Moral Values in the Oromo
Gada System: an Ethno-philosophical Reflection

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1. Introduction

This research project sets out from practical problems. While the action that people perform and the behaviors they exhibit are greatly influenced by their moral values, it seems that these values have not earned the attention they deserve. This is particularly true in the Ethiopian context. In their attempt to identify the main causes of the interwoven problems currently facing the country, researchers devoted much of their efforts to the economic, political, cultural and social activities of people, while paying no attention of significant degree to the moral life and values of these people. The researcher strongly believes that whether the actions that people perform are productive or unproductive, solution offering or trouble causing is tremendously influenced by their moral life. The reality of human life is not only made up of facts, but also full of values. Grappling with the problems of development and the issue of raising the living condition of people does not seem to be feasible unless the moral values of the societies (that play important role in commanding the daily activities of people and thereby influencing the far- reaching development of the country), are genuinely addressed. We, therefore, need to look into our indigenous moral values.

This study is designed to explore the moral values embodying the Gada system of the Oromo of Ethiopia. The Oromo, being the largest ethnic group in the country, has a tremendous role to play in the process of nation-building. Although the Oromo have moral values of their own it seems that no clear and valid knowledge of these values has been gained. The extent to which these values serve either good or evil purpose has not been clearly identified. But with ignorance and negligence to ones own (indigenous) moral values, it is very unlikely to get into the right course of development.

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It is in response to these problems that the study of the moral value in the Oromo Gada system is proposed.

As it is to all other people, moral life is one of the most important aspects of their life to Ethiopians too. Daily they make use of it. They act and behave according to their moral norms. In the light of certain moral principles they evaluate their own actions as well as the actions performed by others. As it is deep down in their life, it has played a significant role in making them what and who they were in the past, and what or who they are at the present. And yet most people do not seem to have acquired clear, knowledge of the moral values that largely make up their identity and life.

In the Ethiopian context mostly people consider morality more as a matter of religious concern than as an issue of earthily reality, because "religions are also moral guidelines by which to live."(Grcic 1989: 11) The fact being this there is a strong tendency to leave all issues of morality to religious institutions and their practitioners. Although it pervades both the religious and non-religious life of man, the narrow and shallow belief that morality was only an issue of the religious realm, has so far been rolling down from the preceding to the succeeding generations. Most of our people are still with this old perception. For them morality does not seem to have meaningful role to play either in enhancing or in hampering development. It appears as if it is more important and meaningful for heavenly life than it is for the secular world. Now the question is, would it be appropriate to continue with this kind of age-old belief of morality? Should we remain ignorant of all what is there in our value systems? If there is a genuine interest to solve the practical challenges of the country and sincere need to know how strong or weak we are in solving our problems, our moral values that might have been the host for a number of evils should critically be explored.

The Oromo are known not only for being the largest constituent in the country, but also for being the possessors of a comprehensive socio-political system called Gada. The preliminary survey of this research has already brought the researcher to the belief that the Oromo Gada system is an integral system consisting of philosophy of reality, [ie, Metaphysics]; of God (Waaqa), [ie, Theology or Philosophy of Religion]; of society, politics and their values, [ie, Moral, Political and Social philosophy]. To enable us get a framework with whcih we can know, critically evaluate and appreciate

the moral values of the Oromo Gada system it is imperative to shortly consider the historical development of moral life in general.

2. The Historical Development of Moral Life

Moral concerns are as old as human history. They are also as young as the present human generation. Old, because there was no time when human beings lived without some kind of moral judgment. Young, because some of those old human problems for which moral concerns are called forth, do still reside in the life and activities of present day human beings. On top of that, new and formidable problems that make morality more pertinent today than ever before have developed. Insofar as humans are rational and social beings with conflict of interests morality may not grow old.

Humans are, no doubt, social beings. This indispensably entails that humans are moral beings. In other words, "Morality is a social activity… If you were the only person in the world there would not be any morality." (Pojman 2005: 7) Individuals cannot acquire human features without a social environment that socializes (humanizes) them, and human society cannot exist without the aggregate existence of humanized individuals. One always makes the other. The important issue however is not that human individuals live together and form society, but how they manage to live together. In the study of moral philosophy we are concerned more generally with questions about how one ought to live, what could count as good reasons for acting in one way rather than another, and what constitutes a good life for human beings (Norman 1985: 1)

Individuals who enter into social life have conflicting interests to pursue. They are these interests that either harmonize or antagonizes human relations. Wherever there is scarcity, "human society will never escape the problem of the equitable distribution of the physical and cultural goods, which provide for the preservation and fulfillment of human life" (Niebuhr, 1960: 1) Men are in constant conflict as long as the treasures which nature provides are not sufficient enough to satisfy at least their reasonable wants. And yet as rational beings men cannot be carried away by conflicts to a common ruin. "The first demand of life is to continue to live."(Titus 1954: 17), and hence conflict necessitates morality for arbitration.

