

***THE BENEFITS OF INTEGRATING TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS FOR
SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMMES
FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN OROMIA: THE CASE OF ARSI AND KARAYU
OROMO TRIBES***

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Declaration

I, Denebo Dekeba, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and all the sources of information used for the study have been duly acknowledged.

Name: -----

Signature: -----

Date: -----

Acronyms and Abbreviations

BOLSA - Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs

BARD- Bureau of Agriculture and Rural Development

CDA- Cooperative Development Agency

CSA: Central Statistics Agency

ECA- Economic Commission for Africa

FGD- Focused Group Discussion

FDRE – Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

KII- Key Informants Interview

MoLSA- Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs

NGO- Non Governmental Organisations

TMS- Traditional Support Mechanisms

Chapter One

Background and Rationale of the Study

1.1. Background

Even though population ageing is one of humanity's greatest triumphs, older people do face multitude of social and economic challenges in many parts of the world. Ethiopia is one of the developing countries whose older people are facing economic and social challenges. Nearly half of the population (44%) of the country lives below the national poverty line¹, and it is estimated that 90% of Ethiopians are affected by multi-dimensional poverty. Existing evidence shows that older people often fall into the extreme poverty category and they cannot afford basic health care, social services or housing.² They, especially in urban centers of Ethiopia, are found to be the most vulnerable and generally lack social protection (project and annual reports from HelpAge International).

In fact, every society has problems; they also have the wisdoms and mechanisms for managing its socio-economic problems.³ Accordingly, many nations of Africa have developed their own traditional systems and institutions where such social problems are effectively addressed by the society itself without or minimum intervention of external assistance. These institutions have vital part in the socio-economic life of the society.

¹ United Nations Development Program: **Human Development Report**. New York -USA, 2010

² FDRE Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs: **National Plan of Action on Aging**. Addis Ababa-Ethiopia, 2005

³ Peter Blunt and D. Michel Warren: **Indigenous Organisations and Development**. Intermediate Technology Publisher. London-Uk, 1996

Led by older people, these institutions play significant role in poverty alleviation, conflict resolution and advancement of human development.⁴ However, the potential of these traditional institutions for accelerating and spreading development opportunities have not been sufficiently analyzed and integrated to the efforts of modern institutions.

Subsequently, many of efforts exerted by government and NGOs dealing with social protection interventions do not practically involve the respective traditional institutions in the process of managing them and, thus, contribution of the institutions to sustainability of the interventions has not been studied. The Oromo nations, like many African nations, have established a comprehensive traditional institution named Gada for administering the social, political, economic and cultural life of the nation.⁵

Despite this, very little is known regarding the level of involvement of such traditional institutions in social protection programmes and their contributions to sustainable management of the interventions thereby provoking me do this research. Findings of the research are expected to help development actors – both government and non government agencies working on programmes dealing with social protection for older people to design inclusive social protection policy. It would also

⁴ Economic Commission for Africa: **Relevance of African Traditional Institutions of Governance.** Addis Ababa-Ethiopia,2007

⁵ Asmaron Legesse: **Three Approaches to the Study of African Society.** ^{1st} ed. Free Press. Michigan-USA, 2000

help academicians and researchers in the field to conduct further researches on other aspects of traditional institutions.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The Oromo nation has established traditional systems and mechanisms for managing its socio-economic problems (Dirribi 2011). The system has been governed by traditional institutions that were customized to address the socio-economic and cultural problems faced by the people. Besides, the institutions enhance the socio-economic ties among the society through, among others, facilitating community initiatives of caring for vulnerable children, women and older people. These clearly indicate that involving such traditional institutions in the development and emergency humanitarian project/programmes would have paramount contributions towards sustainability of the interventions. However, the traditional institutions have not been involved in the process of managing social protection interventions undertaken in the Oromia National Regional State in spite of their implied strategic contribution for sustainability of those interventions. Besides, neither has the potential of these traditional institutions for enhancing sustainability of social protection interventions for older people been analyzed explicitly

1.3. Objectives

1.3.1. General Objective

General objective of the research is to assess the benefits of integrating traditional institutions for sustainable management of social protection interventions for older people of Ethiopia.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

This research is specifically intended to find out the benefits of integrating Traditional Institutions for Sustainable Management of Social Protection Programmes for Older People in Oromia National Regional State. This study is specifically intended to:

- I. investigate which traditional institutions are addressing the social protection needs for older people in the Oromia National Regional State.
- II. assess the extent to which the traditional institutions are involved in the process of managing social protection interventions made by government and non government organizations in the Oromia national regional state.
- III. distinguish the strategic benefits of involving traditional institutions to sustainable management of social protection interventions made by government and non government organizations in the Oromia national regional state.
- IV. identify the means by which traditional institutions can effectively be involved in the process of managing the social protection interventions.

Chapter Two

Overview of Related Literature and Theoretical Framework

2.1. Conceptual Frameworks of Older People, Social Protection and Traditional Institutions

2.1.1. Older People

The term 'elderly' or older person has different meaning in different countries; it is mainly explained and is related to chronological age, functional age as well as retirement age. According to the UN definition older persons are those people whose age is 60 years and over. About four to five percent of the total population of Ethiopia (CSA, 2006) constitutes older people above the age of 60 and it is estimated to rise to seven percent by 2050. According to a HelpAge International study in Addis Ababa (March, 2010), there are three types of older people:

- **Home-based older people:** refers to the population of older people who live in a household (with home to sleep) in Addis Ababa.
- **Homeless older people:** refers to older persons who usually sleep in religious places (e.g. church, mosque) and/or streets in Addis Ababa.
- **Institution-based older people:** refers to older persons living under institutional care in homes for older people in Addis Ababa.

In Ethiopia, as in many African countries, older people are culturally considered to be important citizens who play a significant role in the cultural, social and political spheres of society.

The recurrence of drought and chronic food insecurity, coupled with the emerging HIV and AIDS pandemic and urbanization have gradually eroded the role of the extended family and kinships in looking after the

country's older people. As a result, older people in Ethiopia reportedly live in poverty and suffering (UNFPA). The Rehabilitation Agency 1996, MoLSA, 2007). Numerous studies indicate that older people are amongst the most vulnerable to poverty and HIV&AIDS. Poverty rates are known to be extremely high amongst this age group. For Instance, in Addis Ababa 79% of older people surveyed in 2010 eat only once or twice a day⁶. Besides, older people in Ethiopia are often having insufficient or no access to an adequate standard of living, social services, health care and HIV and AIDS prevention interventions.

Despite this, little efforts have been older people's needs are largely ignored by both national and international development policy makers and, thus, older people generally appear to be invisible in the formulation, content and implementation of key national policies and strategies in the country. The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) agreed by world leaders in 2000 make no direct reference to older men and women. As a result, about 80 percent of older people in the country who are no longer able to work are estimated to be dependent either on the support of their extended families, or on the alms given by fellow community members and religious institutions as they are not in the list of pensioners' payroll (calculated by the authors based on the information of UNFPA/ The Rehabilitation Agency, 1996)

2.1.2. Social Protection

Social protection is a set of interventions that aim to reduce social and economic risks, vulnerabilities and deprivations for all people.⁷

⁶ Research **on Vulnerability and Living Conditions of Older People** in Addis Ababa conducted jointly by HelpAge, IOM and UN-OCHA

⁷ African Union (Social Policy Framework)

The social protection interventions (Projects and programmes) are required to meet major four pillars, mainly transformative, primitive, preventive and protective.⁸

1. Provision: this classically covers all forms of social assistance (the safety net part of social protection) that is often non-contributory from the point of view of the recipient and financed by the State or external donors (IOs, NGOs, faith-based organization, social networks etc)
2. Prevention: this typically includes all insurance mechanisms that are contributory. So it could be all forms of employment based social protection (pensions, survivor's benefit, maternity benefits, etc) as well as market forms of insurance- health insurance and pensions.
3. Promotion: this relates to instruments that have economic growth effects, such as educational conditionality's attached to social transfers.
4. Transformation: this includes actions to improve access to social insurance and social assistance for marginalized and excluded groups as well as legislation and actions to address rights and inclusion/exclusion.

⁸ Amdissa Teshome: **Mapping and Analysis of De facto Social Protection Interventions.** Addis Ababa, 2010

Amdissa (2010) further explains the categories of social protection as follow.

