

A HISTORY OF QUTTOO TRADITIONAL PRACTICE AMONG THE GUJI OROMO: THE CASE OF BULE HORA DISTRICT, WEST GUJI ZONE, SOUTHERN ETHIOPIA

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ABSTRACT: *The major goal of this study is to reconstruct the history quttoo tradition of the Guji Oromo and its major functions among the society. To achieve this goal, an attempt was made to collect authentic data sources from local elders, women and youths orally. The written documents which have relation with the study also examined and cross checked. The Guji people exercises different traditional practices which are set in the Guji customary laws. Quttoo tradition is one of these traditional practices that had been performed by the community. Quttoo is an ornament material usually worn by the Guji girls before getting marriage. This material plays the plenty roles for women particularly the girls in the Guji culture. These roles are visible in the quttoo traditional practices. The most known function of quttoo tradition are sociocultural, economic and political functions. Since the beginning of the Gada system of governance, the outlook of the Guji people towards the females was lower. For instance, the women can't participate in the political system. For this reason, the women in Guji came to be marginalized from the politics of the society. However, this important traditional practice helped the Guji girls to be honorable sects with in the society. Generally, the quttoo tradition is an umbrella for the Guji women particularly, the girls to protect them from different human violence and ideological inferiority.*

KEYWORDS: Quttoo, Traditional Practice, Guji Oromo, Guji Girls, Southern Ethiopia.

INTRODUCTION

The History of *Quttoo* Traditional Practice among the Guji Oromo Society

The Guji Oromo people had been ruled by the Gada system for a long period of time. Some documents justify that the beginning of the Gada system in the Guji people as far as the year 1424.¹ Informants and contemporary written documents reveals that the present newly elected *Abba Gada* is 74th cycle of Gada President. Starting from the beginning of this new administration system, the Guji Oromo people had been governed by the customary law which is distinctive from the constitutional laws. This Gada customary law is enacted by the *Hayyus* (councilor) and the Gada officials who have knowledge and experience on the Guji traditions. This law formerly enacted at *Oda Bultum*, the well-known and great ritual place of Oromo people. However, now a day, since Guji people had expanded to different directions, *Me'ee Bokkoo* became the common ritual place (*Ardaa jilaa*) for the whole Uruga Guji tribe.²

¹ Report from Culture and Tourism Administrative office (Manuscript, 13 March, 2017, Bule Hora District, Oromia Region) ,p.3

² Informants: Jarso, Ganale and Girja; Abebe Gobena, " The Influence of Imposition of Non-indigenous Cultural Elements on Guji Oromo Cultural Values(.....,2016),pp.67-68

The Guji customary law divided all activities that are performed in the society in to moral and immoral activities. Moral activities are the activities that are supported by the customary law and have acceptance with in the society whereas immoral activities are the activities that are opposed by the customary law and disliked by the society. For instance, talking, walking or going, eating, sitting, crossing the river before the seniors (elders) is immoral. Accordingly, preceding the elders or first borne is believed to cause misfortunes, with in the society. In addition, in the Guji society, every things have its own norms and tradition. For instance, children, wife, husband, boy, girl, male, female... etc. These section of the society have to pass through the tradition under which they are categorized. Unless, it will be immoral for the society.³ Therefore, this research aimed to assess the customary law on the girls particularly on the *quttoo* traditional practice among the Guji girls.

Quttoo is one of cultural elements practiced in the Guji society. It is a material that is bound or tied on the hair of the Guji girls before the marriage. The Guji girls hold *quttoo* when they arrive adolescence. This material is made up from different small substances such as tiny, tendons (thin skin), threads, beads, wires and other kinds of decorative materials. Besides, *quttoo* belongs to the Guji girls to show their identity, honor and virginity. This material has wide definition in the Guji community. Some peoples define it as a holly material to show the virginity of the girls. But, others, having this, define it as the material element to imply the identity of the Guji girls and their dignity throughout the community. Some parts of the society regard the *quttoo* as a power and right of the girls in the society of Guji. Some people also define *quttoo* as a decorative materials of the girls. However, all the community agreed up on the significance of *quttoo* to substitute the identity, dignity and virginity of the Guji girls.⁴ Informants revealed that the practice of *quttoo* tradition makes Guji distinctive from other Oromo community live out of Guji territory. This material is prepared by the mother of the girls after they arrived usually above 14 years old. Holding *quttoo* has its own meaning in the society. When the mother of the girl prepare the *quttoo* for her daughter, she meant "now, my girl had reached for marriage and henceforth ready for marriage request for who wants to marry her". Thus, *quttoo* can also use to signify the adolescence of the Guji girls.⁵