Humans, as rational beings, create and live in the moral world. Grasping which action is morally right or wrong, desirable or undesirable is in the

nature (consciousness) of these humans. As Titus (1954: 9-10) observes, we live in a world where we must not only make decisions but where there are right ways and wrong ways of doing things. Neither individuals nor society can exist without ethical life. In moral life men are free to choose between the right or wrong course of actions. But it must be noted that, while it is likely plausible to consider that what makes morality necessary is conflict (Singer 1991:11) it is not enough to say that it exists only because of conflict. There must also be the willingness as well as the capacity to look for shared solutions to conflicts (Singer, 1991: 12).

Different disciplines are directed towards solving the problems and answering the questions of man. Natural and social sciences of different fields have solved a considerable number of problems and answered a lot of questions. Ethics has also been attempting to develop the moral life of man in order to settle problems and answer questions that have ever been faced and raised. The achievements scored in the ethical life of mankind however are not as remarkable and immense as the ones gained in the fields of natural and other social sciences. As Niebuhr (1960: 1) comments, "For all the centuries of experience, men have not yet learned how to live together without compounding their vices and covering each other 'with mud and with blood'."

In fact the world is more resourceful, powerful and culturally advanced today than it had ever been. Achievements of science and technology have given men tremendous powers to solve the complex problems facing them. And yet the present world is suffering from formidable evils of complex nature created or induced by human beings. It could even be said that the world has experienced very complex and complicated evils more today than it had ever done before. Although the history of human society witnesses that humans essentially prefer love to hatred, friendship to enmity, togetherness to solitude, peace to war, life to death, good to evil, the current world is probably more full of vicious acts than the previous one.

The best minds of mankind have ever been trying to find out ways and means of dispelling all forms of evils and promoting good in place of them. "There are means and resources available by which we may build a more satisfying life and better world." (Titus, 1954:1) But who or what is responsible for the evils to exist if adequate means and resources are available and if humans have ever been doing all what has been possible for them to promote good? If we presuppose a cause for the occurrence of any

phenomenon then what is the cause of evil? From secular viewpoint one of two things is possible- either the contemporary world has no enough material resources, knowledge and skill to get rid of evils; or something has gone wrong in the moral system of the present- day man.

As mentioned earlier, the works of scholars in various fields prove that the current world is rich enough in economic and human resources, scientific and other intellectual achievements enabling human beings. uprooting evils from their surroundings. If the lack of material resources and knowledge is not apparently the cause for the evils of the current world, then we need (for it) to look into the moral system of the existing man. Something seems to have gone tragically wrong with the course of human events. There is precariousness about life, a vague uneasiness, even a fear that civilization it self may be in a period of decline. (Titus 1954: 1) Hampered by different factors the moral life of man in the current world is too much impaired to address the evils of this world.

The life and system of present-day humans are largely dictated by scientific knowledge, and economic (or material) values. Being overshadowed by the victory of science, technology and other material values, morality, which should be the prime guiding principle of human acts and behaviors, is increasingly trampled on. When the value of money (since the values of material wealth are expressed in terms of money) dominates the world, the values that money cannot buy and that which applied science cannot explain, (i.e. moral values) could be devalued, and hence immoral acts become rampant. Thus our trouble seems to be due to our neglect of moral ideals and a lack of spiritual insight, not due to lack of science, of technical education or of material equipment (Titus 1954: 3). Of course moral values are still there deep and functional in the life and activities of people. They have contributed a lot to make the survival and togetherness of people possible. What is being strongly argued in here, however, is that they are not developed to the extent of considerably preventing man from doing evils against his fellow human beings and the world, and from abusing all good achievements available at his disposal. Without authentic moral commitments and respects at their basis, all good things such as material resources, knowledge, skill, beauty, etc. can easily be abused or turned into means and sources of various evils.