Main pillars	Examples of Interventions
Transformative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social protection legislation • Legislative & regulatory reform • Sensitization campaigns • Social communication to promote behavioral change • Strengthening legal system for vulnerable • Overall social policy
Promotive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second chance education Skills training • Integrated early childhood development • Conditional cash transfers • Asset building & livelihood development
Preventive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributory social insurance/social security • Universal social pensions • Universal child allowances • Savings and credit schemes • Burial societies
Protective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public employment schemes • Feeding programs • Child protective services • Cash/food transfers • Fee waivers • Family support services • Humanitarian relief

Source: *Mapping and Analysis of De facto Social Protection Interventions*

The Social Protection Framework has served me as a frame work for analysing the role of traditional institutions in managing the social protection projects and programmes. In Oromia, the social protection interventions have been made by Government Agencies, Civil Society Organisations and Non Governmental Organisations.

2.1.3. Social Protection in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia there are numerous legal and policy level provisions addressing support for the vulnerable groups such as children, older people, persons with disabilities and marginalized women.

2.1.3.1. Legal Provisions

I have reviewed the major legal provisions addressing support for the vulnerable children, older people, and persons with disabilities and marginalized women in Ethiopia. The review of legal provision is intended to supplement the view that 'legal protection' is an important part of (or complementary to) 'social protection'.⁹ These provisions are enshrined in the **FDRE Constitution, Revised Family Law, Labor Law, and the Revised Criminal Cod**

The FDRE Constitution enshrines protection for vulnerable children, older people, people with disabilities and women¹⁰. Article 41/5 of the constitution states "The State shall, within available means, allocate resources to provide rehabilitation and assistance to the physically and mentally disabled, the aged, and to children who are left without parents or guardian.

⁹ Devereux, S. and A. Teshome: **Options for 'Direct Support' in Ethiopia: From Productive Safety Net Programme to Social Protection System**, Consultancy Report for DFID, Addis Ababa Ethiopia, 2008

¹⁰ **Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia**

The Constitution does also have a separate article on the rights of children (Article 36). It makes a number of provisions regarding (i) the duty of the state to provide special protection for orphans, (ii) the right to be free of corporal punishment or cruel and inhumane treatment in schools and other institutions and (iii) the right to be free from exploitation or work that is hazardous for their health, education or wellbeing. The article recognizes the principle of the best interest of the child, its right to life, name and nationality and those juvenile offenders should be separated from adult offenders. Article 90 of the constitution also states “to the extent the country’s resources permit, policies shall aim to provide all Ethiopians access to public health and education, clean water, housing, food and social security”.

The Revised Family Law makes provisions for social protection and point ups the outlook that a society with high moral standards will minimize the social problems that social protection aims to address.¹¹ A fundamental purpose of the Law is to ensure that Ethiopian children are brought up in a healthy environment with proper education, and grow up to be responsible citizens. The family is seen as the main provider of support to vulnerable members of society – children, older persons, persons with disabilities. However, the Law also protects the wellbeing of children in the event of their parents’ divorce or separation.

¹¹ FDRE Proclamation No.1/2002: **the Revised Family Law**, Federal Negarit Gazeta, Addis Ababa,2000

Ethiopian Labor Law provides Working Conditions of Women and Young Workers.¹² Maternity leave and maternity protection are regulated in Articles 87 and 88. Employees are entitled to maternity leave, which is to start from 30 days prior to due date of birth, and end not less than 60 days after birth of the child. Maternity leave is classified as paid leave (Article 88 (3) to (4)). Under Article 89 of the Labour Proclamation the statutory minimum age for young workers is 14 years. Special measures of protection of young workers (e.g. work in transport, night work, work in arduous, hazardous or unhealthy activities, such as mining) may be taken by the Minister. Work performed under the regime of a vocational training course is exempted from this protection (Article 89:5).

The Revised Criminal Code addresses a number of issues important for social protection, children and women protection in particular.¹³ It criminalizes harmful traditional practices such as Female Genital Mutilation, abduction, early marriage, enslavement of children, trafficking of children for prostitution and forced labour, sexual abuse, corporal punishment in schools and institutions, rape, sexual outrage, maltreatment and neglect. The Code also establishes the obligation to register children at birth.

¹² FDER Proclamation No. 377/2003 Labour; and Labour Amendment Proclamation No. 494/2006, Federal Negarit Gazeta, Addis Ababa. 2006

¹³ FDRE Proclamation No.414/2004: **The Criminal Code of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia**, Federal Negarit Gazeta, Addis Ababa. 2004

2.1.3.2. Social Protection Policies and Strategies

In Ethiopia, there is no contemporary social protection policy to formally address the pertinent needs of vulnerable children, older persons, people with disability and women. However there a number of policies, strategies and action plans and programmes that have elements of social protections and obligate the government to look after the welfare of its citizens. These include:

- ✚ The Growth and Transformational Plan
- ✚ The National Plan of Action on Aging
- ✚ National Plan of Action for Human Rights
- ✚ Developmental Social Welfare Policy
- ✚ Social Security Policy
- ✚ HIV/AIDS Policy and Strategy
- ✚ Population Policy
- ✚ Education and Training Policy
- ✚ National Women's Policy
- ✚ National Youth Policy (2004)
- ✚ Employment policy

Yet, the need to support or integrate traditional institutions and traditional support mechanisms has not been explicitly mentioned in all of the above the documents.

2.1.4. Traditional Institutions

A great deal of social scientists and sociologists have documented the existence and functioning of traditional institutions. Many authors have given seemingly different but complementary definitions of the same connotations regarding traditional institutions. Peter Blunt and D. Michel Warren (1996) in their publication title *Indigenous Organisations and Development* defined traditional institutions as those organizations that have autonomous if not ancient origin. Others define traditional institutions as the structure and units of organization in a community and encompass also the norms, values, and beliefs that guide social interaction.

Traditional Institutions do shape the local organization, while the leadership structure within the community and their function roles ensures compliance with the rules, norms and beliefs among the society.¹⁴ By traditional institutions I am referring, for this investigation, to those indigenous institutions with a systematised organisational base that are original (native) to a particular society or nation and that influence the socio-economic and cultural interaction through enforcing the norms and values among the nation.

¹⁴ Stephen Burgu Kendie and Bernard Guri: **Endogenous Development and Bio-Cultural Diversity**. Center for Development Studies, University of Cape Coast, Ghana ,2006

Recent development thinking, especially those dealing with social protections, do implicitly and/or explicitly recognize the important roles of traditional institutions as they complement the efforts of government, Civil Society Organisations, and Donor NGOs in the process of managing programmes.

The importance of traditional institutions for the socio-economic development of a respective nation has been empirically proofed by many research works. As a result, in some nations, integration of traditional institutions into modern institutions has been practiced at country level. For instance, Ghana, one of the better economies in Africa has constitutionally endorsed the vitality of traditional institutions for the socio-economic development of the nation. Stephen Burgu Kendie and Bernard Guri (2006) have accentuated this fact in the following:

In Gana, the 1992 constitution enjoined on development programming to ensure that culture informs all development activities. Culture is thus gradually making inroads as entry point to sustainable development. The original notation of separating the culture from development and seeing culture only for tourism purpose is becoming a thing of the past. This is largely due to the resilience of culture and its institutions, despite the imposition of western worldview. This realization has given rise to the current development paradigm referred to as endogenous development. Indeed new partnership are being sought between the 'traditional' and the modern for durable local level development.

Traditional institutions are dynamic and develop over time in response to external changes.

Unlike formal organizations like cooperatives or other forms of civil society organizations that may collapse when faced with crises and pressures, the traditional institutions are persistently resilient to external challenges.¹⁵ Traditional institutions are established through indigenous forces to address socio economic problems of the particular society and are effective enough to do so.

Even though it tends to be more invisible to the outsiders, there are a lot of leadership and managerial systems and resources in traditional institutions.

In recent efforts to conduct development planning and management workshops for community leaders of indigenous and exogenous organizations . . . several important lessons have been learned. One is that basic planning and management concepts long held to be generated out of the Euro-American experience also exist in the local languages. This should not have been surprising to us given the fact that every community has problems and must have mechanisms for identifying and dealing with them. That means there should be concepts of problems, resources, objectives, and goals. Further comparative researches in a wide variety of languages used in developing countries indicate that these concepts appear to be universal. Second, local level participants in these planning workshops have the capacity to analyze their own organizations in terms of strengths and weakness, as well as a willingness to experiment with new organizational structure to see whether they might address some of the expressed weaknesses.¹⁶

Older people do appear to be the corner stone for the proper functioning of all traditional institutions.

