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**THE CHANGING TRENDS IN BRIDE WEALTH (GABBARA) AMONG
ARSI OROMO: THE CASE OF NEGELE ARSI DISTRICT**

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**THE CHANGING TREND IN BRIDE WEALTH (GABBARA) AMONG
ARSI OROMO: THE CASE OF NEGELE ARSI DISTRICT**

MA THESIS

BY: HABTAMU DERBE

ADVISOR: DEJENE GEMECHU (PhD, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR)

CO-ADVISOR: ZERIHUN MEKURIA (MA)

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Thesis on the Tittle The changing Trend in Bride Wealth (*Gabbara*) among the Arsi Oromo: The
Case of Negele Arsi District is done by Habtamu Derbe

Approval by:

1. _____	_____	_____
Chairman	Signature	Date
2. _____	_____	_____
Main Advisor	Signature	Date
3. _____	_____	_____
External Examiner	Signature	Date
4. _____	_____	_____
Internal Examiner	Signature	Date

DECLARATION

The researcher hereby declares that the thesis on the title “The Changing Trend in Bride Wealth (Gabbara) among the Arsi Oromo: The Case of Negele Arsi District” is my original work and all sources that have been referred to and quoted fully indicated and acknowledged with complete references.

Name: Habtamu Derbe

Signature: _____

Date: September, 24/2021

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university advisor.

Main advisor

Name: Dejene Gemech (PhD, Associate Professor of Social Anthropology)

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Co-advisor

Name: Zerihum Mekuria (MA)

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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Glossary of Local Terms

<i>Abbaa</i>	<i>father, owner, title of respect</i>
<i>Assennaa</i>	<i>a type of marriage that is arranged based on the will of girls</i>
<i>Akaakayyuu</i>	<i>a grandfather/ grandmother</i>
<i>Ardaa</i>	<i>close relatives</i>
<i>Ateetee</i>	<i>female ritual carried out to protect women's rights, and protest</i>
<i>Balballa</i>	<i>minimal lineage</i>
<i>Bokkuu</i>	<i>scepter</i>
<i>Buttaa</i>	<i>abduction, a marriage construct by force</i>
<i>Daboo</i>	<i>organized labor cooperation</i>
<i>Dhaala</i>	<i>a type of marriage that is constructed by inheriting wife</i>
<i>Dhoofsisaa</i>	<i>a head of cattle which is given by the boy's family to newly married couples</i>
<i>Eesuma</i>	<i>uncle</i>
<i>Fira</i>	<i>relatives</i>
<i>Gabbaraa:</i>	<i>gifts provided by the boy to the girl's family to validate the marriage</i>
<i>Gadaa</i>	<i>Indigenous socio-economic and political organization of Oromo</i>
<i>Geegayoo</i>	<i>a head of cattle which given by the girl's family and her relatives to couples</i>
<i>Gosa:</i>	<i>sub moiety</i>
<i>Gudiffachaa</i>	<i>adoption</i>
<i>Gumaa</i>	<i>institution of conflict resolution, compensation paid for wrong doing, revenge</i>

<i>Gurguboo</i>	<i>a head of cattle which given by the bride's family to the newly married couples</i>
<i>Hadhaa</i>	<i>mother</i>
<i>Halangee:</i>	<i>whip hold by groom, elder and abba gadaa in wedding, conflict resolution etc.</i>
<i>Handhuraa</i>	<i>a cow which given by the bride's family to their newly married daughter</i>
<i>Hangafa</i>	<i>first born, senior</i>
<i>Ketticha</i>	<i>go-between</i>
<i>Maandha</i>	<i>junior/second born</i>
<i>Milkii</i>	<i>omen</i>
<i>Moggaasa</i>	<i>name giving (naming)</i>
<i>Raadaa fi Jibicha</i>	<i>a heifer and bull which given to the bride's families</i>
<i>Siinqee</i>	<i>stick given to a woman on her wedding day in order to protect her rights</i>
<i>Waaqa</i>	<i>Creator /God</i>
<i>Waaqeffannaa</i>	<i>a belief in Waaqa/ God</i>
<i>Walgara</i>	<i>sister exchange marriage</i>
<i>Warra</i>	<i>lineage</i>

List of Abbreviations

CSA: Central Statistical Agency

ETB: Ethiopian Birr

FGD: Focus Group Discussion

MASL: Meters above sea level

MM: Millimeters

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Abstract

The gift of bride wealth or gabbara is an important element of marriage among the Negele Arsi Oromo. While the functions and meanings attached to the practice are constantly changing over time. The aim of this study was to describe the changing trend in bride wealth or gabbara among the Negele Arsi Oromo; specifically, to describe the former gabbara gift; its customary value, the current gift and its implication on unmarried youths, newly married couples, their parents, community, marital stability and the initiatives undertaken to address the issue. To attain the objectives an ethnographic design and purposive sampling technique was employed. Accordingly, I conducted 16 semi-structured in-depth interviews, 13 key informant interviews, 4 Focus Group Discussions (32 participants), and participant observation. The necessary data was analyzed using thematic analysis through description under their main themes. The finding of the study shows gabbara is playing a crucial role in providing solidarity, mutual respect among the bride's family and the son-in-law and marital stability. However, currently it seems to have lost its original symbolic meaning; it has increasingly become causes of disagreement, disrespect, poverty; marital dissolution. The study also shows the ever-increasing gift results an increase in women migration, cohabitation, abortion and related problems; women's domestic violence due to impoverishment and marital instability among the spouses. In response, the community in cooperation with concerned offices and stakeholders planned to address the problem. Yet the problem is persisting. From these findings it was concluded that gabbara currently affecting the life of youths, couples, their parents; the wider community.

Key words: Arsi Oromo, Marriage, Gabbara, the changing Trend

CHAPTER ONE

1.1. Background

Marriage is one of the primary social institutions in any society. It seen as the fundamental unit of the society without which there could be no family and it is the first institution in the history of man (Bassey, 2005). Accordingly, Okodudu (2010) stated as marriage is a universal phenomenon in all societies; however, it is difficult to define the concept of marriage. This difficulty arises mainly from the differences in the marriage arrangements that have been observed in different societies. In view of this, Farley (1994) in Jackson (2015) defined marriage as a socially recognized arrangement; usually between men and women there is a sexual and financial relationship. Therefore, this study focuses on the marriage between a man and a woman.

In several societies, customary marriage is legalized by giving various gifts to the bride's family or to the boy's family. In this regard, Forkuor (2018) states that the payment of bride wealth or the gifts given by the groom to the bride's family is practiced by many cultures around the world. For instance, in many African countries, it has different names; among Arab and Islamic societies, bride wealth, which is termed as Mahri is an essential element in marriage rites. In contrast in India, the bride's family gives a dowry (money and material resources) to the groom's family. In many parts of Africa, bride wealth is given in kinds such as livestock or cash (Bawa, 2015).

Therefore, traditionally bride wealth or dowry gifts serve to validate customary marriages in different parts of the world based on societies' cultural contexts and values. However, since various societies have their norms when it comes to marriage whom to marry, and who is out of bounds and what types of procedures are followed to have a marriage between spouses. In this regard, Murdock (1967) in Anderson (2007) states that the practice of bride wealth takes place in two-thirds of pre-industrial societies' cultures in the world. Rees (2016) also said that the practice of bride wealth is a widespread custom in many societies.

As empirical evidence suggests the tradition of bride wealth historically is believed to have positive consequences; gives formal recognition to marriages, maintain social control, building

social identity, secures wives against possible abuse, stabilizes partnership, promotes social solidarity and joins the two families together (Ansell, 2001). Even though, the practice of bride wealth has different names and symbolic meanings among different societies of the world. For example, among the Zulus of South Africa, it referred to as the *Ilobolo* Thiara & Hague (2009) and the Tiv people in central Nigeria call it *kem* (Mpiani, 2018). However, nowadays as Ansell (2001) argued the functions and meanings attached to the practice are constantly changing.

Likewise, while there are many different ethnic groups with diversified ways of life in Ethiopia, the gift of bride wealth is used to validate customary marriages in different parts of the country. Among others, *Gabbara* is one of the most commonly practiced customary marriage gifts among the Arsi Oromo. According to Muktar (2019), *Gabbara* refers to gifts given by the groom or his family to the bride's family as a gift or support. Even though the practice of *gabbara* is going through every place of Arsi Oromo, due to different factors this customary marriage gift is changing over time. Thus, this study aims to investigate the changing trend in *gabbara* gifts among the Negele Arsi Oromo community.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Ethiopia is the home of many nations and nationalities and a multicultural state. Each ethnic group also has their diverse ways of cultural life like marriage practices, burial ceremonies, wearing style and many others. For instance, if we look at the marriage gift practice of the Arsi Oromo, it is one of the most important gifts to validate the customary marriage. They practice in various ways in line with the culture and customs of the community. Likewise, Muktar (2019) also confirmed that the Oromo have different marriage practices like *Walgara*, *Membeetoo*, *Hawii*, *Mata-dibaa* (short marriage system), *Adda-Baanaa*, *Dhaala* (inheritance) *Sabbat-Marii*, *Gursummeettii* and some others.

Gabbara is marriage gifts from the bridegroom and his family to the bride's family. Oral history shows that it was started formerly by the gifts of only two heads of cattle which were a heifer and a bull (*raadaa fi jibicha*) and two blankets (*wayaa lama*) given for the bride's family. The two heads of cattle and the two blankets (*Wayaan lamaan*) were for a father and a mother of the bride. However, nowadays the types of *gabbara* have changed from cattle to cash and the amounts has ever-increasing. As a result, some young men and women tend to cohabit while

looking for money to legitimize themselves as husband and wife. Many youths also started to perform marriage by their interest without prior understanding of their family. This in turn results in a dispute between the bride's and the groom's family; and between the spouses and their families; because of violating the custom or bypassing their parents. Besides, many young females have engaged in illegal migration to Middle East countries especially to Saudi Arabia, Beirut, and other country to support their parents and boyfriends so that they can easily pay *gabbara* gift.

Many scholars conducted different studies related to Arsi Oromo while only a few empirical studies were directly on *gabbara* gift in the study area. For instance, Muktar (2019) conducted a study that focused on the perception, practice, and challenges of *gabbara* marriage system among Bale and Arsi Oromo communities. Leila (2009) focuses on the Wedding Music of the Arsi Oromo, Daniel (2002) studied continuity and change in the status of women of Arsi Oromo. He explained the causal factors for the relegation of the status of Dodola Arsi women. Likewise, Hebo & Shigeta (2014) conducted a study on continuity and change in the rights of Arsi Oromo women to property in West Arsi.

On the other hand, Leila (2016) mainly focuses on *Ateetee*, as an Arsi Oromo women's song in dispute resolution process. Her central intent was to demonstrate how music, as an expressive form, enables women to protect, promote and claim their rights, and resolve disputes peacefully in a rapidly changing social environment. Likewise, Jemila (2014) and Talilee (2018) focus on the role of Arsi Oromo women in bringing peace and reconciliation among warring clans in a non-threatening way, simply by holding their ceremonial stick, *siinqee*, and singing their *ateetee* songs. Sena (2008) also attempts to investigate the images of women in the Proverbs and Sayings of the West Arsi Oromo.

Therefore, the above-mentioned research works have not dealt with *gabbara* in general and its changing situation in particular. Especially, they did not state the reason for the gift and its changing situation in particular. In other words, no detailed studies have been conducted on a similar topic with this study. Thus, there are empirical gaps and this study intends to fill it from the context of the West Arsi Oromo. This study, therefore, investigated the changing trend in *gabbara* among Arsi Oromo and seeks to explore how marriages are approved in the face of the shortage of cattle or money and the increasing gift. It investigated how young men preparing for

marriage can negotiate when he is not in a position to afford the current gift. In general, I aimed to investigate the changing trend in *gabbara* among Arsi Oromo in Negele Arsi.

To this end, this study addressed the following research questions:

1. What was the former *gabbara* gift among the Arsi Oromo look like?
2. What does *gabbara* look like right now?
3. How does it challenge the life of spouses, youths, and the wider community?
4. Does *gabbara* have any influence in women's life and marital stability?
5. What is the role of indigenous social institutions, community leaders, and religious leaders in resolving the influence of bride wealth among the Arsi of Negele district?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1.3.1. General objective

The general objective of the study was to describe the changing trends of *gabbara* gifts, its implication on traditional marriage practice and the lives of the Arsi Oromo in Negele Arsi district

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

The Specific Objectives of the study are to:

1. describe the former *gabbara* and its traditional values among the Negele Arsi Oromo community
2. describe the existing gift of *gabbara*, and its implication on unmarried youths, couples, their parents and the community
3. investigate the link between *gabbara* gift in women's life and marital stability among the Negele Arsi Oromo
4. describe the view of the community on the current *gabbara* gift and the intervention initiatives undertaken by different stakeholders to address the issue in the study area

1.4. Significance of the Study

Currently, high *Gabbara* gifts became a common practice among the study community. Hence, this study will provide a rich description of the current *gabbara* gift, its changes over time, and its major challenges in the study community. The finding of this research also will provide valuable information to concerned government and non-government offices and other stakeholders about the current condition of *gabbara* and its implication in the study community. Furthermore, the results of the study will help as a source of data for those researchers who might want to undertake an in-depth investigation on a similar topic.