The exact period of *quttoo* tradition practice was unknown. However, most of our informants stated that the tradition of practicing *quttoo* was begun during the Italian occupation of Ethiopia. Contrary other respondents argued that the beginning of *quttoo* tradition was existed even before the coming of Italy in to Ethiopia. They suggested that this tradition was begun after the Guji people made their own *Ardaa Jilaa* (ceremonial place) at *Me'ee Bokkoo* and enacted their own law on their way of life. According to their belief, the Gada officials and other authorized elders or *hayyuus* (executive body of Gada administration) altogether enacted the laws and then declared the girls to hold *quttoo* in the communities of the Guji.⁶ This also consolidated by Abebe Gobena (2016:122) in his study as "...in traditional Guji, sociocultural activities such as marriage, burials, ceremonies, child nurturing activities, social organization and others were carried on the basis of the Gada government social code of laws. Therefore, it was after this time that *quttoo* tradition started to be expanded throughout the whole Guji

³ Report from the Cultural and Tourism Administrative office of Bule Hora Town (Manuscript, 22 March, 2017, Bule Hora, Oromia Region),p.11

⁴ *Ibid*, Jarso and Yubo Gelchu.

⁵ Informants: Demisse Bekele, Kebede Besaye and Buskute Wado.

⁶ Informants: Genale Mi'essa, Yubo Gelchu and Gobena Saba.

community. The Guji tribe called *Alaabduu (Haloo)* were assumed to be the first to practice *quttoo* tradition from the Guji Oromo community.⁷

Before the creation of *quttoo* tradition, the Guji people had been practiced *qarree haaduu* tradition (shaving the hair on the tip of the head) to identify the girls from the married (women) similarly with that of Borana people at present day. During this time, the Guji girls shave their *qarree* (tip part of hair on head) until they get marriage. The *qarree* tradition imply that the girl is untouched and have virginity. Oral informants suggested that the present *quttoo* tradition, is a substituent of the former *qarree haaduu* tradition in the Guji community.⁸ Informants also narrate that *qarree* tradition had been practiced by the Guji people to show the girls with virginity or to show unmarried women. *Qarree* (shaving *qarree*) tradition is equivalent to the *quttoo* tradition on the matter of the degree and respectability. In the other words, *qarree* tradition comprises over all activities performed in the *quttoo* tradition of the present time.⁹

In the community, the girls begin to hold *quttoo* after they developed the breast, locally known as *abuuyaa* meaning the small breast. According to the Guji culture, once the girls begin to hold or bind *quttoo*, no one touch either her clothes or body without her permission. Thus, the Guji people say "*intalti quttoo farda kooraati; hin qaban ,yoo qaban qabaa qabdi* " to mean a girl with *quttoo* is equivalent to the horse with saddle; no one can touch her and one who may touch her will be followed by legal accusations. According to the Guji customary laws, a person who may touch the girls with *quttoo* is punished by the law. The punishment is a heifer of cattle. A person cannot deny her accusation. Even, there is no need of evidence to examine such a crime in the Guji culture. According to the Guji customary law, if a person refused the punishment, he is enforced to be punished seven hands. This means, a person is punished seven cattle as to his refusal. The men who are authorized to make decision on such issues are called *Hayyuu* (executive body of Gada administration).¹⁰

According to the Guji customary law, the girl should have not leave a place where she is touched by a person and shout for help. This is to show violation of her right and demanding justice. But if she left the place, she fail or loss the right to accuse and charge the person. People who came there because of her shouting cannot decide anything until the concerned body or official (*Hayyuu*) arrive there. Thus, the mandate of making decision or deciding the required punishment is in the hand of *hayyuus*. The punishment is, customarily, one cow(heifer).But if a person refused to obey the *hayyuu's* decision the *hayyuus* send group of *Jaldhaabaa* (police men of the Gada administration)to the refused person. The *Jaldhaabaa* can flog or trounce the person and take seven cattle from the accused person. One of the seven cattle is slaughtered for the *Jaldhaabaa*; one is given for the girl and the rest five cattle are possessed by the *hayyuus*. All of these are allowed in the customary laws of the Guji Oromo people.¹¹ Our informants also discussed that the Guji girls use *quttoo* as their right and identity before they hold *Siiqoo /siiqqee* (thin stick) during their day of marriage. In other words, *quttoo* serves as the right, identity, and dignity of the girls before marriage whereas *siiqqoo* (legal stick of women) serves as the right, dignity, and identity of girls (women) after marriage. The right of the Guji girls (unmarried girls) are respected in accordance with *quttoo* while the rights of Guji women

⁷ Abebe Gobena,p.122.

⁸ Informants: Genale,Yubo and Gobena.

⁹ *Ibid*

¹⁰ Informants:Jarso, Ture and Adula.