¹⁵ Deborah Eade: **Capacity Building an Approach to People-Centered Development** . 1st Ed. Oxfam GB, UK and Ireland,1998

¹⁶ Peter Blunt and D. Michel Warren: **Indigenous Organisations and Development**. Intermediate Technology Publisher. London-Uk,1996

Despite this, management development projects and programmes do not involve older people (Deborah 1998) and, thus, traditional institutions are marginalized to that intervention. Traditional institutions might strengthen and be strengthened by development projects/programmes specially those dealing with social protections or frustrate or damaged by it depending on knowledge and attitude of the implementers of the intervention regarding the traditional institutions. That is why Peter Blunt and D. Michel Warren (1996) admonish the projects/programme actors approaching the traditional institutions saying.

Outsiders need to approach indigenous organizations very circumspectly both for normative reasons and because of the limitation of their knowledge. Social and cognitive realities are often different from what they appear to be at first, and outsiders may never fully understand the operative situation.¹⁷

In Ethiopia, there are various arguments that traditional mechanisms of support have breaking and are too loose in terms of scope and predictability to address the social protection needs of the vulnerable by themselves. Thus, involving and strengthening the traditional institutions the traditional institution could serve double purposes of revitalizing the mechanisms and of facilitating sustainable management of the social protection interventions.

¹⁷ Peter Blunt and D. Michel Warren: ***Indigenous Organisations and Development***. Intermediate Technology Publisher. London-Uk, 1996

One of the prominent of this argument is the statements made by Dr. Amdissa Teshome as fallow;

A further argument for social protection is the decreasing role of the traditional support mechanisms (TSM). Arguments include that some of the TSMs are disappearing/deteriorating (e.g. dabare; gudifecha in Oromiya). TSMs that exist are not reliable, predictable and others have remained narrow in vision and scope (e.g. idir, iquib). More importantly, in the name of "traditional support systems", older people's dignity is affected. There are cases where home-based elders are abused; thrown out to beg, and robbed. The extended families and communities that are already chronically poor and food insecure are additionally challenged by the HIV/AIDS/ pandemic, struggling to cope with the additional vulnerabilities that AIDS has introduced, including the unprecedented numbers of orphans, the growing number of child-headed households and those headed by grandparents. Some would strongly argue that traditional support systems are overextended and can no longer effectively cope with the growing needs.

On the other hand, there are also cases where Government and NGOs have established formal and yet community based support mechanisms based on the traditional values. Therefore, there are potentials for providing TSMs the necessary policy support in order to make them more vibrant systems. The formal system could also use them as vehicles for delivering social protection.

¹⁸

Despite this research based recommendation by the author, the government has not been explicating evidence that indicate the government has taken policy level action to support the traditional support mechanisms.

¹⁸ Amdissa Teshome: **Mapping and Analysis of De facto Social Protection Interventions.** Addis Ababa, 2010

2.2. Sustainable Management of Social Protection Projects/Programme

2.2.1. Management of Social Protection Project/Programmes

Management refer to doing things done with and through people to accomplish a predetermined objective. It can also refer to the process of planning, organising, directing and controlling various activities.¹⁹ For development projects and programmes including social protection interventions, management implies to a process that involves Project Identification and Design; Initiation; Planning; Implementation; Monitoring, Evaluation, and Control; and Transition of Project/programme.²⁰ According to John Cropper, Eric Berg, Michael Culligan and Leah Radstone (2010), effective management of projects (intended to reduce social and economic risks, vulnerabilities) helps ensure that:

- ✚ Projects are completed on time, on budget, and within the scope and quality prescribed by the project implementation plan – despite the complex and challenging contexts within which they are managed.

- ✚ Beneficiaries receive optimum value from project investments and projects achieve the objectives and goals to which they aspire.

¹⁹ Fred R. David: **Management Concepts and Case**. 7th ed. Prentice Hall, New Jersey-USA , 1999

²⁰ John Cropper, Eric Berg, Michael Culligan and Leah Radstone; **A Guide to Project Management for Development Professionals – Level 1**. 2010.

- ✚ Projects adapt flexibly to the difficult environments in which they work (i.e. insecurity, scarce resources, high risks, multiple stakeholders), managing changes that enhance the ability of the project to achieve its results.
- ✚ Projects meet the accountability commitments to beneficiary communities, donors and other key stakeholders.

2.2.2. Sustainability

The major concern and challenge for many actors in the in the social protections projects/programmes management is the issues of sustainability. Sustainable development has been defined in many ways, but the most frequently quoted definition is that of the Brundtland Report which is read as *"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."*²¹ The definition contains within it two key concepts: the concept of **needs**, in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and the idea of **limitations** imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs.

²¹ **The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED): Brundtland Commission Report, 1987.**

Sustainable development involves devising a social and economic system, which ensures that these goals are sustained, i.e. that real incomes rise, that educational standards increase that the health of the nation improves, and that the general quality of life is advanced.²² Effective and sustainable management of social protection programmes necessitate the recognition and utilization of the value of cross-industry tools, techniques and standards pertinent to a particular context. One of such tools, I have found most relevant, is livelihood framework.

The livelihoods framework is a tool to improve our understanding of livelihoods, particularly the livelihoods of the poor.²³ The framework is appears to be a versatile tool for use in planning and management livelihood related interventions including the social protection projects and programmes.

The framework contains analytical tool named **asset pentagon** that lies at the core of the livelihoods framework. The pentagon was developed to enable information about people's assets to be presented visually, thereby bringing to life important inter-relationships between the various assets that are categorized into five²⁴ namely social capital, human capital, natural capital, physical capital and economic capital. DIFD explains the five assets having great vitality making up pillars for the livelihood.

²² Pearce, Makandia & Barbier: **Blueprint for a Green Economy**. Earthsean Publications Limited, London, UK, 1989

²³ The Department for International Development (DFID): **Sustainable Livelihood Guidance sheet**, London, United Kingdom, 1999

²⁴ DIFID (1999)

Human Capital

Human capital represents the skills, knowledge, ability to labor and good health that together enable people to pursue different livelihood strategies and achieve their livelihood objectives.

Social Capital

Social capital means the social resources upon which people draw in pursuit of their livelihood objectives. These are developed through:

- Networks and connectedness, either vertical (patron/client) or horizontal (between individuals with shared interests) that increase people's trust and ability to work together and expand their access to wider institutions, such as political or civic bodies;
- Membership of more formalized groups which often entails adherence to mutually-agreed or commonly accepted **rules, norms and sanctions**; and relationships of trust, reciprocity and exchanges that facilitate co-operation reduce transaction costs and may provide the basis for **informal safety nets** amongst the poor.

Natural Capital

Natural capital is the term used for the natural resource stocks from which resource flows and services. And although our understanding of linkages between resources remains limited, we know that we depend for our health and well-being upon the continued functioning of complex ecosystems (which are often undervalued until the adverse effects of disturbing them become apparent).

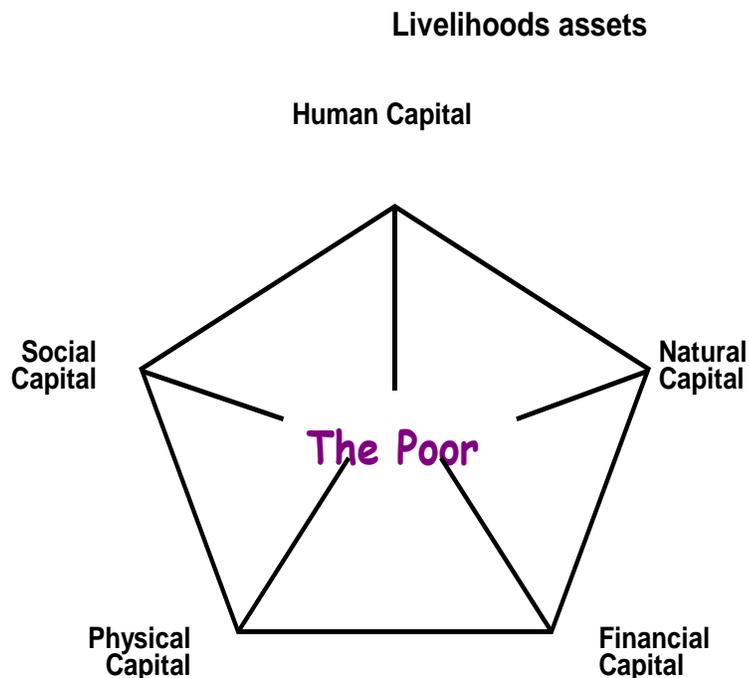
Physical Capital

Physical capital comprises the basic infrastructure and producer goods needed to support livelihoods. Infrastructure consists of changes to the physical environment that help people to meet their basic needs and to be more productive and producer goods are the tools and equipment that people use to function more productively.

Financial Capital

Financial capital denotes the financial resources that people use to achieve their livelihood objectives.