1.5. Delimitation of the Study

Because of time and financial constraints, the geographical focus of the study was delimited to the Negele Arsi district. Since there are different types of customary marriage practices among the Arsi Oromo, it is not easy to investigate all types of marriage practices and gifts in this thesis. As a result, this study focused on investigating the changing trend in *gabbara* gifts among the Negele Arsi Oromo. Due to resource and time constraints, the scope of this study was also delimited to investigate the changes in *gabbara* gifts, its current situation, implication on the community and marital stability and the role of stakeholders to overcome its diversified challenges.

1.6. Limitation of the Study

In this study, I tried to describe the changing trend in *gabbara* gifts and its implications among the Arsi Oromo of Negele Arsi district. In the process of undertaking this research, I experienced some challenges in data collection and data analysis. The major limitations in undertaking this study were the absence of detailed and in-depth research on *gabbara* in the study area. The other limitation was, as the Arsi women are very busy and engaged in many activities, sometimes it was very difficult to sit and discuss with them for a longer period of time. So, as much as possible I tried hard to get their time by discussing with them, then I succeeded. Besides, since only the qualitative research method was utilized in the study, it has methodological limitation. Because the data was not gathered from a large number of people.

1.7. Organization of the Study

The thesis is organized into six chapters. Chapter one includes the background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, research question, significance; delimitation of the study and operational definition of key terms. Chapter two contains a review of related literature. Research design and method, sources of data, the population of the study, sample and sampling technique, data gathering instruments, data collection procedures, reliability and trustworthiness, ethical consideration and methods of data analysis include in chapter three. Chapter four holds a description of the study area, an overview of the Arsi Oromo, Chapter five consists data discussion and interpretation. Finally, Chapter six includes summary and conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Marriage

Anthropologists defined marriage as a worldwide phenomenon, yet the debate continues as to how marriage came into existence. In this regard, Zaman & Channa (2017) argued that in the early year's social thinkers and anthropologists basically, the followers of the theory of evolutionism believed that human beings lived in a state of promiscuity where an individual marriage did not exist. "In such a society all the men had access to all the women and the children thus, born were the responsibility of the society at large. As to the authors, this slowly gave rise to group marriages to bring regulation and general order in the society where either many men were married to several women or several men were married to a single woman and vice-versa". However, later in the day the instinct of jealousy embedded in human beings has been assumed as the reason behind single marriages to restore harmony in a society (Zaman & Channa, 2017).

Murdock (1949) has described marriage as a familiar group that entails residential co-habitation, monetary co-operation, and the formation of the nuclear family. While Westermarck had emphasized marriage as a recognized union between a man and a woman, that the partner lives together, and that the couple has identified mutual sexual rights. But this definition is not a universal definition of marriage as it failed to encompass types of marriages such as polygynous and polyandrous marriages. As to Zaman (2017) such definitions additionally did not take into account marriages where the spouses lived in separate houses and societies in which the obligation of the kid lies with the mother's brother instead of with the biological father. On the other hand Notes and Queries argued that marriage is a union among a boy and a girl such that the youngsters born to the girl are identified as valid offspring of each partner (Notes & Queries, 1951 cited in Zaman, 2017).

Furthermore, depending on the type of society, the marriage pattern and style also vary; the types of marriages universally found are monogamy and polygamy. Monogamy is a form of marriage in which the practice is to have only one spouse at one time. In contrast, a polygamy is a form of

marriage in which an individual has more than one spouse at any given time, or is married to more than one individual (Zaman, 2017). Overall, societies have their norms when it comes to marriage whom to marry and who is out of bounds. In certain societies, there are certain rules of suitability based on which a person has to acquire a mate. While selecting one's mate one has to follow certain rules and choose the bride/groom within these norms (Zaman & Channa, 2017). In most cultures, the process of marriage involves transfers between the families of the groom and the bride (Mpiani, 2018). As Anderson (2007) stated these transfers mostly come in the form of payments like dowry and bride wealth.

2.2. Marriage Gifts: Bride wealth and Dowry

Marriage gifts may take the form of bride wealth when the gift flows from the husband or his group to the wife's group or of the dowry when the gift flows from the wife's group to the husband's group or typically to the couple themselves (Seymour-Smith, 1986). Bride wealth giving societies have also been associated with the mostly strong female role in agriculture; it is founded in societies in which agriculture relies on light tools and thus where women are actively engaged (Ansell, 2001). In addition, marriage gifts are determined by the demand for and supply of brides and grooms in a particular society. When grooms are relatively scarce bride's give dowries and when brides are scarce grooms offer a bride price.

Marriage gifts are also linked with the kinship structure of the society. As a result, bride wealth is mostly observed among societies with general polygamy whereas dowry almost often occurs in monogamous societies. According to Dery (2015) bride wealth is the most common practice used to validate customary marriage in many African countries and the practice is part of marriage rituals and is accepted as a cultural norm to legitimize marriages. The bride wealth payment is a key element of the marriage contract in many sub-Saharan African countries, like Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda and other countries. Despite some differences, the culture of bride wealth is similar in all African countries. It is the transfer of the money or wealth by or on behalf of the groom to the bride and her family upon the marriage of the couple. It is contrary to a dowry payment in Asian countries (Mbaye & Wagner, 2017). Accordingly, studies conducted in many African traditions confirmed that bride wealth historically believed to have beneficial values such as; it gives formal recognition to marriage, maintains social control, construction of

social identity, protects wives against possible abuse, stabilizes the partnership, promotes social cohesion and joins the two families together. Eventually, as Sarkodie (2017) stated the tradition appears to have become monetized and for this reason it has lost much of its traditional essence and value in many circumstances

The custom of dowry on the other hand is prevalent in many South Asia Countries and it was an ancient practice associated with the institution of marriage, which involves the giving of gifts from the bride's side to the groom's side at the time of marriage (Kumar, 2020). It may consist of movable property such as money, ornaments, clothing, household goods, or cattle. In some cases, the land is also provided as a part of the payment (Kamruzzaman, 2015). Therefore, the above-mentioned conceptual definition shows as the terms bride wealth and dowry have a different meaning.

2.3. Conceptual Definition of Bride Price and Bride wealth

Many scholars and writers of marriage price conceptualized the idea of bride rate. According to Oguli Oumo (2004), bride-price consists of a contract where material items (often cattle or other animals) or money are paid by the groom to the bride's family in exchange for the bride, her labor and her capacity to produce children. Among the African societies, bride price is seen as a symbol of the marriage contract and it is also seen as an arrangement for distribution of family property and an arrangement of alliances (Oguli, 2004).

However, according to the Macmillan Dictionary of Anthropology, the use of the term 'bride price' was rejected in anthropological writings due to its connotation of 'buying and selling' a wife (Seymour-Smith, 1986). Where the payment is specifically for rights in the children born to the woman, the term 'child price' has sometimes been employed. Common to most anthropological discussions of marriage payments are the agreement that these payments serve to legitimize marriage relationships at the same time that they signify or mark the transfer of rights in women and/or children (Seymour-Smith, 1986).

In Africa, giving of bride wealth become one occasion the various numerous that described the marriage process especially the ranges of betrothal and courtship (Atekyereza, 2001). In general, varieties of currencies and goods are used for paying the bride wealth depending upon society.

For example, reindeers are given as bride wealth by the Navajo, cattle by the Nour's, Maasai and Samburu of Africa, spears in Somalia (Zaman, 2017). The amount of bride wealth to be paid is based on various factors of which some are related to the status of the groom's family and others on the bride and her social acceptance as prescribed by the society (Zaman, 2017).

2.4. Bride wealth and its functions

As much empirical study shows, the bride wealth is practicing in different countries. Regardless of the context, it serves a multiplicity of functions within the society like the distribution of different resources, establishment of relationships within and among lineages, the preservation of social activities, and the development of social identification. These functions are intricately interconnected (Ansell, 2001). In the former time or several decades ago, marriage gifts include a small number of head of cattle supplemented by other gifts (Mangena, 2013).

Moreover, there are also cultural values connected to bride wealth that made the practice very significant, such as; serves as a gesture of sincerity, a sign of faithfulness to the wedding, that is much like the marriage and engagement earnings used today; because of the religious value added to it, there is a spiritual bond that the woman values to it (Falana, 2019). Furthermore, the payment of bride price is generally accepted and thus viewed as a practice intended to honor the bride and her family. This is considered to be a just practice because it was believed that the payment of bride wealth contributes to the firmness of the marriage.

In addition, the concept and practice of bride wealth is believed to have been that it is a factor that stabilizes and makes marriage durable. For instance, some problems in marriages that would have ordinarily led to the separation of spouses can be resolved with the aid of the bride's family to ensure the stability of the union since they will need to refund the bride wealth if the relationship fails (Falana, 2019).

2.5. The Changing Trend in Bride wealth

It is not easy to determine the origins of bride wealth but at least there is evidence that it has existed for a long time though it has been changing in practices, and meanings. The nature and number of resources exchanged has also been changing over time. Whereas some communities have tended to increase the resources exchanged to exorbitant levels, others have altogether done

away with it due to changes in marriage and familial arrangements (Asiimwe, 2013). Besides, the author stated that bride wealth is not a static practice and undergoes changes as the societies undergo social and economic changes. Especially, with trends in modernization, industrialization, globalization, contact of cultures, and movement of people. For instance, in many areas, as young and educated people increase, the practice tends to also lose stronghold, like any other traditional practices, not because it is bad but because of social change, while in other areas, bride wealth payments increase with time and as the cost of living increases the bride wealth also increases.

Currently, there have been movements from rural areas to urban in search of employment, infrastructure, and better life; then in the cities, people encounter different cultures and are influenced by them. In addition to the influence of the foreign cultures, religion and lifestyle there is freedom which has the potential to influence traditional lifestyle. So, most migrants no longer live as they do in the rural areas where indigenous lifestyle is strictly upheld (Okyere-Manu, 2015). Nowadays, in many countries where bride wealth is highly practiced, the system, intention and nature of property exchanged have changed (Asiimwe, 2013). For example, Thiara & Hague (2009) stated that “among the Baganda, in central Uganda, it was local brew, traditional dress for father and mother, bride wealth used to be in form of cattle, goats and some rare coins especially if the bride was a virgin. However, of recent, this practice has changed and the above items are no longer followed”. Instead, the process now involves haggling for very expensive payments and this may include expensive items like electronics, many cows, cars, furniture, land titles and cash.

Most young men lack the economic readiness to marry given the high bride wealth, yet they have respect for the custom as an integral part of the marriage process. This poses an ethical dilemma for most of them (Okyere-Manu, 2015). Likewise historically, the earlier *gabbara* gift was only two heads of cattle which were one heifer and bull (*raadaa fi jibicha*) and two blankets (*wayaa lama*) given for the bride’s family (Muktar, 2019). While currently it’s highly increasing over time and loses its traditional values.

2.6. Bride wealth and its challenges

Bride wealth is a strongly rooted trend in lots of African peoples while, multiple years back, it's meaning which was just a sign of appreciation and consensus between the two families (for the bride and groom) appears to be eroded or transformed to include payment of expensive financial and material resources. This has generated obstacles associated with raising such resources and the high gifts may curtail wives' (especially poor) negotiating positions or agency in marital relationships. For instance, among the Banyakitra of Western Uganda some young men face hurdles in trying to meet the demands of this practice especially those with inadequate resources, hence try to find alternative ways of raising these amounts like selling off family property or getting bank loans (Asiimwe, 2013).

The transition from communalism to capitalism, from traditional to trendy, has seen the return system also adopting exploitative tendencies. In the vintage times, there was facility to accommodate the poor. Those who had no way of raising the needed payment could arrange to work for the father-in-law instead of paying bride wealth (May, 1983). There are so many poor men in different societies and we are yet to see the ability for them in this modern society in terms of payment of bride wealth. As a result, the poor town dwellers have primarily placed apart traditional payment of bride wealth. Since they do not have the means, they in reality have families without the difficulties of bride wealth payment (May, 1983). Thus, some may decide simply to have kids and raise them as single parents. Women may be moms without always having guys around them as husbands. Thus, insisting on bride wealth payment is now quite difficult. As a society, we have moved far away from the village setup in which it is straightforward to modify its payment. Both boys and girls have obtained a great deal of freedom of movement out of the village to the city setup. In that freedom, the families cannot simply manage especially the sexual conduct of the grown-up boys and girls (Tendai, 2013).

Among the Arsi Oromo, the gift of *gabbara* is causing different challenges on couples, families and societies as a whole. For instance, deviating from the form of cultural practice to modern wedding ceremony, posing economic difficulties on the life of couples and bridegroom. It exposing married couples to unnecessary expenditure and left without basic needs of life, letting bridegroom for a large amount of money deduction and causing most the youngsters to migrate

to abroad countries to collect money (Muktar, 2019). Besides, they have sold properties at their hands like oxen and apportioned farming lands yearly or for a long period of time, which exposed them to poorness. Exposing youngsters to bad habits like adultery practice and socioeconomic risks on the society.