¹¹ *Ibid*

(married girls) are respected in accordance with *siiqqoo* in the Guji communities.¹² According to the Guji culture, unmarried girl with no *quttoo* is immoral for the community. The girl that hasn't *quttoo* is regarded as if she had married to someone. It is difficult to identify the girl that had married at soon from unmarried one. Thus, a man may ask, doubtfully, the girl that had been married in a short time. That is why the *quttoo* is practiced by the girl only. It is also immoral in the society if a married (women) hold *quttoo*. Therefore, the Guji girls leave to wear (hold) *quttoo* as soon as she had got marriage. Taking all of this into considerations, the Guji people had formed a distinctive tradition of practicing *quttoo* to identify the girls from the married women.¹³

Moreover to its significance of decoration and identification for the girls, *quttoo* enables the Guji girls to possess various properties from the family of the boy. According to Dejene (2009:28), "...if the girl happens to be a Virgin, she also given an additional cow renamed as *quttoo*".¹⁴ *Quttoo* also enables the Guji girls to have confidence and to be proud with in the family of the boy and even in the community. During the marriage the Guji girl walks very slowly until she reach house of the boy. Here no one can enforce her to move quickly. Her right is culturally respectable. According to the Guji culture, she enters kraal (Cattle enclosure) rather than man gate during the marriage. The two bridges wait for the coming of the cows to the enclosure (kraal) at evening. Then they enter kraal following the cows. Then she is informed to catch a tail of one cow and enter the cows' compound with that cattle. Then that cattle will be her property. If they don't give that cow for her, she can refuse to enter the kraal until they do this. In this Case, it is immoral to violate her to go from there. After she is given a cow, she enter the enclosure and when she reached the door, she refuses to enter once again. When she reach the class of the boy she married to, she refuses to enter again. Here, she also given cattle. But, if there are no such cattle, they kindly request her to enter the class.¹⁵ On the second day, they detach the *quttoo* from her hair. *Quttoo* is removed from the hair of married girl (bride) either by the sister of the boy or the boy (husband) himself. Before detaching *quttoo* from the hair of bride it is mandatory to give her one cow (heifer) for the bride. If they don't give her a cow, she has full right to refuse to remove *quttoo* from her hair. The name of the cow given her in place of her *quttoo* is henceforth called "*quttoo*" This means, the cow is named after the name of the material (*quttoo*).¹⁶ In addition to that, the family of the boy take the girl (bride) to the cattle kraal and tell her to hit one of the cows with her *siiqqoo* (legal stick). After she did this, that cattle (cow) is decided to be her property.¹⁷ After this time, that cow is named as *Siiqqoo*. The bride also given another cow with a calf locally known as "*okolee-gaadii*" meaning milky cow. Even, if there is no cattle, it must to give the *quttoo* cattle for the bride. Detaching *quttoo* without any kinds of gift is considered as a serious crime in the Guji customary laws.¹⁸

Some informants stated that there are two kinds of *quttoo* among the Guji community. One is the *quttoo* held by the girls (or *quttoo* before marriage) and the other is *quttoo* held by women (*quttoo* after marriage). However, these two kinds of *quttoo* are different from each other. As our informants described, the women's *quttoo* has a hole or open place on its peak whereas the

¹² *Ibid*; Dejene N. Debsu, "Gender and Culture in Southern Ethiopia: An Ethnographic analysis of Guji Oromo Women's Customary Right. African Study Monographs,(2009),p .23

¹³ Informants: Genale, Girja and Morkata.

¹⁴ Informants: Elema Gemedede, Girja Godana; Dejene N. Debsu, p.28

¹⁵ Informants: Me'ere, Yubo and Berri.

¹⁶ Dejene N. Debsu, p.31

¹⁷ Informants: Me'ere, Yubo and Berri.

¹⁸ Informants: Satana, Buskute and Elema.

girls' *quttoo* has no hole on its peak (tip). An open spot of the women's *quttoo* indicate that the female had married or had no virginity (not girl). This kind of *quttoo* is held (used) for a decorative purpose rather than to show virginity. But, in contrast, the girls' *quttoo* shows that the girl is still untouched or a virgin.¹⁹ Generally, *quttoo* is a material culture that stands for the protection of the rights, identity, and respect of the Guji girls not to be violated by others, both before and after marriage.

The Contributions of *Quttoo* Tradition among the Guji Oromo Societies

This chapter deals about the contributions of the *quttoo* tradition among the Guji society. These contributions have been categorized into three major parts by the researchers as sociocultural, economic and political.