The pentagon is demonstrated as follow:



Source: Taken from the Sustainable Livelihood Guidance Sheet (DFID 1999)

The Asset Pentagon has helped me offering technical framework for analyzing the role of traditional institutions for sustainable management of social protection projects/programmes. The five assets and maximization of the interaction among them is the founding block for sustainable management of the respective interventions.

There has been growing interest in the 'Social Capital' as it is the most important of the five assets and captures the idea that social norms and social bonds are important part of the basis for sustainable development.²⁵ This necessitates the active involvement of traditional institutions in the project/programme cycle management which is of great vitality for sustainability of those projects/programmes.

Sustainable development is possible only if the creative capacities of the society are engaged in the development process, and for that to occur, development action must be rooted in the culture of the country concerned. Those sources of creativity are essentially cultural. It is a society's indigenous culture and creative resources which provide the inspiration, the dynamism, the capacity to adapt, initiate, innovate, invent and re-invent. The creativity in a developing society, especially one with a large traditional sector, is to be found in, and is manifested by, its cultural traditions, its eco-indigenous knowledge and techniques, in the ways in which that society has traditionally dealt with the challenges posed by its physical environment, and in its social, political and economic arrangements.²⁶

²⁵ Michael Assefa :Crucial Paths; **The Importance of Social Capital for Sustainable Management of Natural Resources**.VDM Verlag Dr. Muller Aktiengesellschaft &Co.KG, USA,2012

²⁶ **Mervyn Claxton: Indigenous Knowledge and Sustainable Development**. Third Distinguished Lecture, The Cropper Foundation UWI, St Augustine, Tobago 2010

2.3. Traditional Institutions Relevant to Social Protection in Oromia National Regional State

The Oromo nation has established remarkable and relatively complex age-grade based indigenous democratic institution called Gada. The Gada institution is an elaborate, well structured system for distributing duties and responsibilities among all generational segment of the society. It is an indigenous institution with a systematised organisational base that is original (native) to the Oromo nation. Gada is unique invention of the Oromo nations and influence the socio-economic and cultural interaction of all Oromo through enforcing the norms and values among the nation.

Accentuating uniqueness of Gada to the Oromo nation, Dirribi 2010 professionally argues:

Gada system is invented and contributed by the Cushitic Oromo to the world's outlook ;and practices of social justice shows the competency and far sightedness of Africa's indigenous knowledge. It is a reputation for the entire black race throughout the world to be pride of their understanding, inventions and practice of the principles of human rights before it has been declared by the United Nations as Universal Declaration of Human Rights to ensure human dignity and values among human kind.²⁷

The Gada sets out system by which all generations (from children to very old person do enjoy different kinds of power and benefits in the society. Gada is the highly advanced and complex social system that might represent the advancement of the original social system of Africa. According to Asmarom Legessie (2006), the Gada system is an institution that represents an extreme development of a type of social structure known to anthropologists as age sets.

²⁷ Dirribi Demissie: ***Oromo Wisdom in Black Civilization***. 1st ed. Addis Ababa – Ethiopia, 2011

Gada is one of the most astonishing and instructive turns the evolution of human society has taken. This fact is accentuated by other renowned professional researchers. One of this is Professor Donald N. Levine who described advancement in the institutional setup of Gada as follow:

The details of the operation of the Gada system – how the various classes are constituted, and their respective functions and interrelations are enormously complicated. Indeed, the Gada system represents one of the most complex systems of social organization ever devised by human imagination.²⁸

Since Gada is a too complex institution to be covered by a single work and its anthropological and sociological analysis is out of the scope of this work, I would concentrate my investigation only on those aspects of Gada that are related with traditional mechanisms of addressing social protection problems for vulnerable groups.

2.3.1. Distinctive Aspects of the Gada as Institution

2.3.1.1. Gada as an Indigenous and Systematized Intuition

Gada is a well organised and institutionalized system with synergistically integrated elements and sub systems. *The basic planning and management concepts that referred to by Peter Blunt and D. Michel Warren (1996) as existing assets for traditional institutions also evidently revealed in the Gada institution too.*

²⁸ Donald N. Levine: **Greater Ethiopia: The Evolution of a Multiethnic Society.** University of Chicago Press, Chicago, USA, 1974

The institution is organised in a sophisticated systematic manner to provide effective leadership and management through establishing deferent leadership elements of legislative, executive, and judiciary and ensuring duty disaggregation among the elements.²⁹ These elements of the institution include Abba Gadas which is equivalent to President, Abba Seera which is equivalent leader of the judiciary, Abba Muudaa the cultural and religious leaders, Abbaa Alangaa the prosecutor, Abbaa Sa'aa Financial Leaders, Abbaa Biyyaa leader of the interior affairs, Abbaa Duulaa leader of the Defense Force. Each element is well staffed and exercises autonomous power vested up on it by the Yaa'ii Guddaa/ Gumii Gaayyoo, the general assembly. The officers are elected democratically for fixed office term of eight years.

The rule of law; equality and equity; limitation of office to a single term; separation of ritual, religious and political domains; and equitable representation of representation of all members of the society are the distinctive aspect of the system. Professor Asmarom accentuated the advancement in the democratic system of administration saying:

In Oromo democratic traditions, the highest authority does not reside in the great law makers who are celebrated by the people, nor do the rulers who are elected to govern neither the eight years, nor the electors and ritual leaders who hold their office. . . . it resides instead in the open national assembly, at which all Gada councils and assemblies, aspirant and in power, active and retired are represented and the Worra Qallu participate as observers.³⁰

²⁹ Asmarom Legesse: **Oromo Democracy: An Indegenious African Political System**. 1st Ed. The Red Sea Press, Inc, Asmara, Eritrea, 2006.

³⁰ Asmarom Legesse: **Oromo Democracy: An Indegenious African Political System**. 1st Ed. The Red Sea Press, Inc, Asmara, Eritrea, 2006.

The institution comprises mechanisms of caring for children, women and older people. It does also have community based mechanisms of reducing social and economic risks as well as of managing vulnerabilities and deprivations for all people with special emphasis for children and older people.³¹ The Gada also administers social networks and relationships that are part and parcels the lives of the nations and which are of critical vitality for sustainable management of development interventions including those dealing with social protection. It does also promote, with distinctive commitment, justice through systematically managing conflicts among the Oromo and between the Oromo³² and other ethnic groups.

2.3.1.2. Gada as Institution Resilient to External Forces

According to Deborah Eade (1998), the traditional institutions are persistently resilient to external challenges. This fact very much suit the Gada, as it has survived a great deal of politically motivated pressures from the European and Abyssinian colonizers (Asmarom Legesse 2006).

The European colonizers of the 19th Century were threatened by the democratic nature of the Gada system that they had though might provoke mass movement back home.

An independent state ruled by the Gada system consists in a supreme danger for the Anglo-French colonial establishment; if average citizens and specialists of the Western World studied a society ruled by Gada, they would propagate its benefits among the Western Societies and this could cause a thunder for more menacing than the Lenins October Revolution.

³¹ Dirribi Demissie: **Oromo Wisdom in Black Civilization.** 1st ed. Addis Ababa – Ethiopia, 2011

³² Lambert Bartels: **Oromo Religion Myths and Rites of the Western Oromo of Ethiopia- An Attempt to Understand.** Barlin Germany, 1919

Even worse, with in an Oromo state organised by Gada, the Anglo-French colonial establishment would fail to infiltrate and impose its norms, inflecting the international stance of the country and dictating choice and decisions. For them the existence of genuine Oromo state and society would gradually trigger their end. On the other hand an independent Oromia would be the first, ideologically and culturally Cushitic, state and yet their perverse reading of the Bible makes them believe that they must never allow the descendents of the Ham rule their countries.³³

The colonial powers, thus, worked hand in hand with the Abyssinian colonizers to replace Gada, the African Democracy with Monarchies and chiefdoms.

Besides, the Anglophone scholars, who wrote extensively about African political system showed strong and abiding interest in African monarchies and chiefdoms yet very little interest in and much contempt for indigenous African democracies. (Asmarom Legesse 2006) The other challenge to the Gada institution did come from the Abyssinian colonizers, especially from emperor Menilik II II who started the conquest to make the empire of Ethiopia in the last quarter of the 19th Century. During the process of making the Ethiopian Empire, the Ethiopian Emperors declared implicit and explicit war against the Oromo of Ethiopia and their culture.