Morality is the "pursuit of truth and understanding about how we ought to live together in a complex world'' (Pojman 2005: xvi) But all the

atrocities and inhuman acts that men of this contemporary world inflict upon one another certainly suggest that the questions how we should live together have not yet been well addressed. Consequently, the world still needs morality and even more urgently today than it had ever been in the bygone days. Undoubtedly, "Ethical awareness is the necessary condition for human survival and flourishing. If we have to endure as a free, civilized people we must take ethics more seriously than we have before" (Pojman, 2005: xvi). As Titus pointed out, we want life not death; happiness not pain; and to live full and abundant lives, and morality is the attempt to discover and to live the good life.(1954: 4) In fact one thing is certain- that people still have moral rules or principles. But these rules and principles alone do not guarantee moral behaviors unless people have the desire to commit themselves to them. On top of this, the rational foundation of these rules and principles must critically be examined so that we could know whether they are free of flaws or full of them.

People should not blindly follow or obey rules. They do not have to accept them unquestionably. Definitely rules are the bodies of rights and duties, responsibilities and obligations that require decisions and choices for the actions or behaviors expected of individuals.

3. Statement of the Problem

Wherever there is unsolved problem and unanswered question there is a necessity of seeking a solution. It is not only the pursuit for academic excellence but also the obvious practical problems being faced that mainly stimulated the undertaking of this research. Some of the issues that provoked this research project are stated in three categories: namely, (1) issues in relation to the Oromo as an ethnic group, (2) nation-wide concerns and (3) world-wide significance of the issue in question.

3.1 Issues in relation to the Oromo as an ethnic group

The Oromo of Ethiopia are the possessors of indigenous democratic system known as the *Gada System*. *Gada System*, for the Oromo, is a comprehensive value system, of which moral value is one major component. To some extent the manners and the 'ethos' of these people indicate that they are relatively peace loving (or non-violent), free from bias

and prejudice, people of good will and honesty, kind and cooperative. History witnesses that unlike some other people who used to enslave their victims or prisoners of war, the Oromo used to "assimilate their assimilie" and culturally "recognize their indebtedness to those they have assimilated."(Asmarom 2001). The researcher is of the opinion that it is the moral value entailed in the Gada system that instilled such behavior and attitude in these people. But how much of these good qualities are retained and known to us now? To what extent are these used for good ends? This has to be explored.

The moral life and value of the Oromo people is one of the basic factors constituting their identity. One may not identify who the Oromo were in the past, who they are now and who they would be in the future unless he/she/ knows something about their moral values. Even some of the Oromo who do not have well founded knowledge of this important aspect of their own life could suffer from blurred ideas of their identity. In fact the Oromo as people know their own values. That is why they were able to retain at least some of the aspects of their values regardless of the local and external repressive actions imposed on them. But the merits and demerits of these values have not been critically examined in the context of the complex value system of the contemporary world.

Asmarom (2000: 79) relates: "The Oromo people managed to maintain their traditional democratic culture..., preserved Oromo identity, democratic idiom, and sense of communal integrity." But most of the Oromo and Non-Oromo intellectuals of the country do not seem to have good knowledge of these values. Owing to their academic background and intellectual exposure they appreciate the values of the industrialized Western world, while paying little or no attention to those of their own. Of course it is good to appreciate the desirable moral life of any human community but it is bad to blind to those of ones own. The rational elements of the moral value of the civilized world could and should be used as a searchlight to find our own. We therefore need to use our knowledge of the moral value of the so called civilized world as a means to find, reflect upon and cultivate the desirable value system of our own.

The moral life of the Oromo people, by and large, is traditional. It depends on the social pressure and authorization of the society in question, not in the reflective capacity of individuals. What motivates a person to act in certain way is largely the approval or disapproval of the society. It is the

authority of the group or society outside of and imposed on the individual (Sinha 1994: 55) that makes the individual to act or behave either this way or that way. The moral agent is committed to certain moral principles not because he/she consciously and reflectively understands the merit and the demerit of the principles, rather because he/she is told and taught that the contrary is undesirable. Such morality is not dynamic. Rather it is predominantly conservative since it does not tend to critically examine the rationality of the traditional norms, and incorporates new social events and discard the old values that are incompatible with the tide of the time.

People in customary morality are passively accustomed to approve or disapprove actions. They do not question how much of the approved or the disapproved is justifiable. The passive acceptance of what has been there in the age-old traditional value of the society cannot, however, go along with the need of modernization. "Moral progress inevitably demands transition from group morality to personal morality. It demands a transition from unreflective to reflective morality." (Sinha 1994: 55) To put it differently, the moral life of a given society must be reflected upon; its merit and demerit must be identified to know whether it makes a positive contribution to the course of development. It is only then that morality becomes reflective. The authority of the moral life, in reflective morality is inside the moral agent- it is the authority of conscience from within the self.