Sociocultural Contributions of *Quttoo*

Quttoo tradition has various sociocultural contributions among the Guji people. In the Guji society, the *quttoo* girl is respectable. She is regarded as *woyyuu* (honorable) person. It is only allowed to touch her body during greeting and playing. Unless, touching the body of the Guji girls is considered as a negative action done for unnecessary purposes. In addition, either insulting or frightening the Guji girls is also prohibited by the society. Thus, the degree of *quttoo* to respect the virgin girls, who practice it, in the society is very tremendous.²⁰ The Guji culture also gives a great respect for the *quttoo* girls from violating and raping the girls in the society. In the culture, the *quttoo* girls and young men are not allowed to touch or hug each other unless they are sister and brother or relatives. Even, the man who needs to ask her for the marriage cannot sit behind her during the decision. There should be some interval (gap) between them. The only possibility to touch and hug each other is after the conclusion of marriage.²¹

However, there is no such cultural restrictions between the same sex (girls with girls), and also girls with the boys who are below 14 years. The boys below 14 years are, socially, considered as children. Until the boys arrive this age, there is no such serious customary principles about them since they are taken as children. One of the Guji's sayings concerning this "*Ijoolleen aadaa hin beektu*" to mean the children don't know moral values. This implies that what is done or said by children may be something wrong therefore people should not cause quarrels or disputes based on children's context.²²

Besides, as a sociocultural contribution, married and unmarried women are identified by the *quttoo*. Therefore, it is immoral to leave *quttoo* for the girls in the society. Accordingly, the girls that have no *quttoo* could not be treated with the one with *quttoo* by the customary law. This is not to mean there is no punishment if she is violated. But, a person who may rape her is punished the cow bull rather than the heifer. This is due to the fact that the girl that has no *quttoo* is considered to be a married woman; a person who violated women is punished a bull rather than a heifer, in the culture.²³

¹⁹ Informants: Demisse, Kebede and Cari.

²⁰ Informants: Yubo, Me'ere and Satana.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

Moreover *quttoo* serves as a means to maintain aesthetic value of girls and women's. It is very attractive and serves as a decorative material for the girls of Guji to look beautiful.²⁴ Beyond the girls, the *quttoo* tradition is also the identity of the Guji people. This means, the *quttoo* tradition is the only tradition practice performed among the Guji community.²⁵ According to the Guji culture, the girl marry to the man with her full cultural materials. All of these materials are prepared by her family. *Quttoo* is one of the materials provided for the bride as a gift. *Quttoo* serves as symbol of respect for girl's family for instance when the girl marry to someone without a consent of her family, there will be quarrel between two families. During the day of get together or forgiveness of the two families, the father of the girl observe the presence of *quttoo* on her hair perhaps if there is no *quttoo* on her hair, he take the marriage as abduction (illegal marriage). He take the lost *quttoo* as evidence and request the local elders for justice about illegal marriage done on his daughter.²⁶

The honor of *quttoo* also proceeds throughout the life after marriage. The girl married with *quttoo* is respected by both her husband and his families. Also, her husband can never divorce her. It is unacceptable in the society. Even if her husband divorced her, she argues that she was a girl before he had married her considering *quttoo* as her evidence. On this, *quttoo* helps her to have morality. Dejene (2009) also discussed this issue as "... in the Guji culture, divorce is discouraged both by the wife's and husband's parents and every possible measures are taken to solve their problems..."²⁷

Economical Contributions of *Quttoo*

In the Guji community, *quttoo* has also many economical contributions. According to the Guji culture, girls does not have the right to inherit the properties of her family. For instance, when the girl is born, she is not given land. The land is allowed for the boys only. However, the father may give her the cow called *geegewoo* (accompanier cow) during her marriage. In addition, her father may sent other cattle called *dabaree* (assistant cattle) for specific time. But, both *geegewoo* and *dabaree* cattle are not mandatory of the girls' father to give them; it depend on the interest of the father of the girls. Then, the *dabaree* cattle turn back for the family of the girls after the two spouses possessed their own properties. This is discussed by Dejene (2009) as "...the marriage gifts such as *siqqoo*, *quttoo* and other indirect forms of inheritance from their parents' property such as *geegewoo*, and *jibbaataa* are a few of mechanism through which the women in the Guji may acquire personal/private property..."²⁸

However, the land or estate of the Guji girls is given them after the marriage. This estate is mostly a cow that is given her in the place of her *quttoo*. For the boy's family, it is must to give this cow before releasing (removing) *quttoo* from the heir of the bride. The bride also has a right to refuse to remove the *quttoo* until she is given a cow. This is also supported by the customary law of the Guji community.²⁹ Accordingly, if she refused and goes with *quttoo*, she is considered as a virgin girl. But, this causes the great shame to the boy and his families. In addition, if she informed what happened to her for the *fira* (clan of the boy), it is very frightening because *fira* is a powerful groups of families who control over all activities performed with in the *worraa* (sub-clan). Thus, the *fira* can enforce the family members to give

²⁴ Informants: Cari, Bolle and Adula.