The explicit war was open battles fought between the Oromo under the leadership of Gada and the Abyssinian under the leadership of monarchical Emperors.³⁴

³³ Dirribi Demissie: **Oromo Wisdom in Black Civilization.** 1st ed. Addis Ababa – Ethiopia, 2011

³⁴ Gada Melba: **Oromia: An Introduction to the History of the Oromo People.** 2nd Ed. Kirk House Publishers, 1999

In the battle against the Arsi Oromo, Minilik II faced firm resistance that demanded his personal involvement. Although the forces of Menilik were armed with modern weaponries they acquired from the contemporary European colonizers, they were firmly resisted by the Arsi Oromo forces under the leadership of Abbaa Gada Roba Butta from 1884-1886. Because Menilik II was unable to overcome this war in open battle, he used biological weapon which was the first of its kind Africa against the Arsi Oromo forces. This was also attended by massacre and amputation of innocent Oromo people. The Annole Massacre is the most severe of these incidences. At Annole district of the Arsi Zone, for instance, more than 13,000 innocent people were killed over night in attempt to crack their integrity to the Gada system in 1886 and this incidence is known as the Harka Mura fi Harma Mura Annole.³⁵ The Abbysinian Emperors also fought a great deal of implicit wars against the Gada system. This part was more sophisticated and involved some "scholars" who attempted hard to achieve systematic misrepresentation of the Oromo culture to the world.³⁶

The kings, after completion of the process of making the Ethiopian Empire, issued a lot of proclamations targeting to dismantling the Oromo culture.

³⁵ Denebo Dekeba: **The Conquest of Menilik to Oromia; the Case of Arsi Oromo**, Papre submitted to History Department of the Adama Teachers College, Adama, 2002

³⁶ Mohhamed Hasen: *The Oromo of Ethiopia, A History 1570- 1860*. Read Sea Press, Trenton, Canada, 1994

Yet all these attempts have not abolished Gada system from the Oromo land.

Their (Oromo) tchaffe were banned by a proclamation issued by Menilik II, in order to prevent an eventual disturbance emanating from the gatherings. Nevertheless, the judgments which the Oromo pass at their tchaffe are better and more observed than (those by) us who are near them and claim to be Christians.³⁷

2.3.1.3. Gada as Institution Addressing Social Protection Issues

Gada has legislated and executed different customary laws that have been accepted and internalized among the Oromo nation. The laws deal with the issues, among other, of Social Protections, Human Rights, Environmental Protection, Administration and Governance. (Dirribi 2010). Because the scope of this research is limited to Social Protection for Older People, I will briefly look into only the Gada Customary Laws pertinent to Protections of Older People.

2.4. Mechanisms of Protection for Children and Older Persons in the Gada Institution

In Gada system, vulnerable groups of the society, children older people and women gave socio-economic and political protection. Children and Older people are given care from all people. (Asmarom Legesse 2006).

³⁷ Dirribi (2010) as quoted from Getachew Haile: **Ye abba Bahire Dirsetoch Oromowohn kemimeleketu leloch senedoch gara** (Finfine), 2002.

Other researchers in the areas also affirm this fact. For instance Dirribi illustrated the protection given to Children and Older People as follow;

Dabbale (Children under eight) and Gadamojji (older people) get care from all people. They get respect, protection, care and security and are never forced or not being given responsibilities. Even when their families are unable to care for Dabbale and Gadamojji, the kinship and /or the clan has an obligation to provide all the necessary care, security, protection and support for them. Dabballe and Gadamojji can never be ignored or neglected, exposed to unsafe, unprotected or insecure situations. They talk good things and give blessings. ³⁸

Gada system promotes protection for older people and aging is considered a blessing and older people are respected with due diligence. In this regard Professor Asmarom found out the following in his anthropological work among the Oromo of Ethiopia.

Gadamojji cannot carry arms; they cannot kill nay living creatures, they are required to use a ritual argot. People their blessings, and wherever they go they are given food and shelter. Men and women come to them for refuge from misfortunes, enemies, or angry kinsmen. They make pledges to Gadamojji and promise to anoint them if their hope and wishes are fulfilled.

These provisions of care and protection for older people are legislated in some of the Gada Laws one of the most popular of which is the Mako Billi Law as institutive as enforceable norm among the Oromo nation.³⁹

³⁸ Dirribi Demissie: **Oromo Wisdom in Black Civilization.** 1st ed. Addis Ababa – Ethiopia, 2011

³⁹ Negasso Gidada: **History of the Sayyoo Oromo of Southwestern Wollaga, Ethiopia from about 1730 to 1886,** Frunkfurt Germany, 1994

2.5. Mechanisms of Protection for Women in the Gada Institution

The Gada system has also established a seemingly simple but actually complex human rights sensitive mechanism for protection of women rights among the Oromo nation. This is materialized through the Siinkee. Siinkee is one of the Gada major institutions established for ensuring human rights and is managed by Oromo women among the Arsi Oromo.⁴⁰ Being powerful symbol of respect and authority for women, the Siinkee institution enforces socio economic rights of women and promotes peace among the nation.

The Sinke institution is used as a traditional and religious mechanism to solve marital disputes and clan/tribal conflicts as well as a blessing ritual in the case of war, disease, draught or other calamity affecting the community. Some reports indicate that in order to prevent a clan/tribal dispute from deteriorating into a full-fledged conflict, women also use Sinke. In marital disputes, Sinke functions as a response to the potential or actual occurrence of verbal, physical or sexual abuse. Due to the strong customary and religious symbolism, a man about to hit his wife would immediately restrain himself once she has picked her Sinke stick. Where the act has already been committed, the wife will take out her sinke and cry out for help. This is by itself considered a signal for the occurrence of abuse or violence and leads to a process of resolution of the conflict according to the customary laws of the Gada system. . . . In conflict situations where two clans/tribes engage in violence, the women lay down their sinke on the ground in the middle of the fighting. The significance attached to the women's action is so powerful that the men would prefer to resolve the dispute peacefully rather than walk to the ritual sticks laid down in front of them.

⁴⁰ Lenesil Asfaw: **Gender Analysis: A Qualitative Study Made on Gender Relation in Arsi-Negelle Wereda**. Rift-Valley Children and Women Development Association (RECWDA), 2005

Alternatively, the sinke may be used to bless the clan/tribe's young warriors to achieve victory in a justified or unavoidable conflict. In this case, while the men prepare for war, the women form two columns and hold up their sinkes for the men to pass under. As noted above, the use of the sinke in marital disputes is mainly for the protection of the rights and interests of women. This is especially so during the confinement of a married woman after childbirth which is referred to as Qanafa in the customary law. During this period, family members, especially the husband, are expected to be caring to the mother. The husband, in particular, should observe many customary rules including refraining from any form of mistreatment or abuse. Failure to observe these rules results in appeal of the Sinke ritual.⁴¹

Women can use their Sinkes to enforce female rights and resolve conflicts according to murti amba, the traditional law of the Oromo. If they see a group of people fighting, for example, some women carrying their Sinkes will intervene. They will place their Sinkes between the fighters to separate them while the villagers ululate to stop the fight and attract other villager's attention and elders come to resolve the dispute. The men will not dare to continue fighting in the presence of the Sinke, and they are bound traditionally and culturally to respect the decisions that are made. Sinke as a response to violence against women is usually initiated by the victim who takes up her ritual stick in public as a response to the potential or actual occurrence of verbal, physical or sexual abuse. Whenever this happens, the senior mothers then mobilize all women in the village who would abandon whatever they were doing and join the protest. Then, the men approach the women to investigate why they have protested and bring the council of elders to the site.

⁴¹ Tsehay Aseffa: **The Role of Women in Conflict Resolution: the Case of Sinke/Siingee in Arsi Negelle Woreda in Arsi Zone**. A Thesis Submitted to Institute of Gender Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Gender Studies, Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa Ethiopia 2008

The sinke is a formal ceremony governed by intricate rituals. The imitation of sinke by married women is considered evidence of wrongdoing on the part of her husband. The punishment is usually in the form of an explicit admission of guilt and proprietary compensation.⁴² Since the recent decades, scholarly works of a great deal of sociologists and social anthropologists have indicated the paramount importance of integrating anthropological research as an important part of the development of human rights.

They further argue that efforts to strengthen human rights should be done with great cultural sensitivity and with an aim to both reveal and incorporate “traditional” notions of human rights into the discourse⁴³. One of these scholars is Marit Tolo Østebø, assistant professor at the Betanien Deaconal university college Bergen, Norway who conducted an Ethnographic research on Women’s Respect and Rights among the Arsi-Oromo. In the paper she presented to the 16th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, she strongly argued that stakeholder acting in the areas of human rights must carefully analyze the competence of excising traditional institutions and supplement their works in order to deliver sustainable results.