2.7. Bride wealth gift and Marital Stability

Writers of marriage payments have deliberated at the effect of excessive bride wealth on the stableness of marriages in Africa and different developing countries. Sambe (2013) argued that bride wealth is a major factor contributing to domestic violence in relationships thereby threatening the stability of marriage in Uganda. So, due to high bride wealth, a lot of women in Uganda have suffered and had their rights violated. This has implications on the stability of marriage in the area and elsewhere in the world. Once the man has paid bride wealth the woman is lost her economic status because the man has paid for her. Even what she works for becomes part of the husband's family property because they paid bride wealth. This affects women's freedom thereby affecting their marital stability. It forces a woman to live under an intolerable and hostile family environment that subjects her to servitude and slave like conditions hence leading to violence against women when the marriage breaks down (Sambe, 2013).

Accordingly, Falana (2019) argued as men are dominant in decision-making and woman has no power for anything. To him where the man is doubtful or insecure, domestic violence is common. This is mostly where the man is jobless or the woman has advanced training and social status, he expects the woman to show him respect as the village women should. As such, the woman has no opinion over any matter.

Thus, the payment of bride wealth in many cultural contexts relates to the above factor through perpetuating economic inequality. Women in lots of households have been depending on financial aid from the husband. This reduces the woman's decision-making, enhancing gender power imbalances. Such women feared leaving an abusive relationship as the man may demand repayment of bride wealth by her family (Falana, 2019).

2.8. Theoretical Framework

2.8.1. The theory of Symbolic Anthropology

In this study, I used the theory of Symbolic Anthropology because it helps to describe the reason, why the meaning and symbol of *gabbara* gift among the Negele Arsi Oromo changing over time. In this regard, Turner (1974) cited in Moore (2009) considers cultural symbols, together with ritual symbols, as originating in and maintaining procedures involving temporal changes in social relations, and not as timeless entities. Symbols have some basic properties in common. They are powerful condensations of meaning: “Many things and actions are represented in a single formation”.

Symbols are “multi-vocal susceptible of many meanings”, though their meanings tend to cluster around two extremes of a continuum; at one end, there is often a cluster of meanings around physiological and natural phenomena, and at the other, another cluster of meanings about social relationships. He stated that Symbols are condensed and multi-vocal, may speak to different people in different ways; the construction and reconstruction of meaning occur with specific, dynamic contexts of social process (Turner, 1974 cited in Moore, 2009). Therefore, since *gabbara* is viewed as a symbol of a covenant that helps the sustenance of a marriage, the practice should be majorly symbolic. This means that any contributions from a groom’s family the heads of cattle, cloths or other gifts and the gift from the bride’s family to the son-in-law among the Arsi Oromo can be seen as a symbol that validates a marriage and binds two families together and equally it has economic relevance because the heads of cattle distributed between the members of the bride’s family.

For instance, a heifer given to the bride’s mother has a symbolic meaning among the study community because it’s a sign of fertility and milk and milk products are considered as a woman’s property. It has also economic values because women have got money by selling butter or exchanging it with other products. Similarly, a bull given to the bride’s father is a sign of respect because the bull is considered to be male property and it is used for farming and farming is considered to be a highly regarded activity among the study people. The product from agriculture in turn used for family consumption and other family expenses. In addition, the economic cooperation among the two families also increases by supporting each other during agricultural

operations like *daboo*, drought and other economic disasters. Therefore, *gabbara* has cultural, economic and social values among the study people and it gives rights and privileges to the husband over his wife and the children born to her.

2.8.2. Theory of the Gift

Mauss (1967) in Moore (2009), stated that the life of a logically established communication system and at the same time, he enters the ideal of the entire social phenomenon in the anthropological theory. What Mauss is trying to show is that in all societies gifts which are supposed to be given voluntarily, are actually obligatory. Mauss (2002) described the economic importance of the gift and its role in ancient societies. Of course, in these societies as well as in ours the economic importance is hidden and covered under a number of symbols. Even today, we will note this function of the gift, as an example while a younger couple gets married.

In the earlier western legal and economic systems, the exchange of goods took place between collectivities and not individuals. These exchanges have been now no longer effective of materials and wealth but mostly of feasts, rituals, military services, women, children, dances, festivals and fairs. Such exchanges, far from being voluntary, “take it or leave it” negotiations between individuals, were surrounded by socially recognized and sanctioned obligations. Although described in the voluntary language implied by the word “gift,” such total pre stations are defined by a triad of obligations: the obligation to give, the obligation to receive, and the obligation to repay (Mauss, 1967 in Moore, 2009). While not all exchanges take this form, total pre-stations are recurrent social phenomena.

The obligation to give and to receive is very important. To refuse to give or to receive is to reject the bond of alliance and commonality. It is like the recipient has some kind of right of property over everything that belongs to the giver. Therefore, I utilized the theory to guide the study since there are different types of gifts given by the groom like heads of cattle, clothes, money; etc. and a return gift from the bride’s family among the study community.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methods and Study Design

3.1. Research Approach

To undertake the study and answer the above-mentioned research questions I employed a qualitative research approach. Because it helps to describe the changing trend of *gabbara* from the life experiences of the study population in their natural settings. This means that the approach enables to study things in their natural settings, trying to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in phrases of the meaning's humans carry to them. In this regard, Denscombe (2007), argued that qualitative research first involves studying the meaning of people's lives, under real-world conditions. Therefore, the utilized approach helps to create a "thick description" of the changing trend of *gabbara* gifts or the phenomenon being studied. In doing so, I try to capture the participants' former and current situation of *gabbara*.

Moreover, I employed ethnographic research design for it can guide to understand cultural practices, particularly, how *gabbara* gift changing over time in the study community and what resulted from the change. Accordingly, I utilized different data gathering methods like participant observation, in-depth interview, key informant interview, and focused group discussions.

3.2. Methods of Data Collection

As mentioned above data collection tools were determined based on the research questions to gather relevant data for the study. Hence, to answer the research questions, data were collected from the field using multiple methods including observation, interview, and focus group discussions.

To do this, I prepared a list of questions (observation list and interview guideline) for all interviews beforehand; however, more questions were asked depending on the rapport between me and the interviewees. I made all interviews in *Afan Oromo* as it is the local language; I and the informants speak and did not use the service of translators.

3.2.1. Participant Observation

In contemporary field research, participant observation is the most important technique to collect original data (Yin, 2011). This is because sometimes the information that the researcher gathers from the informant may contradict that of the real situation. It helps the researcher to prepare guidelines and organize questions for the interviewee. Thus, I engaged in observation as it helps to collect reliable data. Basically, I used the observation method to observe the negotiation and the gift process; different cultural activities, ceremonies and the daily lives of the people. Besides, I have observed the kind of material given to the bride's family and the return gift from the family-in-law. Moreover, I attended the wedding ceremony in one of the Negele Arsi rural kebele. In doing so, I collected first-hand data from the natural setting. Finally, I have arranged the participant observation based on the objectives of the study.

3.2.2. In-depth Interview

Using in-depth interviews allowed the concerned individuals or informants to speak for themselves. In this regard, Creswell (2018) stated that the qualitative studies interview is further defined as tries to recognize the arena from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of their experience, to uncover their lived world. Therefore, using this method I collected data from sixteen (16) in-depth interview informants which consist of three (3) community elders who are participating in the *gabbara* gift negotiation, four (4) married men; five (5) married women, and four (4) unmarried youths to collect data about the issues like types of *gabbara*, changes overtime, cultural perspectives, communities view on the recent *gabbara* gift.

Moreover, the in-depth interview schedules were set with the intention of getting richer information by identifying the free time of the interviewee for the interview. Here, semi-structured questions were used to give freedom for informants to express their ideas in their own words without restriction. To get detailed information, I utilized probing questions like what, how, why, when, and where. In general, the data was collected until it reached the data saturation point.

3.2.3. Key Informant Interview

Key informant interview as an instrument of qualitative research method is used to obtaining detailed information from the informants, who are expected to have special knowledge on *gabbara* gifts in general and its current implication on the study community. Therefore, I selected key informant interviewees due to their knowledge and professional experiences in relation to the issue under study. Thus, key informant interviews were proceeding with Abba Gadaa's from the surrounding area and experts from different offices.

Thus, by using this method I collected relevant, and up-to-date data from thirteen (13) key informants that means, four (4) abba Gadaa's, two (2) experts from the district culture, and Tourism office, because, they are working on culture and heritage conservation issues and they have deep knowhow about the current situation of *gabbara* gifts. As well, I collected data from one (1) expert from the district women children and youth's office, I have selected the office due to the office gives a great emphasis to women and youth-related issues and I have observed when many women were appealing domestic violence to the office. Moreover, I gathered well-organized data from the Negele Arsi women's children and youth's office.

Besides, I collected the data from one (1) lawyer from the district first instance court. Because the court properly knows the current situation of divorce rate in the community; the reasons of couple's divorce. In addition, I gathered data from one (1) health officer from the district health center, because the health center has rich data on unwanted pregnancy and abortion. Furthermore, I gathered health-related issues like infections and abortion-related data from two (2) private clinic health officers. Because many young women preferred a private clinic for an abortion to a public clinic because public health centers are required to meet several requirements. Honestly speaking I gathered rich data from a private clinic's health officers.

Furthermore, I collected the data from two (2) Muslim religious leaders because they have great intimacy with the followers/members of the religion and the wider community; they know the daily life of the people. I gathered relevant data on the teachings of *kuran* on *gabbara* gifts. The intention for the diversification of key informant interviewees was to get more data regarding the changing trend in *gabbara* gift, women migration, divorce, abortion; related infection, cohabitation and the data was collected through semi-structured interviews. Likewise, Creswell

(2018) argued that “semi-structured interviewing can get in the manner of your ability to speak freely with key informants”. Because it allowed me to probe informants and get more detailed responses. Besides, I took a note and record the data, as soon as I get the consent of the participants.

3.2.4. Focus Group Discussion

Besides, the above-mentioned methods, I employed four (4) Focus group discussions, each consists 32 discussants. As Hopkins (2007) states focus groups are beneficial for researchers wishing to orientate themselves to a new field and can enhance the role of the research participants in regulating the study findings. Thus, I conducted four FGDs at the study area with different social and gender status groups mainly with socially respected individuals and married men, unmarried youths and married women. Because these groups of people have direct experiences of *gabbara*. Discussants were selected using the purposive sampling technique taking into consideration age, roles in the community;’ experience in the *gabbara* gifts.

Furthermore, the four FGDs consisted of a total of 32 discussants. That means 12 married couples, (8 women and 4 men) 16 unmarried youths (8 women and 8 men), and 4 community elders; I arranged them into 4 groups. In this regard, due to cultural norms, women may be afraid to speak in front of their husbands and elders. So, the first FGD was a group of married women who were eight in number. Unmarried female youths may also afraid to discuss freely with elders and socially respected people. Thus, the second FGD was a group of eight unmarried girls. To get the real feeling and opinions of unmarried men youths, I organized eight unmarried men as third FGD. Finally, I arranged four married men and four elders together to form the fourth FGD. Furthermore, during the discussion, the discussants’ ideas were recorded using audio recorder.

3.3. Sources of Data

Obtaining valuable sources of data in the process of the study is unquestionable to address the primary inquiries to be answered. Concerning this, Creswell (2018) noted that evidence helps to provide answers to the research questions or hypotheses. Hence, to have thick and valuable data, primary and secondary sources of data were utilized for this study. Primary data were collected from individuals who have different social statuses (Men, Women and the Youth) like leaders of

indigenous social institutions, religious leaders, government offices, elderly men who are involved in deciding the *gabbara* gifts within communities, unmarried and recently married men and women. As well as from other stakeholders who are working on similar cultural issues.

Whereas, the secondary data were collected from official documents and related works of literature to enrich the primary data. Accordingly, the data was gathered from relevant reference materials, finding reports of studies, books, journals, published and unpublished materials such as thesis, etc. on similar issues, reports from relevant government offices such as the zonal and district culture and truism offices, women and children affair office and NGOs, and website sources with relevant documents.

Furthermore, the information from elders, leaders of indigenous institutions, and women helped me as I understand more about the changing trend in *gabbara* gift; its current influence on unmarried youths; their parents, and the community as a whole.

3.4. Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

In this study, I have employed the non-probability sampling design and a purposive sampling technique was employed to select in-depth interview informants, key informants, and FGD discussants from the study community. Thus, as a sample, a total of sixteen in-depth interview informants, thirteen key informant informants and four focus group discussions was made with purposively selected informants and discussants. Furthermore, the data was collected until the objectives of the study were achieved or the data saturation point.

3.5. Procedures of Data collection

Before the beginning of data collection, permission for cooperation was made from the West Arsi zonal administration and Negele Arsi district administration where the study was carried out. It was done with the approval letter from Jimma University. After I obtained permission, I started communicating with kebele administrators to create a conducive work environment and to be safe from any kind of problem. Thereafter, I selected key informants; the key informants from the culture and tourism office were supported me in the selection of the In-depth interview informants and in facilitating FGDs. Then, the data was collected based on the consent of

informants. The in-depth interviews and FGDs were employed in *Afan Oromo*. Then, it was transcribed into English for data analysis.