²⁵ *Ibid*

²⁶ Informants: Cari, Bolle, and Adula.

²⁷ Dejene N. Debsu, pp. 28-29.

²⁸ Informants: Genale, Girja and Dukale; Dejene Debsu, p.31

²⁹ *Ibid*

the heifer for the bride. But, if the family of the boy have no cattle, the *firaa* or *gosaa* give their own cattle for girl (bride). It is after this time that she remove *quttoo* from her hair.³⁰

The *quttoo* girl has the right to possess three cows in accordance with the Guji culture during marriage. These cattle (cows) are known as *quttoo* (a cow given in place of *quttoo*), *Siiqqoo* (a heifer given as a result of holding *siiqqoo*), and *okolee-gaadii* (a cow with calf or milking cow). Additionally, the boy's family may give other properties too. But, these three cows are the most popular in the society. Therefore, the traditionalist girl (girl with *quttoo*) has such rights of property, in the customary law of the Guji Oromo people.³¹

According to the Guji culture, these three cows could not be taken from the bride. These cattle are regarded as equal property for the two spouses. Her husband cannot use these property alone he cannot make as required without making due discussion with the bride (the girl). If he used without the consent of his wife, *firaa* or *gosaa* party involves in the issue and punish the husband. The punishment maybe flogging the man with small and thin sticks until he promise not to repeat this unlawful action.³²

Generally, in the Guji culture, though the Guji girls have not the right to inherit the property of their families, *quttoo* tradition enables them to inherit the original property from the families of the boy. Therefore, in the Guji customary law, *quttoo* is considered as the right of property.³³

Political Contributions of *Quttoo*

Quttoo tradition also plays a pivotal roles in the political aspects of the Guji community beyond sociocultural and economical importance. According to the Guji culture, there are five *hayyuus* (parties) who authorized to make the laws. These law makers always go with *Abbaa Gadaa* everywhere. Most of the time, *Abbaa Gadaa* is consulted by them. They are well experienced and knowledgeable about the Guji culture. The *quttoo* tradition is also one of the cultural elements of the Guji that is enacted by these *hayyuus* and other knowledgeable Gada officials. They identified *quttoo* for the whole girls of Guji people. They decided the girls to wear *quttoo* at the time of adolescence. Therefore, the girls are obliged to hold *quttoo* during the time of adolescence. This material help them to identify themselves from other social class i.e. married women and enables them to be honorable in the society. These Gadaa officials had made the *quttoo* law and principle which is much feared in the society.³⁴ According to the Guji customary law, one who touch or rape the *quttoo* girls forcefully is decided to pay (punished) one heifer. Dejene (2009:31) also suggested that "transgression against such laws is punishable and exclusion from the social relationships..."³⁵

The organ whom has the mandate to investigate and proceed justice is given to *hayyuus* (traditional executive bodies) that are elected in the community. *Jaldhaabaa* are the groups of men who are traditionally empowered to serve as policemen in the Guji community. They care for any refusal of *hayyuus* decision or any opposition against the Guji customary laws.³⁶ Accordingly, the principle of *quttoo* tradition become a pillar for the statutory law towards the rights of women. The principle, supports Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopian

³⁰ Informants: Dukale, Elema and Morkata.

³¹ Dejene,p.28; Informants: Ture, Dukale and Gobena.

³² Dejene,p.28

³³ Ibid, p.31.

³⁴ Dejene,p.31

³⁵ Informants: Satana, Buskute and Elema.

³⁶ *Ibid*

constitution stipulated in Article 35 which refers about women's rights. Therefore, most of the time, customary laws of the society work interdependently with statutory laws (State laws).³⁷

On the other hand, regarding equality of property, both the husband and wife are obliged to use their properties equally. Gender equality in the society is dictated by the *firaa* or *gosaa* party, who have the power to control all clans. These officials look after the women not to be alienated and harassed by their husbands and to have equality on their common properties obtained with the honor of *qutto*. They also control over all the activities performed with in their clans. This customary law also assists the Ethiopian constitution towards gender equality and right of properties. The study of Fafchaps and Quisumbing (2002) show that...the assets held in the sole ownership by the wife during marriage do not raise her bargaining power since it is likely to be shared equally between spouses upon no-fault divorce.³⁸

Therefore, *qutto* tradition plays the great roles both before and after marriage in the Guji society. Even its significance proceeds throughout the entire life of women. Beside to this, divorcing the *qutto* girl is immoral in the Guji society. If the husband divorced the wife married with *qutto*, she has the right to refuse this marriage dissolution. During this time, *qutto* assumed as her right evidence before the *gosaa* party.³⁹