⁴² Tsehay Aseffa: **The Role of Women in Conflic Resolution: the Case of Sinke/Siingee in Arsi Negelle Woreda in Arsi Zone**. A Thesis Submitted to Institute of Gender Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Gender Studies, Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa Ethiopia 2008.

⁴³ **Dorothy L. Hodgson: Rethinking Pastoralism in Africa: Gender, Culture and the Myth of the Patriarchal Pastoralist**. Ohio University Press, USA2000

Strengthening her argument about the vitality of Sinkee, Hodgson puts the following;

Based on the collective character of the Sinqee or Ateete mobilizations, as well as the belief in a collective spirit of all women it seems reasonable to conclude that women form a strong spiritual and religious force among the Arsi-Oromo. The humble and spiritual character of women also plays an important role in cases which involve sexual abuse and rape or in relation to virginity and to incidents where a girl is deflowered prior to marriage. . . . If the role of NGOs and activists in fighting for women's rights is based on stereotype assumptions of the "oppressed African woman" this may have significant negative consequences for women's lives. To uncritically apply western notions of human rights, without taking into account the local context, might actually destroy mechanisms, values and institutions that traditionally have given women respect and protected them from violence and abuse. One might risk tearing down traditional values which are not merely theoretical "laws" but which are embedded in cultural practice. Efforts to strengthen human rights should therefore be done with great cultural sensitivity and with an aim to both reveal and incorporate "traditional" notions of human rights into the discourse.⁴⁴

Marit Tolo's opinion is in complete conformity with the idea of Deborah Eade⁴⁵ who firmly argue that any development intervention that ignore people's existing strengths may create dependency and so make people more vulnerable than before.

⁴⁴ **Proceedings of the 16th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies**, ed. by Svein Ege, Harald Aspen, Birhanu Teferra and Shiferaw Bekele, Trondheim, Norway 2009

⁴⁵ Deborah Eade: **Capacity Building an Approach to People-Centered Development** . 1st Ed. Oxfam GB, UK and Ireland, 1998

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.1. Study Design

The study has focused on identifying traditional institutions dealing with social protecting for older people and investigating the benefits of integrating those institutions for sustainable management of social protection projects and programmes in Oromia National Regional State.

I have used combination of qualitative research methods such Key Informants Interview, Focused Group Discussion and observation. I preferred those methods as they sounded to be helpful in closer study with advantages to listening to what people have to say about the traditional institutions that are part and parcel of the life of the Oromo nation- especially of the rural people. I have used tape recorder and photo camera while discussing with the participants. The study has tended to be qualitative, exploratory and analytical in nature. The qualitative aspect is attributed to the qualitative in nature of the data collection tools utilized while the exploratory and analytical aspects were intended to get the real image of the traditional institutions and the strategic benefits of integrating them in the process of Managing Social Protection interventions i.e. social protection projects and programmes. The qualitative research methods were preferred, for this study, over quantitative research methods to get in depth understanding of the traditional institutions and their strategic relevance from the point of view sustainable projects/programme management, implementers of the social protection programmes and beneficiaries of the interventions.

3.2. Description of the Study Area

The study focuses on the Oromia National Regional State in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. The State of Oromia borders Afar, Amhara and the State of Benshangul/Gumuz in the north, Kenya in the south, The State of Somali in the east, the Republic of the Sudan and the state of Benishangul/gumuz in the west, the State of Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' and the state of Gambella in the south.

The State of Oromia sprawls over the largest part of the country and at present consists of 12 administrative zones and 180 districts/Aanaa. Of the 12 zones, Bale and Borena account for 45.7% of the State's total area but only about 14% of the state's population. The Council of the State of Oromia is the highest body of its administration. The capital city of the State of Oromiya is Finfine.

I have found the land size and the population size of Oromia to be the most controversial with deep socio economic and political gray areas. The figures claimed by the FDRE Central Statics Agency (CSA) sharply contradict with the figures from other reliable sources. According to the CSA the total population of Oromo nation is 27,158,471⁴⁶ and the regional government estimates the land area of the State of Oromia is about 353,690 Km². The rural residents of the State account for 89.5% of the total.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Central Statistics Authority of Ethiopia: **Population and Housing Census** , Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2008

⁴⁷ **Website of the Oromia National Regional State**

Other sources of internationally accredited researchers, however, depict different figures. Professor Asmarom Legesse estimated that the land size of Oromia is 367,000 km² and the total Oromo of Ethiopia was 30,000,000 accounting for 40% of the country's population about ten years ago.⁴⁸

According to Gada Melba 1999, Oromiya was located between 2-12 degree N and 34-44 degree E. It is bordered by Somalia in the SE, Afar in the NE, Djibouti in the E, Sudan in the W, Kenya in the S, Amhara and Tigray (Abyssinia) in the north.⁴⁹ Oromiya is home to many rivers and lakes famous for their scenic beauty besides being endowed with rich natural resources both renewable and non-renewable, healthy environment, and ecological set up in the past before being looted and destroyed by Abyssinian authorities.⁵⁰ The forests of Oromiya contain a variety of excellent and valuable timbers before being devastated by colonizers of the empire. Oromiya is known for its bio-diversity, a number of indigenous species of birds, mammals and many precious wild animals.

The Oromos had established and been governed by an egalitarian social system known as Gada. Gada is remarkable and relatively complex age-grade based indigenous democratic system.

⁴⁸ Asmarom Legesse: **Oromo Democracy: An Indegenious African Political System**. 1st Ed. The Red Sea Press, Inc, Asmara, Eritrea, 2006.

⁴⁹ <http://www.unpo.org/article/7917>

⁵⁰ Gada Melba: **Oromia: An Introduction to the History of the Oromo People**. 2nd Ed. Kirk House Publishers, 1999

It is also a form of constitutional government and a social system which is characterized by advocating the belief that all people should have equal political, social and economic rights and influenced every aspect of Oromo life. This system has been weakened in many parts of Oromia as consequence of colonization of the Oromo by the Ethiopian Emperors in the last quarter of the 19th Century.⁵¹ The field work part of the study was conducted on two zones, the East Shewa and the West Arsi Zones of the Oromia National Regional State. The socio economic and cultural set up is reasonably similar to the rest parts of the region.

3.3. The Field Work

The fieldwork was conducted for three months. The study was an enlightening experience, which provided me with wider knowledge about the ample treasuries of the African traditional institutions in general and of the Oromo in particular.

In the process of the field work, I had conducted focused group discussion with leaders of traditional institution (Gada, and Clan leaders) in Shashemene, Kofale and Kore districts of the West Arsi Zone and Fantalle district of the East Ehewa zone. My plan to conduct similar focus group discussion with community leaders of the Bora district was failed because the flood disaster occurred in the district during the time scheduled for the work. I have also conducted structured interview with leaders of relevant government Bureaus and NGOs in the Oromia National Regional State.

⁵¹ Katsuyoshi Fukui : ***Ethnicity & conflict in the Horn of Africa, Easter African Studies***. Illustrated Edition. Ohio University Press, USA, 1994

At the Federal level, the FDRE Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Oromia Bureau of Finance and Economic Development, Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs, Bureau of Agriculture and Rural Development, and Cooperative Development Agency in the East Shewa and Arsi Zone were interviewed. The questions I posed to government and NGO leaders during my interview were the following:

1. *Do you think involving traditional institutions in the development project/ programmes cycle management might contribute to sustainable management of the programmes?*
2. *To what extent the Oromo nation, in your opinion, has established its own mechanisms of addressing development issues and vulnerabilities.*
3. *What strategic benefits would traditional institutions offer to the sustainable management of development intervention?*
4. *Have these mechanisms (traditional institutions) been participating in development projects and programmes?*
5. *Has your organisation (formal institution) established mechanisms (implicit or explicit) of involving the traditional institutions in its interventions at strategic, tactical and operational level? If yes how is it working, what strategic achievements have been made?*
6. *Has your institution or other stakeholders you may know made any assessment (study) on the role of traditional institutions for integrating them in the development interventions? What was the finding?*
7. *How do you think traditional institutions can best be involved in the process of managing development interventions?*

3.4. Sampling

The study involved total of one hundred twenty (120) persons (both natural and legal persons) from traditional institutions, NGOs and government offices in the target region as a target population. All traditional institutions in the target zones were reviewed vis-à-vis objective of the study and Focus Group Discussion will be conducted with group of five-seven leaders of traditional institution in four districts sampled based on convenience.

Focus Group Discussions were conducted with beneficiaries of social protection interventions following the same sampling technique and sample size with the former group (leaders of traditional institutions). Besides, Key Informant Interview was conducted with 8 opinion leaders purposively drawn from target communities in the two Zones under study. These techniques were used to gather both qualitative data intended to investigate which traditional institutions addressing the social protection needs for older people in the target zones of the region.