3.6. Challenges in the Field

It is normal for researchers particularly for fieldworkers to face encounters while conducting fieldwork in their study area. While collecting data, most key informants were busy, which made it impossible for them to give time for interviews during the day. To solve this, I scheduled interviews in the evenings, early in the morning and on Sunday when they were free. In addition, NGOs and government offices that conduct studies in the community have been paying out allowances to informants. Thus, informants expected me to do the same. However, due to experts' advice, and the clarification made with the informants as this study was purely for academic purposes, then they were agreed to give information without participation peridium.

3.7. Trustworthiness of the Study

Ensuring the quality of data is the main activity of the research. Hence, to determine the credibility of instruments, the researcher sought comment from language experts and advisors on face, content and format for interview guide and FGD guide before using for data collections. Here irrelevant items were discarded and modified as per the comments given for the instruments. Then, English versions of FGD, and interview guides had been translated into *Afan Oromo* to decrease confusion and verbal exchange barriers in the course of using for data collection.

Besides, triangulation was made to ascertain the trustworthiness of the collected data. To do this I read the data several times to see if the constructs, categories, explanation and interpretation make sense; cross-check the collected data using different instruments. Then I examine the relationship between the data and the result found was a high relationship between the data collected through different instruments. Furthermore, while the completion of data analysis experts from the culture and tourism office and community elders were read the text to assess whether the interpretation represents them. To do this, I invited the experts to read the text and I read all text for the community elders. Finally, I incorporated all necessary comments for further improvements in the study.

3.8. Ethical Consideration

An attempt was made to ascertain the research process professional and ethical. To do this, I have informed respondents about the purpose of the study i.e., purely for academic and tell them as their confidentiality was protected. In addition, I have not imposed on informants to be involved in the study rather they were involved based on their consent. In selecting participants, the researcher played proper attention to the stability and healthiness of the participant's personality.

Moreover, the researcher not personalized any of the responses of the respondents during data presentation, analysis, and interpretation. For this, the names of participants had been kept anonymous. Besides, the references used for this research also duly acknowledged. I also maintained due care and diligence to ensure that the information that the respondents were provided remains as confidential as possible. In this regard, the confidentiality of the respondents was protected by withholding the names of the research entities as well as all persons who were participated in the study. All data were collected solely about the key research objectives of this study and to answer all research questions mentioned above. The responding organizations will have an opportunity to access the research results once the data analysis process and the research is completed.

3.9. Methods of Data Analysis

Because the qualitative research approach was utilized in this study, qualitative data analysis methods were employed to answer research questions and meet the objectives. In this regard, Denscombe (2007) noted that qualitative data analysis is conducted concurrently with gathering data, making interpretations, and writing reports. During data collection as a researcher, I gave great attention to obtaining rich and deep information on the intended objectives. Then, I identified emergent themes to develop tentative explanations.

After I identified the themes, I examined how these themes are patterned and check whether there is a relationship or contradiction between themes. In doing so, I triangulated the collected data using different instruments. As a researcher, before the actual analysis was made, I stored the collected data and classify it under their source and types. Then I transcribed, compiled, and

elaborated into meaningful and patterned information soon after the completion of that particular data collection session. Moreover, the collected data using in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, Focus Group Discussions, and observation was first transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis in narration form under their main themes.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1. Description of the Study Area

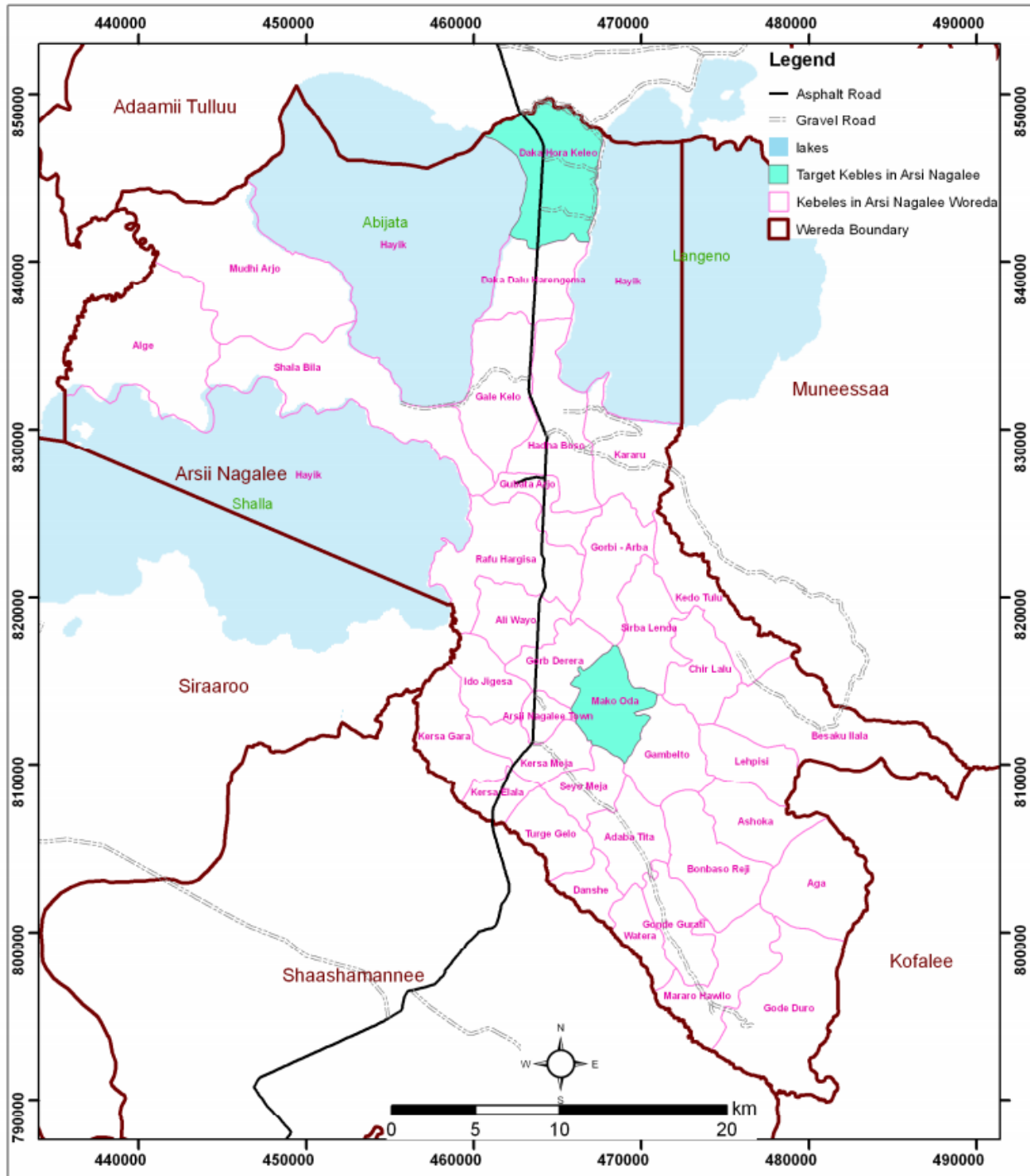
The study was undertaken in Negele Arsi district of Arsi zone Oromia National Regional State. The capital of the district is Negele town which is situated 226 km from Addis Ababa to the South on the main asphalt road that takes to Hawasa. The district is located in the central part of the zone having a total area of 420 km². It has a common boundary line with Adami Tulu Jido Kombolcha in the North, Shashemene in the South, Kofele in the West, and Kersa district in the Eastern direction (Hussein, 2010).

The district is divided into 3 distinct geographical areas with different proportions of latitudes, namely, highland (5 %) which is very small part of the district, midland (58%), and lowland (37%). According to the 2007 population and housing census, the population of the district was estimated to reach 304,928, of which 49.6 % are male and 50.4 % are females (CSA, 2007). Among the population, 20% are urban dwellers while 80% are a rural community. Administratively, the district is categorized into 43 rural kebeles and two urban centers, namely, Negele and Goljota towns with four sub-administrative kebeles (Debella, 2014).

Topographically, the district is mostly characterized and dominated by plain surfaces. The relief of the district ranges between 1500 and 2100 meters above sea level (masl). The soil type of the district falls under sandy major soil types, which are conducive for annual crop production and has a high potential for agricultural activity. The total annual rainfall of the district usually ranges between 600 - 1000mm. The highest temperature was recorded during the dry season, that is, in the months of January, February and March that rises up to between 21^oc and 27 ^oc, whereas the lowest temperature occurs in the months of October November and December (Debella, 2014).

The main cereal crops include maize (35%), wheat (32%), haricot bean (12%), and *teff*, which is a staple food in the urban, centers (11%). There are also a variety of fruits and vegetables, such as banana, potato, and sugarcane. Oxen are the main means of cultivation. Besides, Donkey carts are the main means of transporting peasant produce to the market. The topography of most parts of the district is conducive for carts (Hussein, 2010).

Figure 1: Administrative Map of Negele Arsi District



Source: Bureau of Finance and Economic Development, Government of the National Regional State of Oromia in (Hussein, 2010).

4.2. Brief Overview of the Arsi Oromo

The Arsi are among the largest groups of the Oromo people residing from East Shewa to Bale in Ethiopia. The term Arsi is used for both the dialect and speakers of the language (Yenealem, 2016). Oral traditions provide different explanations in relation to the term Arsi. According to some oral traditions, Arsi is the name of the founding father of the Arsi division of the Oromo (Teshome 2008 in Yenealem, 2016). Most studies which were conducted on the Arsi on the other hand indicated that Arsi is the founding father and had two “sons”. According to Hirut, (2000) and Daniel (2002) “The Arsi oral tradition confirms that a man called Arsi had two sons called Siko and Mando who in turn had five and seven sons respectively. These twelve sons of Siko and Mando are the fathers of all Arsi Oromo inhabiting today’s Arsi and Bale zone”.

According to Yenealem (2016) the narration tells that the genealogy of Oromo begins from *wayyu*, who was the founder of *bokku*. The known subgroups of Arsi are *mando* and *sikko*. According to (Husen, 2000 & Abas, 1982) these two groups are subdivided into seven and five *warra*’s (relatives) respectively which are taken as children for the two Arsi groups mentioned above.

The two major branches of Arsi Oromo and their branches described by Husen (2000) & Yenealem (2016) are the following:

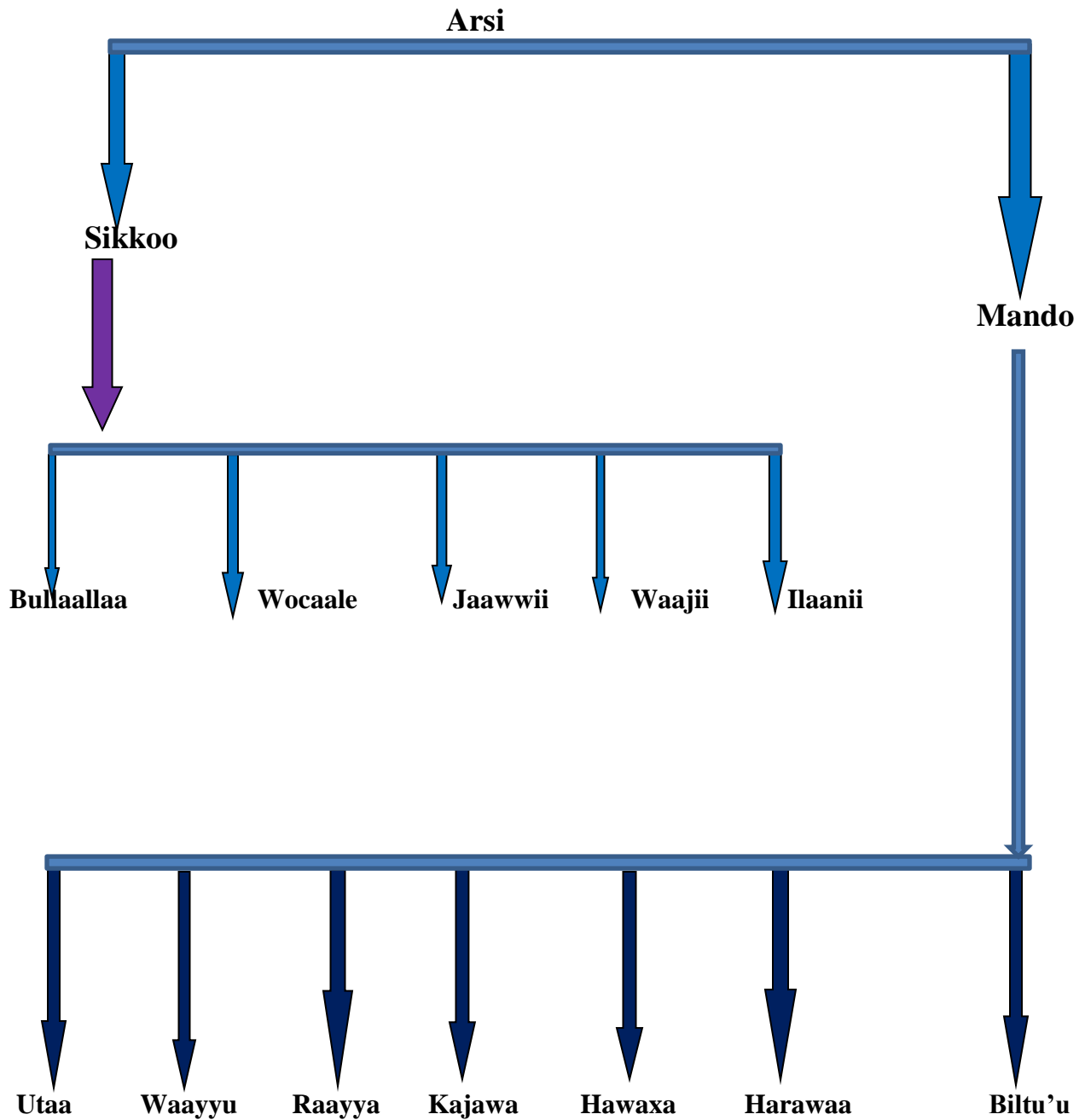


Figure2. Genealogy of Arsi Oromo

Source: From Yenealem (2016)