Generally, because of customary law is very serious in the Guji culture, no one can disregard with. It is inviolable and respectful. As far as one knows, if the customary law is respected, the same is true with the statutory law. Thus, there is no doubt that this *qutto* tradition has great roles in avoiding violence happens to the women. If the crimes towards women are avoided, the peace and security; and rule of law of the country is maintained. This is how *qutto* tradition is beneficiary for the politics of the country.⁴⁰

Factors that Affects the *Qutto* Tradition

Qutto is a beauty and cultural decorative instrument that reflects the Guji Oromo culture is, now a day, being ignored. This is due to the fact that resistance that emerged in the society and external factors. Especially, this is visible on the new generation in the society, who requested the new fashion and regarded the native culture as an old (backward) fashion. This have exhausted an energy of several cultural elements and sacred objects including *qutto*. Abebe (2016) discussed this as "...in modern time, sacred ritual objects, religious artifacts, and worship practices have been considered as the sign of backwardness and worthless objects...".⁴¹

Informants of Bule Hora district Stated that at the current day, it is very difficult to find the *qutto* girls (those girls who use *qutto*) in Bule Hora town and its surroundings with the exception of some rural villages and neighboring *woredas* (districts). However, the Guji girls in the neighboring *woredas* like Gelana, Abaya, Dugda Dawa, Melka Soda and others are still in practicing the *Qutto* traditions.⁴²

³⁷ *Ibid*

³⁸ *Ibid*, Fafchaps and Quisumbing, "Control and Ownership of Assets with in Rural Ethiopian Households. Journal Development Studies,(2002), p.78

³⁹ Informants:Gobena Saba,Ture Dukale and Cari Galgalo.

⁴⁰ Jemjem Udessa and Dhadacha Gololcha, p.54.

⁴¹ Abebe Gobena, P.102; Informants: Satana and Buskute,

⁴² Informants: Tsegaye, Bali and Cari

Generally, we have categorized those factors affecting the *Quttoo* tradition practices among the Guji people in to three major sections. These are religions, modern technology; and attitudes and ethnic (cultural) interactions. Each of these factors are discussed below.

Religious Factors

Most of Bule Hora district informants narrate that the *quttoo* tradition was active (in practice) before the expansion of religions throughout the community. Prior to the expansion of modern religions, Guji people had been lived by their original culture. However, after the coming of new religions (Christianity and Islamic) into the society, people began to accept religious ideologies of the time.⁴³ Abebe (2016), in his study, discussed the influence of religion upon indigenous traditions, rituals and practices including *quttoo*. He has elaborated as follows

*before incorporation of Guji into Christian empire, traditional prayers had been conducted under bigger sacred trees...however, infiltration of modern religious values brought change on public ethnical attitudes towards nature which paved the ways for the expansion of Muslim and Christian destructive cultural values in Guji....*⁴⁴

Our informants also witnessed that both Christianity and Islamic religion do not agree with the legislation and principles of the culture. Most of the time, they go through their own dogmas. Chiefly, our informants from Christian religion (religious leaders) revealed as

*The all-knowing God had already set all the ways in which human kinds live. All of his words regarding human life are written in the Holly Bible. Accordingly, all human beings are obliged to live according to his words. Therefore, living as the order of cultural laws is regarded as violation of the God's will or as misdeeds....*⁴⁵

Even if there are massive numbers of believers, who try to reconcile the religion with the culture, there are tremendous divergence between the religious doctrine and that of the culture. Moreover, *quttoo* tradition is said to be unacceptable by both Christianity and Islamic.⁴⁶ In addition, believing in abstract concepts and physical objects like mountains, rivers, land, ceremonial place as well as power vested in certain individual and families are taken as sin (misdoings).⁴⁷ They also believe in the God's comments in the Holly Bible to be separated from the secularists and their ways of life.⁴⁸ The elders of the town revealed that various cultural components mainly *quttoo* tradition came to be exhausted after the Christian missionaries came to the region and began Evangelization through the population. This resulted the society,

⁴³ Informants: Shaik Ali Hassen, Abdi Tuke, and Solomon Zeleke, Abebe, pp.102-107.