Structured interview was conducted with five NGOs implementing social protection interventions sampled based on convenience. Similar interview was conducted with government agencies namely, the FDRE Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the Oromia Bureau of Finance and Economic Development, the Oromia Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs, the Oromia Bureau of Agriculture and Rural Development, and Oromia Cooperative Development Agency.

The interview focused on collecting data required to examine the extent to which the traditional institutions are involved in the process of managing social protection interventions made by government and non government organizations in the target geographical areas.

3.5 Data Sources

3.5.1 Primary source

The primary sources of information include focus group discussion and interviews conducted with leaders of traditional institutions, beneficiaries of social protection intervention, NGO implementing social protection interventions and concerned government officials.

3.5.2 Secondary Source

I thoroughly reviewed various published and unpublished documents to obtain information on the issues of involving traditional institutions in the process of managing social protection projects/programmes and the strategic benefits this might have for sustainability of those interventions . The revived documents include relevant national policies, organizational profiles of the sampled NGOs, Operational guidelines of the sampled government offices, FDRE Constitutions, International Conventions and others.

3.6 Data Collection Tools

3.6.1 Observation checklist

I conducted participant observation was to get an insight on the situation and the status of traditional institutions. I stayed at the study site and observed the routine life and different practices of the people, I also had ample opportunity to attend some of the ceremonies conducted by the Gada at Kuyera town of the Shashemene district. Besides, I observed and collected field notes on the actual activities and participation of local communities in the process of project cycle management.

This approach helped me to engage in open informal discussions and obtain information about the attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts of the society aspects of traditional institutions.

3.6.2 Interview guide

An interview guide was prepared to gather qualitative data from leaders of NGOs implementing social protections projects government officials in the target areas. A purposeful approach was used to identify knowledge of women and men on '*traditional institutions* culture for qualitative interviews regarding their experience and perspectives.

3.6.2.1 Focus groups discussions guided questions

This is one of the instruments of the study, which was used to obtain qualitative data on various components from the sampled areas. I have found FGD very useful in understanding issues of consensus and variation among members of the discussion, to obtain group attitudes and perceptions by initiating the participants for active discussion.

Women and men elders' representatives traditional institutions – Abba Gada and Clan leaders (Shanacha in Arsi and Damina in Karayu) as well as beneficiaries of projects were the participants of the focus group discussions. A checklist of questions was used to guide the discussions accordingly. The time and place of discussion was fixed in consultation with leaders of the traditional institutions. The necessary preparation was made to facilitate the discussion, and motivate the members to share their knowledge about the subject in question by the help of two moderators. I used Audio tape recorder and photo camera where I felt relevant to record speeches of the participants and take photos of the important events, to facilitate the discussion.

The discussions were conducted in Afan Oromo, national official language of the region and translation was not necessary as both discussants and I are fluent speakers of the language. The discussions were quite frank, informative and resourceful. In each FGD, information was collected on the overall perceptions, attitudes, problems, in promoting regarding the role of traditional institutions.

3.7 Data analysis Methods

I conducted all the interviews and focus group discussions in Afan Oromo and used interpretational analysis approach. Besides, descriptive case study analysis was used for this study to identify and understand major strategic benefits of integrating traditional institutions for sustainable management of social protection projects and programmes for older people in the target areas. I also used critical investigation techniques to analyze the extent to which projects implemented by NOGs and government offices had been involving traditional institutions in the project/programme cycle management.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

I did seriously take most ethical concerns in qualitative research revolve around issues of harm, consent, deception, privacy and confidentiality of the data. Therefore, enormous attention was given to the ethical issues informed consent of the participants as much as possible. In this case I investigated the willingness of all respondents to give their idea freely and then made them know that they had the choice not to answer any question they considered inappropriate.

Regarding the confidentiality, even though the participants of the study were so happy to reveal all information about the traditional institution, the identity of individuals has not been included here along with the information they have provided and will not be disclosed to any third party.

Chapter Four

4. Analysis and Findings of the Study

Preamble

This chapter presents the findings and analysis of the data collected in the due process from the focus group discussions, the interviews, the Key Informant Interviews, and the observation. I have also, in the some chapter, tried to relate the fact on ground with the literature and theoretical frameworks particularly the Sustainable Livelihood Framework and the Pillars of Social Protection discussed in chapter 2 so that the analysis is backed by theories. The interpretation and analysis was made in the light of strategic benefits of integrating traditional institutions for sustainable management of social protection programmes/projects the in the Oromia National Regional State.

4.1. General

According to my observation there is various manifestation of poverty, social and economic risks in the target area. The society I observed perceive poverty not only as a mere problem of earning under half a dollar a day, but also as isolation, marginalization, breakage of long standing social norms and values. In all communities I have observed, there are purely community based and traditional mechanisms of reducing social and economic risks as well as of managing vulnerabilities and deprivations for all people with special emphasis for children and older people.

Members of the society are trustful of and adherent to the mutually-agreed or commonly accepted rules, norms and sanctions administered by these traditional institutions. Besides, there are huge prevalence and utilizations of the concepts of management and leaderships in those institutions.

In the study area, there are also huge number project's and programmes implemented by NGOs and government institutions with aim to reduce social and economic risks, vulnerabilities and deprivation of the vulnerable people. However, the level of building up on the existing capacities of the community and/or integration of the traditional institutions in the process of managing those projects / programmes is very minimal. Very few NGOs have, to a limited extent, integrated the traditional institutions in their interventions. These interventions were evidently proved to reveal indication of sustainability by far better than other projects/programmes without or little involvement of the traditional institutions. All participants of the study- beneficiaries of the project/programmes, formal organisations (NGOs and Government Agencies), the leaders of the traditional institutions believed that projects targeting the vulnerable people are better managed and their sustainability could easily be ensured if the traditional institutions are involved at all level of the project/programme cycle management.

I have also learnt that the root of the Community Based Traditional Mechanisms and traditional institutions addressing the social-economic problems for the vulnerable people in all the studied community was the Gada system.

Leaders of the Gada system do believe that the system was not as strong as it had been with thie forefathers in addressing the social-economic, political and cultural needs of the society. It had been weakening for many years due to different factors.

The leaders in the Karayu and Asri society I interviewd had prime concern that the trend might get worse in the coming generations unless immediate actions are taken to reverse the situation.

4.2. Traditional Support Systems/ Mechanisms

I have found out that there are various community mechanisms by which the target community members support the vulnerable groups. The following⁵² are the major tools that the Karayu and Arsi elders had pointed out during the interviews and focused group discussions.

- **Buusaa Gonofaa/Hirphaa**
- **Wali Dabarsaa**
- **Geegayoo/Dhawa**
- **Gumaa**
- **Qanafaa**
- **Moggaasaa/lallaba**
- **Guddifacha**
- **Dagoo/Jigii or Gessaa**
- **Siinqee**

Because the anthropological and sociological analysis on the operation of these institutions is out of the scope of this study, I described only two of them for understanding the sociological aspects.

⁵² *I have spelt the names of the traditional support mechanisms as they are pronounced by the society and could not find English ward or phrase that could serve similar purpose or bear the same connotation.*

4.2.1. Buusa Gonofaa/Hirphaa

Buusaa Gonofaa/Hirphaa is one of the traditional institutions that were identified by my informant and focus group discussants in the target districts of the two Zones- Arsi and Fantalle clan system is vibrant.

The institution is popularly known as Buusa Gonofaa in Arsi and Hirphaa in Karayu but their meaning is so similar that they can be used interchangeably. Hirpha is a mechanism by which vulnerable community members are economically supported by the rest people in the society. If a household is ,according to the elders (participants of the study), in serious economic problem due to natural and manmade hazards like lose of crops, livestock and /or other assets members of the clan do bear the duty to support the vulnerable household.

In those circumstances, the clan leaders (Shanacha in Arsi and Damina in Karayu) do mobilize resources from every married member of the clan to support the victim household to develop resilience to the shake (the hazard). The resource is mobilized both in cash and in kind. The amount each household contributes is discussed and decided jointly by the clan leader the head of the contributing household. This joint decision takes the wealth (asset) status of the contributing household i.e. the wealthier household contributes more than the others. Asked about the current trend of the system, the informants told me that the system still works even though the intensity had been reducing. I was told about cases that witness this fact.

The following is the case the Karayu elders told me during the key informant interview.