As mentioned above the two major branches of Arsi are *Mando* and *Sikkoo*. Despite the category, the community of Arsi and Bale are the sons of the two brothers who are closely tied with each other in culture, language, religion and in general in a socio-political organization (Abas, 1982). *Mandoo* refers to the Arsi Oromo residing in the Arsi proper (contemporary Arsi zone) and northern Bale Zones, while *Sikkoo* refers to those groups of Arsi Oromo residing mainly in the rest of Bale Zone. However, for the one referring to the present administrative classification of Arsi and Bale, it is difficult to classify the population into *mandoo* and *sikkoo*. This is because there are districts that were incorporated as a part of the West Arsi Zone from the former Bale province. According to Jaylan, like the Oromo as a whole, the Arsi Oromo were ruled by the Gadaa system and though they were followers of the Oromo traditional religion *Waaqeffannaa* (a belief in Waaqa supreme God), but later the people began to follow the Islamic religion (Jaylan, 2005 in Sena, 2008).

4.3. Descent and Kinship Structure of the Arsi Oromo

In addition to blood kin structure, the *Arsi Oromo* have two ways of adoption practices and this practice is made by incorporated into one's descent group through adoption (*gudiffachaa*) adopting a child by a foster parent that enables childless couples to have children and *moggaasa* adopting an alien adult or stranger into a clan or a tribe through a ritual ceremony of *harma hodhaa* (to suck abreast) that played an important part in the history of *Arsi Oromo* to establish relations with outsiders. In terms of traditional cultural values in *Arsi Oromo safuu* is known by them and they believed that to exercise powerful influences on how every member of the group should behave. Oral tradition is also important in the area, which is closely intertwined with the local identity, culture, and history of the people (Jeylan, 2005). The descent and kinship structure have the following distinction from the lowest to the higher level.

4.3.1. Mana

According to Gemetchu (1994), cited in Hirut (2012) the primary and lowest family members folk organization is *manna*, which actually means house. It contains *Dhirsaa, niiti fi ijoolee* (husband, wife and children): this level of kin organization is similar to the nuclear family. The *Arsi*

societies are known by the practice of polygamous marriage and in this form of kin group organization husband was controlling the whole activities. In the case of many wives, the first wife is called *Niiti hangafa* and others are second, third or fourth wives, in order of their marriage to the man. *Arsi* usually calls the younger wife *Maandha*. The elder son is called *hangafa* and those younger wives to him are also *Maandha* (Daniel, 2002).

4.3.2. Warra

This form of group organization is consisting of two or more *mana*. It refers to the father's household, together with his married son's households and it resembles the extended family organization or minimal lineage. *Warra* refers to affinal relations to a main rather than cohabitation. Members of *warra*, though widely dispersed geographically, are still considered members of a family unit (Hirut, 2012).

4.3.3. Anaa/Ardaa

Several *warra* organized together form *Anaa/Ardaa*- several households at different places which include many of the closely related kin groups. Such kin groups comprise *akaakayyuu* (father's father), *akko* (father's mother), *abba* (father), *hadhaa/hadhoti* (mother/mothers), in case of plural marriage, *ilmoolee dhiiraa* (Married and unmarried sons), *dubaroolee hinheerumiin* (unmarried daughters, *wasiila/ abbeera/wasiiloota* (father brother or brother- uncle /s from the father's side). *Ardaa* is more inclusive in terms of lineage, whereas *warra* and *ardaa* are in proximity; some members could live in a distant place and still be consulted in case of problems, conflicts and rituals such as weddings, funerals or initiations. It refers to a coherent settlement grouping of *warra* found in the *Arsi* lineage system (it can be the whole villages/of genetically related group (Hirut, 2012).

4.3.4. Balballa

Several *ardaa* in turn form *balballa*, which literally means door. In the Oromo society, the saying *balballa ebelu* is used to mean, "son and son's descent groups". The particular person can be alive or dead but he is used as a reference for the given descent or family group, which can be minor lineage. According to Hunting ford (1955) cited in Gemetchu (1993), described: the basis

of Oromo society is the group called *warra* family or *hidda* root which encompasses parental kin, distinguished as those of *abbeera /ardaa* or father's brother and maternal kin, distinguished as those of the *eesuma* or mother's brother. Another affine, are called *fira* relative for *arsii boro* and the affinal group '*firumma*'. The difference between *warra* and *balballa* is one of degree. *Balballa* is inclusive in terms of lineage; whereas *warra* refers to particular families in the same lineage group.

4.3.5. Gosa

The group of *balballa* forms *gosa* (clan), which is the highest level of kin group organization among *Arsii* Oromo communities. This form of group organization of conceptual categories are social constructs based on the general frame of blood relationships and that they are only relevant at the lowest level of conception, tending to become progressively more fluid at the higher levels of structure. It has own significance among the *Arsii* Oromo in day to day of societal manners like *fudhafi heeruma* (marriage), *gadda* (mourning) ceremonies and initiation rituals of its members and also it important for the protection of problem that comes from outsiders of the clan members. For example, if a particular of *gossa* kill a member of another *gossa*, the offender's *gossa* plays all the necessary compensations *Gumaa* (blood price) to the casualty's *warra and gossa*. Therefore, this shows that *gossa*' has an important role in handling the members and it requires respecting the rules of *gossa* and abiding by its norm, taking part in all activities that need the participation of members (Hirut, 2012).

4.4. Socio-Political Institutions

Among Oromo people, there are institutions by which the society is governed. These are Gadaa system in general (Yenealem, 2016). According to Asmerom (1973) "The Gadaa System is an institution that represents an extreme development of a type of social structure known to anthropologists as age set". On the other hand, Bassi, (1996) cited in Yenealem, (2016) defines Gadaa as "certainly a very strong symbol of Oromo ethnic identity, but as with most symbols, it may have multiple meanings. It manifests itself in a wide range of social phenomena, including perspective rules, ceremonies, rites, public offices and actual physical villages." Thus, the Gadaa system is a system in which Gadaa classes succeed each other every eight years providing

military, political, social and cultural leadership for the Oromo nation (Yenealem, 2016). Moreover, the Arsi have five Gadaa sets namely birmaji-bultuma- horata-bahara-and robele from oldest to youngest respectively. Besides, a distinct feature of the Arsi Gadaa practice was that each *gossa* was autonomous and independent. Hence, it had its own Gadaa area and a community form of the Gadaa government under *Abba Bokku*, who served as the spokesperson of the assembly (Yenealem, 2016).

On the other hand, the *siinqee* is one of the cultural features among the Arsi. It is a sacred stick which is given to a woman in order to guard her rights. According to Yenealem (2016) the description *Siinqee* is of a woman's shield (weapon), a spear and a symbol. As *abba bokku* holds *bokku* on his hand; has *halangee* on his hand. *Siinqee* is unique to women and it is a symbol of womanhood. Carrying *siinqee* in her hand symbolizes her with that of a warrior full of his staff. Therefore, *siinqee* is not merely a term for a material symbol, like that of Gadaa system it also refers to an institution, to a women's organization totally excluding men, and it has both religious and political functions. As Gadaa system and *siinqee* have great place in socio-political aspects of the Oromo people in general Arsi Oromo in particular, the value system of the people has been influenced by these institutions that functioned parallel to each other but again functioned hand in hand for building the people. Asafa (2010) states "The Gadaa and Sinqee helped to preserve *saffu* in Oromo society by enabling Oromo women to have control over resources, social status and respect, and sistership and harmony by deterring men from infringing upon their personal and collective rights." Moreover, in Arsi Oromo socio-cultural activities *Siinqee* has various symbolic representations: as a symbol of marriage of Oromo women; a ritual stick used for praying and also for institution of conflict resolution mechanism (Jemila, 2014).

4.5. Marriage Practices among the Arsi Oromo

According to the informant's marriage among the Arsi Oromo can be divided into different categories and types. Accordingly, Daniel (2002) argued that the culturally and socially sanctioned marriage among the Arsi Oromo contains *Gbbara* (payment of bride wealth) which is facilitated by *Kadhata* (begging process); *Walgara* (sister exchange), *Buta* (abduction), *Hawwata* (persuasion) *Dhaala* (levirate), *Milbettoo* (sororate). However, the marriage practices found in Arsi Oromo is not extensively differing from other Oromo people living in other areas. In Oromo

people make assessments of the potential in-laws before fixing any marriage relations. The family from both sides make sure about the identity, social status, blood relations, etc. to begin affinal relations. They are counting back up to twelve (12) ancestors in the father line and in the mother line (Jemila, 2014). Besides, Muktar (2019) described different types of marriage systems practiced among the Arsi and Bale Oromo. These are explained as follows:

4.5.1. Addabaana

This is a type of marriage takes place when a girl is left unmarried or when her father wants to give her to someone whom she does not like. In this case, the girl chooses unmarried young man and then runs away to his house without the knowledge of the man mostly in the evening (Yenealem, 2016). On her arrival she tries to enter to the house by saying:

Adda baana shifaa xabboo mana citaa; you man in the grass-built house
Warra afaan golaa; na jalaa goraa be off those who standing on my way to the sleeping room

According to Yenealem (2016), it means,

Let us unite with our flower (shifaa), be off those who standing on my way to sleeping room (in this case she is demanding to let her enter the house. Thus, she will stand beside the pillar until she is given a reply. Then, the family of the man she went to asks her the name of the man she wants. Subsequently, they ask her clan /gosa/ in this case, however, such proposal for marriage is not acceptable immediately by the boy. He will be advised not to reject. But if it is not acceptable by the boy's parents too, for different reasons, the next day she will be taken back to her parents after anointing her head with butter. But if accepted, the next day two jaarsaa/ Facilitators/ would go to her parents for negotiation (Yenealem, 2016).

4.5.2. Hawwata (Persuasion)

Hawwata is the other type of marriage which is arranged based on the mutual interest of the boy and the girl. The agreement is arranged without the knowledge of their family. It is well known among the Arsi Oromo, and it is usually performed in order not to pay a number of heads of

cattle, materials and money to the girl's family. But the boy has a responsibility to legalize the marriage either through *gabbara* or *walgara*.

4.5.3. *Buttaa* (Abduction)

This type of marriage is an informal and illegal way of acquiring a wife which Arsi Oromo adopted through time. It is performed occasionally and is gradually being ignored. The first reason is the increase in the bride wealth. The second reason is that the social group in which the boy belongs or the low socio-economic capability of the boy and his parents allow the boy to abduct the girl who is going to be his wife (Yenealem, 2016). The boy can abduct the girl if he fears that her parents may refuse the relationship because of the descent social group he belongs. On the other hand, if his parents do not afford the amount of bride wealth expected from them for the marriage process because of the low economic status, in this case the boy will decide to get the girl forcefully.

The plan of abduction is arranged secretly and carefully. The boy tells this mission to his intimate friends or relatives who are strong enough in the process of abduction and able to keep the secret not to be recognized by others. This also includes a selection of the place where the girl frequents and appropriate time. It is shameful to give her back though her family tried to survive her.

4.5.4. *Walgara* (Exchange Marriage)

This type of marriage is a marriage which is performed by the exchange of sisters among the two families. In this case, a father can give his daughter to the brother of a girl he wants to marry or the boy gives his sister to the brother of the girl he wants to marry. Both girls are compared on the basis of their physical maturity (Yenealem, 2016). Specially this marriage system was more common among the Arsi Oromo and is gradually being ignored by the society because of sometimes unbalanced life comfort of the two married girls (Muktar, 2019).

4.5.5. *Cabsaa* (Biidhaa Baasa)

It is a type of marriage undertaken without the love of the bride and her families. The word *cabsaa* means accidental/improptu action. The boy's families or members of the wedding ceremony accidentally arrive at the girl's family home because of missing the one they previously intended to marry from that family or clan members. This marriage type is also implemented when the family of the girl wants to change their ideas not to marry him. Her families cannot refuse to give because they are afraid of elders' curse.