The moral value of the Oromo people has been carried over from one preceding generation to the next through traditional means. But it may not be compatible with the modern style of life and communication, and hence there could be a need for change. To that effect the moral values of these people must be reflected upon, and must also be given a presentable form.

There is a presumption that Ethiopia is currently embarking on the road to democratic system and reform. The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia states that it is the full respect of individual and people's fundamental freedom and rights (Constitution 1995: 75) that would guarantee the democratic order, and economic and social transformation. The development of a given society is realized and guaranteed if the citizen's " wider cultural identities must be allowed to grow" (Asmarom 2000: xi) Stated in Article 10, No. 2 of the above-mentioned Constitution is, " Human and democratic rights of citizens and peoples shall be respected" (Constitution 1995: 75) Respecting them does not only mean recognizing, but also making them to be known, allowing

them to grow, for in the process of growth every culture has something vital to offer. (Asmarom 2000: xi)

In Oromo culture, it seems that ethnic consciousness and identity of the people is stronger than the conscious interest of an Oromo individual. The suppression of their ethnic value is more painful to them than the obstruction of the individual rights. The question of respect or disrespect for their value is something politically and economically sensitive. Therefore, the acknowledgment and development of the values of these people (and also that of others for that matter) must be considered as important question to be addressed and reflected upon.

3.2 Nation- wide Concern

Ethiopia, a country in which the Oromo people make the largest constituent, is one of the poorest nations of the contemporary world. Although the country claims an honor for her ancient civilization, currently it is ranked among the poorest in the world. It is unhealthy, uncomfortable and unacceptable to live in and suffer from such a grave poverty in a country that claims the survival and recorded history of over three thousand years. Apparently, there is an urgent need to take the country and its people out of this shameful situation.

A search for a solution would be futile without the critical examination of the moral values of the country. We need to put many questions to ourselves. Is there any relevant issue of our moral life pertaining to the question of development? Do we really consider a sense of duty as important component of moral life? Do we think that there are morally wrong actions and behaviors in our daily and historical activities, accountable for us to have been left behind in terms of development? Have we ever questioned ourselves whether we have been the major causes of our failure?

The researcher is strongly convinced that there is deep moral impairment in the life style of Ethiopians. This has left the door open to different kinds of evils. Corruption, nepotism, favoritism, dishonesty, bigotry, greed and lust, inefficiency, chauvinism, narrow-mindedness and parochialism, wastefulness, insensitiveness, indolence and procrastination are all rampant. These evils, compounded with the already existing protracted challenges such as poverty, ignorance, illiteracy, lack of health

and others suck the cream of national resources, enervate the energy and the strength of national aspirations. It does not need a complex thought process to understand that this is the reality, since one or more of these evils could daily be done by a few or many citizens to one or many other citizens, or even to the country.

Our people are still being haunted by instability, insecurity, lack of social peace and tranquility, and stagnant mode of life. Consciousness of ethnicity is becoming stronger than national sentiment. The climate of hostility is more felt than a friendly environment. Isolated or fragmented activities of individuals are by far greater than the rationally organized cooperation and integration. Level of rational consciousness is below desirable standard. Significant consensus about common concerns cannot easily be reached among the concerned forces of the country. Tolerance does not prevail as much as it is required. Minor problems often cost much sacrifice. Much more preferred is violence than peaceful means to settle problems. It is not moral and democratic consciousness but feudal sentiment that is being largely used as a guiding principle. Rigidity is very strong and lack of creativity is rampant. Creativity and innovations are not very much encouraged – the goodness of such activities is viewed very often as private business, not as a common goal. With all these and other evils in the mind and the life of the society, to think of successful development would presumably generate nothing more than a dream. The success of any attempt to reduce and eventually eliminate social problems of intricate nature and thereby speed up national development without taking into account the states of moral values of the society is questionable.

Humans are both the subject and the object of morality. As subjects they make it, and as objects they are made by it. In a developed moral culture both the external and internal life of the moral agent are, somehow, reconciled and harmoniously integrated, with the precedence of the internal over the external one. But in less developed moral culture it is mainly the dictation of the external force that makes the moral agent to act or behave in this or that way. In the present day world, however, the actions and behaviors of men that deserve moral judgment should not be mainly dictated by external force but they rather are more importantly inspired and commanded by the moral principles of the agent. Qualified knowledge and skill of profession are fragile without internal commitment to ethical principles. Knowledge, profession, power, responsibility, services, interests

and aspirations, etc. are very much susceptible to different forms of abuse unless they are based on firm ethical principles.

