid the relative marriage the Jaartee society practices *Fira Bariii*. The phrase "*Fira Bariii*" literally means, "Getting to know one's own relatives". In the study area, *Fira Bariii* is one of social networks that organized with the purpose of marinating a social network between kin members and those who have blood ties. The *Fira Baarii* cultural practices have many socio-economic advantages for the Jaartee society. First, it one mechanism of strengthen social network and unity among the study society. Second, *Fira Bariii* one means of the cultural ways to protect the order among the society thereby avoiding the close relative marriages. Third, the *Fira Bariii* ceremonies the economically poor individuals obtain different support from the society. Generally, the Jaartee society has many cultural based social organizations that help them in different socio-economic activities of the society.

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