4.5.6. *Dhaala* (Widow Inheritance)

This marriage practice specifies that the man's widow must marry his surviving brother in order to continue the relationship between the widow and the family of deceased husband. Therefore, it is a compulsory marriage of a widow by her deceased husband's younger brother. The practice is mainly intended to maintain the deceased man's lineage (Yenealem, 2016). The reason behind this is, to preserve the dead man's children within the family and save them from mistreatment by the stepfather to whom the widow may marry (Muktar, 2019). Besides, the dead man's family takes the responsibility of safeguarding his wealth to protect the woman not to marry another person with his wealth and there are also other types of marriage in the Arsi community.

4.6. Beliefs and Religions of Arsi Oromo

Before the introduction of world dominant religions, the people around the world were practicing their traditional religions which is commonly called traditional religions. If we take African people, they have traditional religions which were practiced by the early generations and continue to be practiced to date (Yenealem, 2016). Like other people in Africa, before the introduction of Christianity and Islam, the Oromo practiced their own religion, which is a belief in a monotheistic, one-supreme deity, known as *Waaqaa*.

According to Gadaa (1988) cited in Yenealem, (2016), argued that *Waaqa* can loosely be translated into the English word God. *Waaqa*, for the Oromo, is the creator of the world, basis of order and justice, almighty, omniscient, omnipresent. The belief in such a powerful creator is called *Waaqeffanna* (a belief in *Waaqa* supreme God), (Jeylan, 2005). However, the Oromo

believe that despite the inaccessibility of *Waaqa*, rituals and prayers offer a route of verbal exchange via which the power of divinity can circulate the human world. There are also other smaller divinities called *ayyaana* to deal with day-to-day activities (Dejene, 2002). Oromo believes that *Waaqa Tokkicha* (the one God) created the world. They name this ultimate being *Waaqa Gurraacha* (the Black God). Most Oromos still believe that it was this God who created heaven and earth and other living and non-living things (Yenealem, 2016).

The *Arsi* Oromo have the same basic religious worldview as other Oromo groups. However, gradually, indigenous religious belief systems changed because of an internal and external factor. Currently, the majority of *Arsi* Oromo are followers of the Islamic religion with 70.94%, while 22.29% are Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity, and 5.34% are protestant and some of them are still followers of the indigenous religious belief system (Jemeanesh, 2020).

4.7. The Arsi Oromo Livelihood

Arsi livelihood is based mainly on subsistence agriculture. Based on the climatic condition the *Arsi* produce different kinds of economic subsistence. The lowland is dominated by the agropastoral system; the potato-vegetable cultivation in lowland and midland; the maize-haricot bean in most of the midland and in some lowland; and barley-wheat cultivation in most of the highland and in some midland (Jemeanesh, 2020). The people inhabited on the highland climatic condition, basically, produce barley and wheat and other cereals.

Additionally, they keep cattle, sheep and horses. In the temperate middle zone or midland, climate zone cultivation and cattle breeding are where the most dominant economic activities. About 80% of the population lives in the lower half of the highlands and the lowest point of this climatically temperate middle zone. This is the most fertile zone and cereal cultivation and other forms of agriculture are the predominant activities (Jemeanesh, 2020). People in this area do cultivate *Worqii* (Ensete), and also keep animals such as cattle, sheep and horses. The *Arsi* attach greater social and economic value to their animals. As Hirut (2001) put it, the life of an *Arsi* Oromo particularly that of women is highly attached to the possession of animals' products. In the past and even at present, the major source of income for *Arsi* women is milk and its products. On the other hand, cattle and sheep are suitable animals for sacrifice among the people. So, in

Arsi, animals are both sources of income and prestige in society in general and are objects of scarifies (Daniel, 2002).

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

5.1. The Meaning, Types and Processes of Gabbara among the Arsi Oromo

5.1.1. The Meaning and Types of *Gabbara* among the Arsi Oromo

According to the informants, *Gabbara* is a gift given by the boy for the girl's family as a gift to validate the marriage. However, even though it is directly given by the groom to the bride's parents, the bride's family also gives various gifts to the son-in-law in return while they receive gift. *Gabbara* includes different types of gifts like heads of cattle, honey, money, clothes and other materials. According to the informants, the boy is mostly supported by his family in paying *gabbara* of his wife-to-be. Furthermore, traditionally it is considered as a sign of respect and gratitude by the groom and his family to the bride and her family. But it is given after the completion of several steps or procedures like mate selection and many other processes.

5.1.2. Mate Selection Procedures

According to the informants among the study people, the boy's father played a crucial role in mate selection. Always, the boy's father among the Arsi Oromo will investigate the background of a girl he observes playing with her friends or when she goes to fetch water, market or other places. Because, he is choosing not only a wife for his son, but he choosing the entire people with whom his family will become in-laws or people treat each other as relatives and they help each other when a child is born, a young person gets married and in a grief time. If the girl and her parents are fulfilled his first criteria, then the boy's father checks if any reason happens why the marriage might not be possible.

Although the father of the boy decides the marriage on the ground of the descent of the girl and other social factors such as social status like if she is from outcaste groups, the son also has the opportunity to choose his future wife. Because among the study people marriage among close descendants and caste, groups are strictly forbidden. Accordingly, Daniel (2002) stated that no one can select his marital partner from his father's *gosa* irrespective of the degree of relationship.

Similarly, no one can select his marital partner from his mother's *gosa* at least up to the fourth generation because it is considered that if done incest occurs.

Caste groups among the study people are *watiilee* (pottery), *cawaa* (tanners), and *tuumtuu* (blacksmiths). The boy's father also confirms whether the girl's family is having or free from any sort of communicable diseases like leprosy. Then if this thing seems clear, he sends the *ketticha* (the go-between) to the girl's family requesting their daughter in marriage to his son. The *ketticha*'s are individuals from the groom's family and another person who has good knowledge of the girl's family. The mission of the *Ketticha* should be combined by *Milkii* (Omen) and *Miju'uu* ceremony.

Milki (Omen) is considered to be a symbol of the success or failure of the marriage. On the day they decided to go to the girl's family, the boy's family check whether the family and cattle will spend the night in peace. If the night passes peacefully, the boy by holding a spear in his hand, his father and the *Ketticha* get up early in the morning and going to carefully see *milkee* start from his parents' home to that of the girl's family. The reason is to check on whether the *milkee* is good or evil for mate selection. The days which are selected for *milkee* are Thursday, Friday, and Sunday. Because these days are considered a good day for mate selection. According to the informants, coming across a pregnant woman, and if they found the girl milking a cow, carrying a container full of water, it is said to be good or the symbols of good fortune. In contrast, being crossed by a fox on their way, if a girl is found carrying an empty container, coming across a disabled person, it is bad luck. If something considered bad happens to them on the way, they return to their home without going to the girl's family. If something considered good happens to them on the way, the boy put the spear at the girl's family door, then after they explain the purpose of their coming, they ask the girl's father to give his daughter to their son. The reason they put the spear at the door is a sign for anyone who comes to that family to know that there are guests who came to that family to ask their daughter for marriage. Therefore, as to the study informants anyone who sees a spear at the gate will not enter the house until the guests leave.

Then the girl's father tells them he will think about it and requests that they come back on a certain day for his answer. At this time the bride's family begins their investigation about the people who are proposing the relationship and looking into their ancestry in search of blood ties. Their investigation for responding to the suggestion of union is the same as those of the groom's

family in starting the process. After their investigation of anything that could prevent the marriage and if they want the union the bride's family also critically watches the *milkaa* in the events surrounding them.

Accordingly, just like the first day on the next journey to the house of the future wife-to-be, everything needs to be good in the house of the boy's family and on their way. They critically observe mainly whom they first meet on the road and what he/she is carrying, how peacefully activity seems to be progressing in homes and fields on the way. They are comforted and joyful if the attempt seems to be successful. Therefore, the feeling is very strong among the study people since it allows or prevent the marriage union of the couples.

If *milkaa* does not prevent the engagement, as Daniel (2002) & Yenealem (2016) also stated the *Mijuu* ceremony is taking place at the girl's family home. It is attended by the *Kettichaa*, the boy, his father and one important person from the boy's *gosa*. While, from the bride's side, her families are all attendants of the ceremony. During the ceremony, porridge, milk and wine (*dadhii*) which are made from honey and water are prepared for the attendants. Then the *kettichaa* and the would-be-wife parents are discussing the amount of *gabbara*. According to the informants three or four decades ago, the amount of *gabbara* depends on the girl's physical maturity and the social background of her parents. After the decision has been made the would-be-husband comes with a necklace and puts it on his wife-to-be neck. This process is called *kadhimannaa* (engagement). This is culturally a symbol for the girl to be engaged and the process ends with the wedding ceremony. In relation to this, Turner in his theory of symbolic anthropology reflects as cultural symbols are powerful condensations of meanings like meanings about psychological and social relationships (Turner, 1974 cited in Moore, 2009). In general, among the study people, the boy's family particularly the boy's father, played a vital role in mate selection and the payment of *gabbara* for their son.

5.1.3. Gabbara given by the Bridegroom to the Bride's family

According to the elder informants, as they heard from their fathers and grandfathers the marriage gift or *gabbara* is only two heads of cattle which are one heifer and bull (*raadaa fi jibicha*) and two blankets (*wayaa lama*) given to the girl's family. From these gifts, the two heads of cattle and the two blankets (*Wayaan lamaan*) were prearranged for fathers and mothers.

However, the informants stated that, even though they did not exactly know the time, the *gabbara* gift eventually increased from one heifer and bull to six heads of cattle, and currently, it has been increasing over time. Likewise, the girl's family also gives different gifts like household items and heads of cattle to the son-in-law as a return while they receive *gabbara*. Moreover, elder informants stated that:

Duri, Arsii biratti gabbara guddaa gaafachuun hin turre. Yoo intala seeraan manatti kadhatanii jedhan jaalalaan intala waliif keennaa turan. Garuu, yoo abbaan intala takka ilma isaatiif jaallate, osoo hin kadhatin dura falaa fi falfala warra intala jaallatee sanaa qorata. Haaluma walfakkaatuun, worri intalaatis falaa fi falfalla warra intala isaanii kadhate erga qoratani booda yoo warra jaalatani kabajjaan intala kenanniif malee gabbarra guddaa hin fudhatani ture. Yeroo maatiin intalaa tole jedhani inni fuudhuu seera guutuudhaaf damma washoo lama, wayyaa lamaa fi horii jaha haadhaa fi abbaa intalaatiif qabatee dhaqa. (Interviews made on, April 2021)

The idea explained above, described that among the Arsi Oromo before four or five decades ago, when a family formally asks another family for their daughter's hand in marriage, the parents of the girl accept the request. But, before the selection of the mate, the father of the boy investigates the background of the girl's family. Accordingly, the bride's family also investigates the background of the groom's family. Then, if they like the groom's family, they respectfully give their daughter without asking for too many heads of cattle as *gabbara* from the groom. However, after the negotiation is made, the groom gives two pots of honey, two clothes, and six heads of cattle to the bride's family to fulfill the legality or the formality of the marriage.

Thus, as the above data shows in the former time both families among the study people were critically investigating each other whether the would-be wife or the would-be husband's family has any problems before mate selection. Their investigation tells as the Arsi Oromo have in-depth indigenous know-how about health-related issues and they can easily forecast what will happen in the future life of their children. As a result, both the groom and the bride's families give great attention to getting acquainted before mate selection and different negotiations.

In addition, the gift given by the bridegroom is not challenging his life rather symbolizing mutual respect and formalizes marriage. Studies conducted in various African marriage gift practices confirmed that bride wealth is historically believed to have beneficial values such as, it gives formal recognition to marriage, maintains social control, constructing social identity, stabilizes the partnership, promotes social cohesion, and joins the two families together (Sarkodie, 2017).

Likewise, among the Arsi Oromo, the *gabbara* gifts are not given only to the girl's father rather it shared for different girl's family members because the gift intends to join all the bride's and the groom's families together. Therefore, a heifer is given to the bride's mother and brother while a bull is given to the bride's father.

5.1.4. A Gift given by the Girl's family to the newly Married couples

According to the informants, the girl's family is also responsible to give different gifts to newly married couples. In this regard, the informants stated that:

Horii gabbaraaf dhufe jaha keessaa haadhaaf raada tokko, abbaaf jibbicha tokko, ilma haadhaaf raada tokko kenname. Horii hafe keessaa abbaan muccattii intala isaatiif raada tokko, ilma fuudhuuf immoo jibicha tokko kennaaf. Dabalataan abbaan intalaa mucattii isaatiif horii haandhuraa kennaaf, daakuu fe'aaf. Haati deette immoo meeshaa manaa kan Ogummaa harkaatiin tolfame, sabaree, xuunxoo guchuma, ciicoo, qorii, siinqee, booraatii fi kkf kennitiif. Ilmi fudhuu fi maatiin intalaatis wal hin miidhan, jaalalaa fi kabajjaa guddaa waliif qaban. Abbaa fi ardaan waan ambi heerumsiiseen sitti heerumsise, waan ambi hambifate hanbifadhe... ija hambifadhe, ilkaan hambifadhe, qaama hambifadhe lubbuu hambifadhe... qaamni isii fayya na jalaa hin tuqin, yoo na jalaa tuqxe immoo waan gosaa taati jedhee dhaamatee heerumsiisa. (Interviews made on, March, 2021).