*In April 2011, armed men from Afar region stole all livestock belonging to two households of the Karayu tribe. Since the livelihoods of the household entirely depend on the livestock, members of the household could drown into ground zero economic status. The issue was brought to the attention of the **Damina** (Clan Leaders).*

Because the Damina had already been aware of the situation, they soon started mobilizing the clan members for the rehabilitation. Kora Gosaa, (general meeting of the clan members) was summoned and all members of the clan discussed on the issue. Subsequently, clan members started contributing livestock based on the discussion and consensus with the leader. In less than three months time, the clan members collected sufficient livestock and gave it to the household whose livestock was stolen. The number and type of the livestock contributed by the clan and given to the households equal to the amount and type stolen.⁵³

⁵³ According to the elders, the Karayu were at recurrent armed conflict with the Afar and Argoba community in the adjacent districts of the Afar and the Amhara National Regional States respectively. Long ago, the conflict had been caused by factors like stealing of cattle from one another and resulted in relatively minor casualties. After 1950s the, the frequency, the intensity, the scope and subsequent casualties of the conflict had significantly been souring. The decade of 1950s had remained the begging of severe socio economic problems to the Karayu pastoralists. It was the time when the Karayu were evicted (without any compensation) from their dry season pasture land in the Awash Valley and forced to settle in the driest part of the Fantalle district as a result of the imposed establishment of Awash National Park, the Methara Sugar Factory and other estate farms in the upper Awash Valley. Since 1950s the contempt to have access to water and posture had come to be the basic cause of the conflict between the Karayu and the other pastoralist groups.

The focused group discussion and the key informant interview conducted in Shashemene and Kofale districts of the West Arsi Zone depicts the significant contemporary prevalence of the Buusaa Gonofa among the Arsi Oromo. Similar to the case of Karayu, coordination of the Buusa Gonofa is made by Shanacha, clan leaders.

4.2.2. Walidabarsaa

Walidabarsaa is another traditional support mechanism identified during the focused group discussion and the key informant interview. Literal meaning of the term **Walidabarsaa**, according to my informants, is “giving what you have to those in need” The Arsi elders in the target district told me that there is one principle based value among the Arsi that served as the foundation for the emergence and functioning of the Walidabarsaa institution. This principle is the general thinking among the people that all children and older persons should get sufficient milk to drink.

Children belong not only to their parents but to the clan. It is believed by the community that children must drink milk sufficiently in order for them to grow well. If a child does not get milk, he/she becomes **Ilma Bishaanii** (which literally means a child of water) who become not as strong as otherwise. That child who could not get milk will grow weak. In the later days when reached adolescent the child can't hunt, he can't fight and can't perform other social duties that the Gosa (clan) expects. Thus, weak man is going to belong to the gosa and this is considered shame to the parent first and to the clan next. That is why they want every child to drink milk. Older persons are also perceived similarly.

Older persons are considered blessings to the clan. If the gosa did not care for the older people of our clan, they think the entire clan might be cursed.

This perception is accentuated by the popular Orom proverb “ Bishaan darbuuf deemu si hin nyaatin, jaarsi du’aa deemu si hin abaarin” which literary mean “ may you not be drown by a flowing water and may you not be cursed by a dying older person” Thus, if a household does not have a milking house to get milk for children and older people, the clan should provide the household with milking caw.

The household that received that caw feeds it takes care of it and get the milk from it. When the caw stops giving milk, the caw goes to the owning household and usually the offspring (the calf) will remain with the household as a gift. That is how the Walidabarsaa operates. In Arsi, the concept of Walidabarsa involves other forms of giving also. My informants of Shashemene district told me that there are cases where a vulnerable house hold is given crops for feeding. The crops donated by the gosa members could be after harves or befor harvest on the field to be harvested by the family recieving the donation.

4.2.3. Geegayoo/Dhawa

The Geegayoo/Dhawa is a mechanism of supporting a newly emerging household develop assets that supports the groums establish the asset they need to live.

4.3. Involvement of the Traditional Institutions in the Management of Formal

Projects Implemented NGOs and Government

I have found that this institutions and mechanisms of traditional support are vibrant enough to supplement to sustainability of the interventions made by government and NGOs in the study areas. All of my informants from the the NGOs implementing projects and programmes, governments line departments, leaders of the traditional institutions and beneficiaries of the formal interventions did believe that systematic and research based the integration of the traditional mechanism into the formal projects and programmes gives strategic benefits to sustainability of the later interventions.

However, the involvement of the traditional institutions in the process of managing social protection interventions made by formal institutions (NGOs and Government agencies is minimal. Nor has the strategic benefits of integrating these institutions been investigated or studied before. Majority of the NGOs do not consult the leaders of the institutions. Frontline and back office staffs of some of the implementing NGOs are not aware of the society's culture; they do not even know the language of the community where those projects are implemented. There are some NGOs that know and like the culture, committed to community participations, but not very much work with the Gada, Shanacha or Damina. Involvement of the institution is

limited to giving information. In very rare case, the values and concepts of the traditional institutions and support mechanisms are integrated into relevant projects. In those cases the results of projects tended to be more sustainable.

The Oromia regional government has recently started to establish a "Gada Council" in every district of the state in a way that violates the values of Gada. Older people are appointed by the administration to work as Abba Gada and their role and responsibility defined by the administration and/or the office of the ruling party, Oromo People Democratic Organisation (OPDO). Some of the "Abba Gada" working as member of the "Gada" council said that they were a happy about the scheme because of the wrong procedure of establishing the "Gada Council". Establishment of the "council" and election of the leaders did not have the informed consent of the people they claim to have represented. Besides, some money of these elders did not have any knowledge about the Gada system and, unfortunately, those older people who have good knowledge about the Gada system had been forbidden to participate because they were not member of the ruling party. All most all of the elders have had a prime concern that the move taken by the government jeopardizes the Gada system and its long standing values among the Oromo nation. Even these older people are not consulted in making decisions that affect the socio-economic and political life of the respective community by government authorities and many non of non government organizations.

Chapter Five

Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusions

Analysis of the literature review and the field work indicate that there are traditional mechanisms and institutions that address the social protection needs of the vulnerable groups –children, older persons and women in the study area. These institutions are rooted in the Gada system and do have well established community based mechanisms of reducing social and economic risks as well as of managing vulnerabilities and deprivations for vulnerable people .

The basic planning and management concepts that referred to by Peter Blunt and D. Michel Warren (1996) also exist in these institutions. The traditional institutions and support mechanisms could fit into the asset pentagon of the DIFID livelihood frame work. They are the untapped Social Capital, the most important of the five assets that captures the idea that social norms and social bonds are important part of the basis for sustainable development. Contributions of the traditional mechanisms for sustainable management of the interventions, therefore, are very high and this necessitates the active involvement of traditional institutions in the project/programme cycle management from the inception of the project idea to the final steps of monitoring and evaluation.

This accentuates the idea that sustainable development is possible only if the creative capacities of the society are engaged in the development process, and for that to occur, development action must be rooted in the culture of the country concerned.

However, since the involvement of the traditional institutions in the process of managing social protection interventions made by formal institutions is insignificant, the level of building up on the existing capacities of the community and/or integration of the traditional institutions in the process of managing those projects / programmes is very minimal. In cases where the traditional support mechanisms are integrated into formal projects, their sustainability of those interventions is insured from the very beginning.

This indicates that involving the institution in the process of managing development plans and programmes undertaken in the region would significantly enhance sustainability of the interventions.

The move taken by the Oromia regional state with regard to manipulating the Gada system by the name of establishing "Gada council" seems to result in catastrophic consequence to the system. The procedures followed by the government in the process of cheap politicizing the Gada is not only disempowering but also makes the system more vulnerable to disappearance than ever before. This is accentuated by the fact that civil society organization like the Macha and Tulama Associations that were genuinely operating to enhance the values of the Oromo were banned and others frustrated by negative involvement of the government.

5.2. Recommendations

- ✚ Further investigations should be undertaken by scholars in the field of development studies, sociology and social anthropology regarding the Oromo traditional mechanisms of support for older people.

- ✚ NGOs and government agencies should empower and integrate the traditional support mechanisms in the social protection interventions they undertake in the region.

- ✚ NGOs and government agencies should establish and materialise strategic and policy level mechanisms of integrating the traditional institutions in the process of managing social protection interventions.

- ✚ The Oromia national government should genuinely revisit the strategy of manipulating the Oromo elders in the name of establishing “ Gada council” in each district. The government should recognise that the spontaneous political involvement of the ruling party in the system and the subsequent imposition is making the system more vulnerable. The government should stop manipulating the system for its own political benefits. It should lift the ban on operation of concerned civil society organisations like the Macha and Tulama Association and others that work for enhancing the values of the Gada system.

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