⁴⁴ Abebe Gobena, pp.102

⁴⁵ Informants: Buno Ararso, Mul'ato Hotessa and Abdi Tuke.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*

⁴⁷ Holly Bible, Old Testament; (Exodus 20:3-5), p.76

⁴⁸ Holly Bible, New Testament; (2 Corinthians 6:14-18), p.215

mainly youngsters to disregard their aboriginal culture. Today, this influence is more visible in the *woreda*.⁴⁹

Our informants of the district narrate that some religious associations had started to support the idea of conciliation of religious doctrine with cultural philosophy currently. Accordingly, the followers of such religious branches wear and practice the traditional materials like *quttoo*, *siiqqee* (*siiqqoo*), *mijuu*, traditional clothes,...etc. during the time of wedding and ceremonies. This is done rarely by few number of people.⁵⁰ However, this ideology is extremely blamed by different religious association. Some of our informants from these religious associations told us the great divergence and arguments between the ideology of spiritualism and secularism. They say that a person ways of life should be limited to either spiritualism or secularism. Unless, holding the two ideologies altogether is fruitless. But, if done, this is taken as misdoings in front of the God and the soul of such a person will not be taken into the heaven. They also justify their speech by referring Holy Bible on which they based. This part of Bible consists about the right ways of life of Christians and it is a will of the God to follow this orders only.⁵¹ Generally, a massive numbers of people of the district are the followers of Christian faith with the exception of few numbers of elders with their indigenous culture. The young generation of the district are the participatory of these new religions which later caused them to ignore their culture. Accordingly, the Guji girls whom the *quttoo* tradition belongs to had not paying attention for it and this aggravated the cultural components of the Guji society to be deteriorated. Thus, *quttoo* and other related material cultures are being gathered and stored into store and other cultural centers by the great effort of culture and tourism office and other concerned bodies of the Bule Hora district.⁵²

Modern Technology and Attitudes

Modern technology has been adversely affecting the cultures, traditions, norms and values of our country from the time to time. No doubt that the victims of this influence are young men whose aspirations is to attend western styles. The Guji Oromo community are well known by maintaining their original culture. However, the development of modern technology and globalization eventually resulted for the ignorance of indigenous culture by the society.⁵³ As informants described, in the Guji society, all things have its required cultural position. For instance, children, adults, youngster, elders, wife, husband, cattle and others daily activities are limited to the culture. In the Guji culture, the girls or women cannot wear trousers and short clothes. They also don't go without *quttoo*. It was immoral for the girls to go without *quttoo*. However, at present time, the girls in the Guji society themselves have left behind the responsibility to practice the cultural styles belongs to them.⁵⁴ Accordingly, regarding this impacts of modern technology on the *quttoo*, our informants forwarded different reasons. For example, the Democratic rights developed in the current Ethiopian government guaranteed by the constitution allowed everyone to hold his/her outlooks without interference. Because of this, one can either advocate or deny the ideologies of culture based on this right. Abebe (2016) justified this in his study as "...now a days, introduction of modern political concepts such as liberalism, human rights, women's right, democracy, affirmative action, gender equality, lady's

⁴⁹ Informants: Tubo Gelchu and Jarso Gelgelo.

⁵⁰ Informants: Cari Gelgelo, Adula Gose and Dukale Gose.

⁵¹ Holy Bible, New Testament ;(Matthew 6:24),p.8

⁵² Wereda culture and tourism office report(assessed on March, 2017).

⁵³ Informants: Satana, Buskute and Elema.

⁵⁴ Informants: Me'ere, Genale and Morkata.

first...gradually minimized the customary laws' values in the society...".⁵⁵ Having this awareness, the people, chiefly youngster generation began to prefer the western cultural styles than their own culture. In addition, it opened the ways for those who want to go through required outlook. Even if the Guji customary laws don't allow prevalence of such foreigner's cultures and styles, the legislative (actors) of the customary laws remained silent to avoid the contradiction between customary laws and statutory laws.⁵⁶

Some other informants raised the expansion of the towns through the region and introduction of modern education to be main factor for the weakening of *quttoo* traditional practice among the Guji society. They justify that before the expansion of the towns and introduction of modern education towards the area, the Guji societies were with their original culture. The *quttoo* tradition had been regarded as a distinctive young women traditional practice. It is after the expansion of town and application of modern education that the youngsters inhabited in the town and students of the time altogether began to disregard their culture. Besides, the construction of roads connected the town to town through which other travelers with different cultural styles come in, is an additional motive factor that enabled the society to be exposed for ignorance of their own culture.⁵⁷ The youth are very active to accept a given ideology and to change the ideology in to action. And the same things is true with different styles of culture. Especially they observe different media and films, video, television and other communication centers which are additional factors exhausted and won the attention of those teenager in the society.⁵⁸ In our interviews, we also included suggestion from youth of Bule Hora districts and its environs. A central idea of these youngsters is that practicing *quttoo* tradition seems like old fashion for them. They also consider this tradition as backwardness. In addition to this, when they bind *quttoo* to their hair, it is difficult for them to make up their hair to the styles they needed. It is difficult to change the *quttoo* hair style to other styles simple from day to day. That, is why they choose to leave *quttoo* not to bind on their hair.⁵⁹