The above data describes that, from the six heads of cattle which came for *gabbara*, one heifer is given to the bride's mother, a bull (a buck) is given to the bride's father, one heifer to the bride's brother and then from the remaining heads of cattle, the girl's father gives one heifer to his daughter and one bull to his son-in-law. In addition, the bride's father gives *handhuraa* (most of the time a cow which has a young calf) and house equipment like flour to his daughter. The bride's mother also gives traditional household materials which are made up of local raw materials using indigenous knowledge like *xuunxxo*, *sabaree*, *guchuuma*, *cuucuu*, *qorri*, *siinqee*, *booraati*, etc. Moreover, the groom and the bride's families took care of each other in all directions. They did not economically harm one another; rather they had great respect and hospitality to one another. Finally, the bride's father and his relatives order the son-in-law to protect their daughter and let her be healthy; saying don't harm her eye, ear, teeth, and any part of her body. But if you harm, the problem will be the issue of the *gosa*, not you and me.

Thus, according to the informants, four or five decades ago, *gabbara* among the Arsi Oromo was viewed as a symbol of formal recognition to the marriage and it is also economically important

to the bride's family and the newly married couples. Because the girl's family and the newly married couples equally benefit from the gift provided by the groom and the girl's family. In addition, it promotes social cohesion and joins the two families together since it's not only the union of couples. In this regard, Turner (1974) cited in Moore (2009) stated that Symbols are condensed and multi-vocal or can have multiple meanings, may speak to different people in different ways. Therefore, since *gabbara* is viewed as a symbol of a covenant that helps the sustenance of a marriage, the practice is mainly symbolic. This means that any contributions from a groom's family and the gift from the bride's family to the son-in-law among the study people can be seen as a symbol that validates a marriage and binds two families together and equally it has economic relevance since the heads of cattle distributed among the members of the bride's family. Thus, *gabbara* has various socioeconomic and cultural meanings among the study people. In relation to this, studies among the Ndebele and Shona of Zimbabwe show that the bride wealth has different meanings and functions relating to the distribution of material resources; the establishment of relationships within and between lineages and the maintenance of social control; the construction of social identity (Ansell, 2001).

Besides the above-mentioned gifts, the bride's father gives several heads of cattle (a heifer and bull) to her daughter and the son-in-law as the gift of *geegayoo*. He also gives another gift called *Gurguboo* to the newly married couples (it is a cow and bull given to spouses when couples come to visit the bride's parents). The other unique gift is *Jalkaayaa or handhuuraa* it is a gift given by the bride's father to his daughter (it is a cow that has a young calf). Here what makes this gift unique from other gifts is that it is her personal property and no one is taking it; even her husband cannot sell it. Because it is her childhood gift and it symbolizes compensation for the service she rendered to her family.

5.1.5. A Gift given by the Boy's family to the newly Married couples

On the other hand, the boy's family also gives many heads of cattle to the newly married couples and the gift is called *Dhoofsisaa*. This gift is performed on the next day of the spouse's wedding; the wife gets up early in the morning with a stick called *Sinqee* and while she enters the corral by using *Sinqee* she touches the cattle that her mother-in-law is showing her. Then those touched heads of cattle have remained as the private property of the newly married couples. In this

regard, Daniel (2002) similarly argued that in the *Dhofsisaa* process, the next morning at the groom's parent's home, the girl or the wife touches by her *siinqee* the cattle that shown by her mother-in-law. This act symbolizes that she owned them. These are what constitute the newly married couple's joint property. Therefore, some decades ago, newly married couples were got various gifts in their marriage and this, in turn, motivated the unmarried young youths to get married and have independent property. In relation to this, Mauss (2002) in the theory of the gift noticed that even though gifts are free and voluntary, they generate a sense of debt and contractual obligations, so much so that each social member recognizes a duty to give, to receive, to reciprocate. However, the finding of this study is somewhat different from this theory because previously there was no obligation to return or reciprocate the gift given by the groom's family. Intentionally such gifts are free gifts that are given with no obligation to reciprocate, and no expectation that they will be reciprocated.

Thus, as the data shows the bride and the groom's families among the study people were played a critical role in the future life of the newly married couples. This in turn shows as the bride and the groom's families share the responsibility of safeguarding the couples. It is therefore in the event of challenges that threaten the survival of the spouses, both families cooperate to the peaceful settlement of whatever dispute that could otherwise destabilize the marriage. In this regard, the empirical study among the Dagara of North-West Ghana revealed that in the former time divorce cases are rare due to the intervention of the families during times of disagreements among spouses (Forkuor, 2018). In general, *gabbara* in the former time (three or four decades ago), serves as a symbol of mutual respect between families brought together by marriage. At large, *gabbara* is a traditional practice of substantial value, with a long history among the Negele Arsi Oromo. To end, whilst acknowledging the past significance and benefits of *gabbara* to family and community integrity, there is also important to investigate the changes and its implications in contemporary time.

5.2. The Current *gabbara* and its Implication on Unmarried youths, Couples and the Community

According to the study informants, nowadays *gabbara* has been increasing in unprecedented form and has caused different social, economic, and psychological problems on the study community in general and unmarried youths, newly married couples; their parents in particular. The following sections described pertinent issues.

5.2.1. The Current Trend in *Gabbara* gift

According to the study informants, nowadays there are various changes in *gabbara* gifts among the Negele Arsi Oromo. Since the last twenty years, *gabbara* is increasing in an unprecedented manner. According to the *Abbaa* Gadaa, my informants, since the last two to three decades there have been various changes in the customary marriage gifts. According to him during their fathers and grandfathers, people lived a communal life; they had communal pastureland and other natural resources in common. However, after people start using different technologies and urban ways of life, then an individualistic attitude gradually replaced the communal lifestyle.

Besides, remittance money from abroad came for *gabbara* in large sums and this negatively affected the former tradition. Competition to paying and receiving a large sum of *gabbara* has also come into being. As a result, parents started demanding large amount of *gabbara* from the local community. Accordingly, informants stated that:

Gabbara guddaa gaafachuun akka Aanaa Nageellee Arsiitti motummaa darbee keessa jalqabe. Yeroo ammaa kana gabbarri 100,000- 300,000 gayee jira. Sababni isaas tokkoo warra biyya alaa irraa doolarii ergutu gabbara humnaa oli kana babaldhiisaa jira. Karaa biraatiin immoo abbaan intala heerumsiisu intalti tiyya intala eenyuutii gadi jirti gabbara diqaan wanti heerumsiisuuf jechuudhaan gabbara guddaa fudhachuun jalqabame. olka'uun gabbaraa, haala fuudhaa fi heeruma Arsii irratti jijjirama guddaa fi miidhaa fiideera. Adeemsa, uffannaa, haala kennaa, sirni... waan baay'etu jijjiirame. Walumaagalatti sirnichi baay'ee miidhamaa jira. (Interviews made on, April 2012).

The idea explained above is in short in the context of the study community, currently *gabbara* has reached 100,000-to-300,000 ETB. One of the reasons is the money sent by foreigners from different countries. Because those who have relatives from foreign countries and those who live abroad but want to marry in their homeland provide a lot of money as *gabbara* gift. Then the local people competing for *gabbara* as a symbol of social status or prestige.

Thus, according to the informants, the traditional value of *gabbara* among the study people is now become changing due to several factors like globalization and urbanization. In relation to this, Thiara & Hague (2009) argued that the issue of bride wealth is not straightforward and that it is considered by several to be an important traditional cultural practice of considerable value, with a long history in various parts of Africa. However, modernization and globalization change their traditional values. Likewise, my focus group discussants also stated that those people who live in foreign countries send money instead of cattle as *gabbara* gift; this gradually changing the type of gifts from heads of cattle to money and modern household equipment. In relation to this, Sambe (2013) stated that in many societies, bride wealth takes the form of livestock and clothes or both as custom demands. However, the pressures of modernity have made it possible for all such items to be quantified into cash value in many societies.

Therefore, due to external and other internal factors currently the types, meanings, and values of *gabbara* gifts changing over time in the study community. For instance, as informants and FGD discussants stated in the former time (in this study, the former time is to refer twenty to thirty years ago), it brought mutual respect, cooperation, or solidarity among the people, while, this day's the gift resulting in a sense of competition, disregard and disputes in the people. Muktar (2019) also confirmed that *gabbara* gift develops dishonoring, disliking, disregarding, and neglecting among the community. Moreover, even though modernization and technologies are not considered as bad things, the way the people adopt new technologies and their usage affects the indigenous knowledge and culture of the people. For instance, the expansion of communication technologies like telecommunication, and other media have several benefits for the socioeconomic and cultural developments of the people. However, if the people do not properly use these technologies, it will harm the socioeconomic and good cultural values and practices of the community or it brought adverse consequences in the communal values and practices the people have had in the former time. Furthermore, the informants stated that:

Yeroo ammaa kana gabbarri bifa baay'ee qaba. Ilmi tokko yoo intala fuudhu Gannaataa'ii birrii 30,000 - 40,000, Sooqiidda haadhaa 20,000-30,000, Sabbata Gosaa 10,000-15000, Gaaddisa 40,000-100,000, Uffata 15-30, Horii(loon) 20-40, Siree Meeshaa Guutuu Wajjiin, Darbee darbee Meeshaa Waraanaa (Shugguxii, Kilaashii) Motor saayikilii Moobaayilaa fi kkf akka kennu gaafatama. Gannaataa'iin kuni waan siruma hin barbaachifne; gannaataa'ii jechuun hanga qabeenya argadhutti naaf taa'ii gubboo kennuu jechuu dha. Sababa kana irraa kan ka'e Arsiin kana ilaalee ka ebaluu hagana fidani tiyya eenyuun gadi jirti

jechuun maqaa ofiitii jecha gabbara guddaa gafachuun jalqabame. Yeroo amma kana ilmi tokko yoo intala fuudhuu barbaade gabbarri gaafatamu waan humna isaatii olta'eef fira, ardaa, gosaa fi hiriyyaa irra deemee akka isa gargaaran kadhachuun dirqama isaati. (Interview made on, April 2021).

The above text in *Afan Oromo* meaning that nowadays *gabbara* has various forms. For instance, if a man wants to marry, he has to provide various gifts at different stages from the beginning to the end of the marriage ceremony like *Gannaataa'ii*, *Sooqiida haadhaa*, *Sabbata Gosaa*, *Gaaddisa*, *Uffata*, and other. The groom gives a minimum of 100,000- 200,000 ETB for *gabbara* to the bride's family. In addition, there are different gifts like clothes, heads of cattle, beds and sometimes guns and different materials. *Gannaataa'ii* means 'wait for me' and its money given to the bride's father to wait for the groom until he would be ready to afford the whole required payments. It's a new form of payment introduced by people who are unable to afford the cost of marriage at once. It's used to appease the parents of the bride. As a result, the bride's family in the community began to compete and demanding high bride wealth and symbolize it as a social status. So, nowadays, if a man wants to get married, he has to ask his relatives and friends for help.

Thus, the above data describes, that it is challenging for the groom to bring all *gabbara* at once and is obliged to provide the requested bride wealth at different times. According to the informants, if a man wants to marry, he is forced to ask for support from his relatives and friends and sell cattle and other property. In this regard, Muktar (2019) argues that, if the bridegroom and his family are required to *gabbara* beyond their financial means, they will either sell the equipment at home or lend money from others to be escaped from an ashamed of others. So, if the bridegroom and his family fail to give the requested gift, they will be despised and insulted by the community. In addition, if the gift of the boy's family is less than the gift of the girl's family, there will be animosity between the two families and the bride's family and the son-in-law. Therefore, *gabbara* nowadays challenging the bridegroom and their families.

On the other hand, as to the focus group discussants two or three decades ago, cattle or livestock has played a very important role in the economic, spiritual, and social life of the study people. Because, once had to give *gabbara* in-kind particularly heads of cattle, which were heifers and bull. Conversely, at the moment it's impossible to get a wife without offering large amounts of money (100,000 and above ETB) as a gift to the bride's family.

Fig3: A money given instead of heads of cattle (Loon gabbara)



Source: From researcher's field work April 2021

This photograph shows the transfer of money (40,000 ETB) from the groom's side to the bride's side. The payment was issued by a groom for the bride's father after elders from both families were discussing for more than an hour. And it's given instead of twenty (20) heads of cattle. The elders from the groom side argued that they were agreed to give twenty heads of cattle to the

bride's family but they brought money instead of heads of cattle because nowadays it's possible to give money.