Government officials of this country have apparently launched a fight against evils caused by the abuse of power, profession and responsibility. Commission for Ethics and Anti- corruption has already been set up for that purpose. Even though this effort cannot be undermined, it must not be considered as the ultimate means to curb or avoid such evils. A controlling mechanism from outside may create fear, not commitment; imposition, not devotion. Moreover, its contingency and subjectivity may create another venue for yet another new corruption or abuse. The effective mechanism to make humans choose the correct course of action is to cultivate his or her inner world with rationality and imbue it with reasonable moral values. If man is able to internalize moral values and standards that could be used as point of reference to evaluate the worth of actions and behaviors then the possibility of mitigating evils could be maximized.

Ethiopia is a country of multiethnic groups. Each has its own moral value. However, the moral value of none of these was studied well and known. The fact that people have no good knowledge of their moral values makes them give little or no importance to these essential parts of their own life. When intellectual investigations are made for all the causes and sources of different social evils (such as poverty, illiteracy, red-taping, bribery, procrastination, indolence, adultery, rape, lawlessness and other forms of corruptive acts and crimes) the role of moral values are not seriously considered. Many may think that the sources of all sorts of evils are external to us while plenty of them could deeply be rooted in our value systems. It is this that creates disparity between what these people really are, and what they actually want to be. The first is their reality and the second is their ideal. People always have a tendency to go from who, what and where they are [reality] to what and where they want to be [ideal]. Their ideal is always conceived to be better than their reality. But the achievement of the ideal depends on the knowledge of their reality. Since one of the things that constitute the realty of people is their moral value, the acquisition of correct knowledge of this value is unquestionably important.

To a multi-ethnic society such as ours, adopting a democratic system is extremely important. Democracy is presumed to be the system in which diversity is considered as an asset rather than as something negative and disruptive. For there to be unity, there must be diversity; diversity, on the

other hand, willingly accepts unity. (if it is rationally recognized). In this system individuals and peoples ought to respect one another. The core principle of morality as well as democratic values is respect for others and freedom to all. This involves the acknowledgment of all the essential elements such as language, history, and values that constitute the identity of the individual and people. When we respect the value of others we also make or expect others to do the same to us; and in this sense respect is and becomes a value of reciprocal nature. "A right confers a corresponding duty on the part of others that they refrain themselves from obstructing us in exercising that right" (Grcic 1989: 8). Respect breeds respect, and disrespect breeds disrespect. To avoid the reversal of democratic course of development and to put an end to undemocratic practices that obstructs the exercises of rights, the indigenous values of people and their development must be well studied and be made to grow and flourish on rational grounds.

It seems that indigenous moral values are now too weak to shape and sharpen the views of people about everything. Most of the educated people of the country seem to have adopted the values of the Western world readily. The ruling elites of the country also attempt to predominantly use the exotic values, which they consider as values of the "modernized" or "civilized" world to rule the local people who are still deep in their indigenous values. At this juncture a cleft that takes the two parties apart inevitably occurs.

The ruling elites do not seem to fully recognize the diverse values of their own subjects. They think that the values of their people are "backward" or "uncivilized." And to the people, the values of the Western world are alien and unknown. Given this situation none of these two value systems play significant role in guiding the life of people. The borrowed value is not strong enough to mobilize the society towards higher goal, and the indigenous ones have already been ignored (by those who assume the power to mobilize people). It therefore goes without saying that no strong moral value is being adopted in the relation of the ruling elites and the subjects being ruled. This has created value-crisis to be seriously and sincerely addressed.

To effectively mobilize people in the right course of development, the government and non-government officials must have good knowledge of the values of people they lead and work with. But as discussed so far, this has not been the case with us. Not only that they have been giving

leadership without adequate attention to the value of their own people, but they have rather largely been imposing values that are irrelevant and alien to the culture of these people. One of the major problems why very often people fail to solve their problems seems to lie in this fact. An official without good knowledge of the moral value of his/her people could be either undemocratic or unenlightened to the cause of her/his people. Therefore, critically investigating the moral value of people is very important for those who have the power to rule and mobilize these people. Attempts to critically explore the moral value of the Oromo people may partly tackle these problems.

3.3 World-wide Significance

The value of the Oromo people is a part and parcel of the value system of mankind in the world in general and in Ethiopia in particular. It may have something to contribute to the development of the country and the world, or aspects that hinder them. Whether it does something good or bad to the country or to the world at large should be the concern of humanity. In this case the Oromo moral value is the value that the world wants to know and evaluate. For it to be known, understood and evaluated it has to get a presentable form. This research is intended not only to bring this value to light but also to provide it a systematically organized and presentable form.