Ethnic and Cultural Interactions

Our informants of Bule Hora *woreda* (district) suggested the third factor for the exhaustion of the local tradition particularly *quttoo* tradition to be cultural interaction with neighbor's ethnic groups culture. They state that among the Guji people who are extremely exposed for this influence are those who resided at the frontiers of the Guji land. According to their statements, the Guji people who had settled with Arsi Oromo adopted the Arsi Oromo traditional practices. Likewise, the Guji people who had settled with Borana also adopted the Borana traditional practices. For instance, the Guji people who resided close to Borana people sometimes practice *qarree* tradition (shaving the hair on the tip of head) for the girls not married.⁶⁰

Other informants also told us that such exhaustion of *quttoo* tradition and other related cultural components came from the steps taken by the former Ethiopian governments to survive the ethnic groups who had been suffered from the droughts and famine of the time being, through resettlement and villagization processes. They stated that the *Derg* government brought Amhara people to this study area. These settlers came to this region with their culture.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, Abebe Gobena, p.125

⁵⁶ Abebe, p.125

⁵⁷ Informants: Jarso, Girja and Yubo.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*

⁵⁹ Informants: Badhatu, Chaltu and Ayantu.

⁶⁰ Informants: Dukale, Girja and Jarso.

Therefore, the Guji inhabitants in Bule Hora district and its environment began to adopt the cultures and styles of these new comers gradually through the time spans.⁶¹

In other aspects, *derg* government forwarded the soldiers called *militia* to the town to protect peace and security of new settlers. These *militia* (army) paid the great attentions for these new comers rather than the original inhabitants of the region. This posed the ideology of supremacy on the native people. This ideology of supremacy influenced not only indigenous culture but also local language of the people of the *woredas*. The rural villages of the district which were marginalized from the town and free from the control of these soldiers are now in the practice of their culture.⁶² Generally, factors that have been pointed above, eventually, exhausted tradition of *quttoo*, and other related cultural aspects in advance.

CONCLUSION

The Guji society is one of the main branches of the Oromo community, belonged to Borana confederacy. The Guji people believed that their original place was Girja. The Guji territory is bounded by Arsi to the East and North, Borana to the South, Burji, Konso, Kore and Gamo to the Southwest, Gedeo and Walayta to the West, Sidamo to the North and Somali to the Southeast. These have made high ethnic interaction among the adjacent peoples.

The Guji people is composed of three main tribes Uraga, Mati and Hoku. This is traditionally believed to be the former three sons of Gujo (father of Guji) namely Urago, Mato and Hoku, from whom other four major tribes are descended. Accordingly, the Guji people are categorized in to seven major tribes namely Uraga, Matti, Hoku, Halo, Wessitu, Obbitu, and Shello respectively. The Guji speak Afaan Oromoo, the largest language in Ethiopia and the horn which belongs to the Cushitic subfamily. They have complex set of beliefs. They believe in Supernatural force, *Waaqa*. They also believe in the existence of *durriisaa* (devil). They are culturist Oromo tribe who practice cultural Democratic system of governance called Gada administration and peace making mechanism, *Jaarsummaa*.

Before the coming of Gada system of administration the Guji society have been ruled by five Kings and Queens. The five kings were Duri Dullo, Burako Doyo, Bule Adala, Babalo Bade and Babo Basu. The five queens of Guji were Hoyoyo Hoye, Hoya Garoye, Lali Lasoye, Qadho Qasoye, and Akko Manoye (the most outstanding queen).

Quttoo is a sacred material tied on the hair of Guji girls to identify virgin girls. *Quttoo* tradition is one of cultural elements of Guji people practiced by the girls before marriage. It is a long period cultural practice among the society. The most popular contributions of *quttoo* tradition for the Guji girls are sociocultural, economical, and political. As a sociocultural significance, *quttoo* serves as identity and replace virginity of the girls. It provide honor for the girls (both before and after marriage). Economically, it enables the girls (women) to possess private properties from the boy's families. Politically, *quttoo* stands for the right of Guji girls not to be violated, harassed, and alienated by men. It provide them equal right of property with their husbands.

⁶¹ *Ibid*

⁶² *Ibid*

This sacred cultural object called *quttoo* and other related cultural elements had been underestimated due to introduction of new religions, some foreign cultural variables and modern technology in to the area from the time to time. Accordingly, it is very anxious that these factors in turns cause adverse effect on valuable traditional way of life in the Guji society. Therefore based on the historical implications of *qutto* tradition the governmental and non-governmental organizations in general; and Culture and Tourism Bureau as well as community elders particularly should give due attention in preserving the cultural heritages and material cultural objects.

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