4. Objectives of the Research

This research project has general and specific objectives.
The general objectives are:-

a)   To contribute to the advancement of knowledge in indigenous moral values.

> Assumption: Moral values have tremendous role to play in the making of man's life, and consequently we need to know them. Just as facts do values too affect the life and development of man. As we need to know the truth or falsity of facts in nature and society we must also know the goodness or badness of our value system.

b) To examine the causal connection between social development and indigenous moral values.

> Assumption: The possibility of social development is unthinkable without a relentless effort of society. Efforts can still be affected either positively or negatively by the moral values governing the inner world of every one in the society. Our indigenous moral values are more of traditional nature, and hence they might be full of superstitions, clichés, orthodox and unchecked beliefs, ignorance and different non-rational judgments. A moral life infested with such things can hamper development more than it fosters it. Therefore, a correct course of development can be mapped out only if the cause- effect relationships between social development and indigenous values are well addressed and understood.

c) To explore the behavior and judgments we, as people, have about things in both nature and society.

> Assumption: Man's realty is composed of internal and external aspects. Problems of life cannot be solved only by the knowledge of its external aspect. Viewed from this angle, there is a need of inspecting our internal life. Using Socratic approach we can make self- examination. What kind of people are we? How do we do what we do? Do we do as we ought to do or as we ought not to do? Social problems can be well addressed only if such questions are meaningfully tackled. At this point in time self- assessment is crucially important. We are strangled and caught in a web of intricate problems. If there is a need to come out of these, we must examine our selves very urgently. Who were we? Who are we? Where are we now? Where do we intend to go? Who has made us to be what we are now? Have we ever thought of our selves as the major cause of our problems? Should we keep on considering external factors as the sole cause for all of our failure? Have we ever attempted to check ourselves from inside? Have we ever critically challenged our selves for the reason why we are still in extreme poverty in the world of plenty? Why we remain weak in solving our problems? Can we go over to a better life just with the moral attitude that we have so far been with?

The Specific Objectives are:-

a) To bring out to light the moral values embedded in the Oromo Gada system and to explore the roles they play in making the Oromo person.

b) To investigate the implication of these moral values in the everyday life of the people.

c) To examine the rational justification of these moral values.

5. Data Sources and Procedures of Collection

Literature: Archival and library sources will be· used as indirect or secondary sources. A good number of works on the Gada system are available. In addition to these, documents available in the local offices and institutions engaged in studying and collecting issues pertinent to the subject of the research will be consulted.

Observational Sources: Preliminary information can be gathered from observable empirical facts or events taking place in the daily life, activities and interactions of people, ritual ceremonies and gatherings. Observations can be made on how the Oromo act and behave either individually or collectively towards others, and how others do the same towards them either individually or collectively.

Flied Work: The major source for the collection of data and information are fieldworks and trips. Three methods will be used for the purpose. One is setting and distributing questionnaires (where applicable), the second is conducting in-depth interview and the third is organizing focus-group discussions. In-depth interviews will be conducted with a few key informants.

discussions. In-depth interviews will be conducted with a few key informants.

6. The Research Sites

The selected sites for the purpose are four – one is Borana, the second is Guji, the third is West Shewa and the fourth is Addis Ababa/ Finfinne/. Both Borana and Guji are located in the Oromia Regional State and in the south-eastern part of Ethiopia. They are within the radius of 650 to 770 Km from the capital. The researcher selected these sites because they are the regions of Oromo where the Gada System is still not only a living institution but also a strong system to influence the activities and the life of people.

West Shewa is the other site. It is located in the hinterland of the country, west of the capital/ ie, Addis Ababa/, within the radius of 300 km from the capital. This again is an area of Oromo land where there is an immense intermingling or inter-ethnic cultures are seen. The Oromo of this region have received some of the values of non-Oromo settlers and have given some of their own to others. Despite the intermingling of cultures, still the Oromo retained some of the basic structures of the Gada System. This site is selected particularly for comparative purpose. How much of the Oromo's moral value is affected by this intermingling, and whether the ultimate effect of this intermingling is either of detrimental or constructive nature is to be addressed.

Addis Ababa (Finfinne) is the third research site. Most of the literary works done on Oromo are available in the Oromia regional offices, and in the universities, colleges and cultural institutions found in the City.

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