In addition, participants or those people in the picture are the bride's family and they are laughing happily because they brought the cattle (money) that the bridegroom had been ordered to bring. The elder informants in the wedding ceremony stated that in the past, *gabbara* involved exchanging small symbolic products/gifts and cattle for the sake of bonding the two families and it was not common to find families exchanging cash as *gabbara* gifts. However, currently, the type and number of gifts have radically changed. In addition to this the following picture also shows other gift given by the bride grooms:

Fig 4: A blankets given to the girl's family



Source: From researcher's Field Work April 2021

The above picture shows the bridegroom's family and his side elders sitting in a tenet, and the blankets (clothes) shown are given to the bride's family as *gabbara* gifts. It's sixteen (16) blankets in number and it's distributed to the person who is assigned by the bride's family to give him clothes.

In addition, the soft drink (coca cola) shown is a drink prepared by the girl's family for the guests (the groom's and the bride's families and other people); the traditional milkshake shown is also milk prepared to guests and the traditional loaf of *buddeena/injeera* shown is *buddeena/injeera* placed a tent for guest to eat. In the past, however, it was traditional clothes called *bulukkoo* (traditional clothing made of cotton) given to the bride's family. Accordingly, it was a traditional drink like *daadhii* (wine) which is made from honey and water and traditional foods like porridge prepared for guests. Therefore, the picture shows that traditional gifts and traditional food and drink among the study community are changing over time. When the bridegroom gives all items of *gabbara*, the bride's family also gives livestock and household material to the newly married couples or son-in-law during and after the marriage ceremony. Therefore, both families are affected by the gifts. In this regard, the informants stated that:

Karaa biraatiin, Maatiin Mucayyoo erga gabbara gubbaa irratti tuqame kana fudhatee booda mucayyoo heeruntuuf baasii guddaa baasee meeshaa manaa guutuu (biiffee, Soofaa, Firiijii, TV k.k.f), Horii (Loon) akkaataa kennaa mucaa dhiiraatiin kan murtaayu, Lafa qonaa ykn mana jireenyaa (jiraatus dhabamuus danda'a, Meeshaalee aadaa oromoo (Qorii, xuunxoo, siinqee Orooboo, killa) kennaa. Garuu, kennaa kana hunda bituuf gabbarri fudhatan waan isaan hanqatuuf maatiin intalaatis akka maqaan isaanii hin badne fira irra deemani kadhatani, lafa gurguurani intala isaanitif meeshaa barbaachisu kennanii herumsisu. (Interview made on, April 2021).

The above text described that while the groom pays the expected *gabbara*, the bride's family are also obliged to give expensive household equipment like sofa, TV, cooler, heads of cattle, traditional household materials and sometimes residential land as a gift for newly married couples. However, if the received *gabbara* is not enough to cover the cost of the expenditures mentioned above the bride's family are forced to request support from their relatives and the neighbor communities to balance their gift with that of the bride groom's family. This is to maintain their honor and escape being ashamed of giving fewer gifts.

Thus, the above data describe, currently *gabbara* gifts are highly challenging the life of the spouse and the bride's family. Because while the groom gives all the requested gifts, the bride's family is also forced to give adequate gifts for their daughter or the groom-in-law. Because it results in complain and disregard between spouses and their families. In this regard, Muktar (2019) stated that *gabbara* create displeasure between the groom and the bride's family when there is an imbalance between the groom's gifts for the bride's family and cattle or other

properties were given back to him from them. In relation to this, Mauss (1967) cited in Moore (2009) in theory of the gift stated that in all societies gifts that are supposed to be given voluntarily, are actually obligatory. He stated that although described in the voluntary language implied by the word “gift,” such total pre stations are defined by a triad of obligations: the obligation to give, the obligation to receive, and the obligation to repay.

Therefore, the bride’s family is also equally forced to give all household materials and other gifts while they take *gabbara* from the bridegroom. So, the bride’s parents have suffered equally when it comes to the gift of dowry. According to the focus group discussants many have had to lose their homes, and land to repay the gift or even end up in conflict with the bridegroom when they fail to repay to the son-in-law and they are suffered by poverty. In this regard, Oguli's (2004) study in Uganda also shows as bride wealth has close linkages to poverty.

Fig 5: Bed and other furniture given by the bride's family for the newly married couples



Source: From researcher's Field Work, April 2021

The above picture is a bed given by a bride's family for their daughter and son-in-law. The bed is decorated with all the necessary materials. This practice is currently very popular among the study community.

Fig 6: Different household materials given by the bride's family to the couple



In addition to the above-mentioned bed and furniture, the girl's family also gives different household materials for their daughter and the son-in-law. This is because the bride's family is obliged to provide any items that are deemed necessary.

Fig 7: Sideboard and other household furniture given by the bride's family



Besides, this picture shows, those so-called modern and expensive sideboards and other items. Here the sideboard has a great social value for the bride's family and the son-in-law because giving such items will provide prestige and respect in the community. However, it's hard for the poor to afford; so that they are forced to ask for support from others.

5.2.2. The Implication of *Gabbara* on Unmarried Youths

According to the informants and focus group discussants, *gabbara* currently influencing unmarried youth who are planning for marriage. They stated that in the former time, the Negele Arsi Oromo have a large number of cattle; their cattle also have a great social value in the society. Because their socioeconomic activity and ritual practice are more related to their livestock. Since their parents had a lot of cattle, unmarried youths had no trouble getting married.

But nowadays, due to several factors, the number of their livestock has declined over time, and gradually money became a mode of exchange and embedded in the socioeconomic activities of the people.

However, this doesn't mean the study communities are currently not dear and value their cattle rather it means that since the number of their cattle reducing over time, money became a gift of *gabbara* instead of heads of cattle. In relation to this, a study conducted among the Shona and Ndebele of Zimbabwe shows that the bride wealth payment was mainly made in cattle form, but when the people became capitalist, money became the modest form of payment (Mangena, 2013). Likewise, currently *gabbara* is usually stated in terms of cows but the payments are mostly made in cash among the study people. Therefore, if young men want to have a legitimate wife, they are forced to seek support from friends and relatives. Otherwise, unmarried young men and women tend to cohabit while looking for money to legalize themselves as husband and wife. In this regard, youth informants in bitterness emotion stated that:

Gabbarri dargaggessii fi dargaggeettii hin heerumne irratti rakkoo guddaa qaba. Dargaggoonni yeroo ammaa gabbara sodaatanii sagaagalummaa hojataa jiran. Ilmi hiyyeessa irraa dhalate intala fuudhuu hin dandeenye. intalti hiyyeessa irraa dhalattes akka heerumtuun dhabdee jirti. Yeroo ammaa kana, ilmi hiyyeessa irraa dhalate tokko intala jaalatee fuudhuuf horii hin qabu; abbaan intalaatis itti heerumsiisuu hin barbaadu, maqaa ofii soqaa hagana gahaa of- muldhisuu barbaada. (Interview made on, April 2021).

The above text in *Afan Oromo* meaning described that *gabbara* has caused serious problems for unmarried youths. Due to the fear of *gabbara*, they are engaged in cohabitation. A man who was born into a poor family will not easily marry a woman from a rich family. A woman who was born from a poor family will not also easily get a chance of marriage. In short, nowadays, youths are not marrying the girls they love; similarly, the bride's family doesn't give their daughter to the poor due to his inability to pay the gift.

Thus, as the above data shows, currently giving a lot of money and other materials has a great social value among the study community. Because giving or taking large amount of money or other materials like clothes and household equipment is considered as a symbol of richness and it gives respect in the community. However, due to the ever-increasing gifts many youths are currently engaged in previously unacceptable practices like cohabitation for fear of giving *gabbara* to the bride's family. Consequently, this, in turn, makes unmarried youths more

vulnerable to various sexually transmitted diseases. In relation to this, the study conducted by Oguli (2004) in Uganda shows that because of high bride wealth some young men and women resort to cohabitation or elopement in fear of paying bride wealth. Correspondingly, Muktar (2019) states as *gabbara* exposing youngsters to bad habits like adultery practices and illegal marriage which can increase divorce, sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancy. Hence, unlike the former time, nowadays *gabbara* gifts or the trend appears to have lost much of its traditional value in many instances and it results in several influences on the life of unmarried youths. Furthermore, informants stated that:

Duri dargageessi yeroo fuudhu dergaggeettiin yeroo heerumtu guututu walitti dhufaa durbuumaan kabajaa guddaa qaba. Jaalala waliif qabu, wal shakkiin jidduu isaanii hin jiru. Yeroo ammaa kana gabbara humnaa olii irraa kan ka'e, ijoolleen sagaagaluu jalqabde. yoo wal jaalatanii wal fuudhaniyyuu hiyyeessa ta'ee yoo gabbaruu dadhabe warri intalaa jalaa baasani. Walumaa galatt, yeroo ammaa kana gabbarri dhiiraa fi dubartii miidhaa jira. Keessattuu, shamarran ulfa hin barbaachifneef waan saaxilamaniif, ulfa garaa baasuuf jecha qoricha garagaraa fudhataa lubbuu isaanii rakkoo guddaaf saaxilaa jiru. Karaa biraatiin, ulfa garaa baasuuf immoo baasii guddaaf saaxilamaa jiran. (Interviews made on, April 2021).

The above text describes that in the former time virginity has a great value; youths merry without premarital engagement; so that couples had love, respect, and trust for each other. However, because of the current *gabbara*, youths started infidelity. Even though man and woman love each other, when the groom failed to give the requested gift, the bride's family or family-in-law will forcefully take their daughter. In general, the increment of the gift has hurt unmarried men and women. Particularly, unmarried young girls are exposed to unwanted pregnancies. Then, they tend to take different drugs to abort the fetus; this, in turn, results in severe medical problems and their life becomes in danger.

Therefore, the data shows as virginity played an important role in the community; it has a great value for a couple to trust each other and their marital stability. Because according to focus group discussants, the husband says "she bled on my thigh, he trusts her; he believes as she is curious and loves him because he says she did not have any other man before him; he loves her". Besides to this, asking too many cattle and clothes is forbidden in the study people. Thus, this, in turn, helps to maintain peace and a stable marriage in the family or among the spouses. The peaceful relationship of the spouses therefore, brings a mutual respect and cooperation between them and their family-in-laws. But nowadays because of several internal and external factors the

marriage gift tradition of the study people is changing from time to time. Even in the rural areas currently they do not care much for cultural materials, but they need more recent and technology-related materials where cultural resources are not being focused. On the other hand, Okyere-Manu's (2015) study among the Akan culture of Ghana shows that in addition to the influence of the foreign cultures, religion and lifestyle have the potential to influence traditional life. Most migrants no longer live as they use to do in the rural areas where indigenous lifestyle is strictly upheld; thus, youths are easily engaged in new trends.

5.2.2.1.The Implication of Gabbara on Females

Besides, the above-stated challenges nowadays *gabbara* causes a lot of problems in female's lives. In this regard, focus group discussants stated that because of the large sum of gift given to their family many young females do not marry the person they love and she is forced by her family to marry a man she doesn't love. Besides this, because of the current gift, many young girls are exposed to commit premarital engagement. Then many of them are forced to pay a lot of money to have an abortion. Then, since many unmarried girls in the study area are depending on their parents, they do not have enough money; lack of money restricted them from getting adequate treatment after an abortion. Then, many of them are suffered from different problems. In this regard, informants from a private clinic confirmed that many young women are frequently committing an abortion; they are exposed to different kinds of infections and psychological problems. Accordingly, they said that although we advise many young girls not to have an abortion, most of the time they do not agree to accept our advice because they are afraid of social pressure.

5.2.2.2.The Implication of Gabbara on Males

In the same way, a man who fails to give the expected *gabbara* cannot marry a woman he loves or he may lose his girlfriend. According to the informants, most of the time the young men who does not have money are seize the girl they love with a man who has money. As a result, they are ashamed and feel a sense of inferiority. In relation to this, Thiara (2009) stated that bride wealth may cause a male inferiority complex if men cannot or fail to pay and it may make having children impossible. Likewise, the focus group discussants stated that those who don't have wealth are denied women of their choice because they cannot afford the expected gift. Therefore, lack of

money on the young men's side may mean the land or properties they own have to be sold to pay bride wealth. On the other hand, even though there is a shortage of land, many unmarried men among the study people are mostly engaged in farming activities and cultivating different crops and fruits like maize, potato, cabbage and other fruits for several years to get married. For instance, if a young man wants to get married, he should be cultivating crops or fruits for many years. Since land belongs to the family, he does not have enough land, he cultivates on a small plot of land mostly one or half hectare land provided by the family. According to the study informants, a farmer will earn ten up to twenty thousand ETB from one-hectare plot of land in two harvesting seasons. If he cultivates twice a year, he will earn twenty up to forty thousand (20,000-40,000) ETB per year. So, it means he has to work hard for five consecutive years to get 100,000 up to 200,000 ETB otherwise he needs the support of his relatives or borrows money from friends. In relation to this, Oguli's (2004) study in Uganda also shows as young men and their families have to work hard to accumulate the wealth necessary to pay pride wealth.

Likewise, Asiimwe's (2013) study among the Banyakitra of Western Uganda shows that some young men face hurdles in trying to meet the demands of this practice especially those with inadequate resources, hence try to find alternative ways of raising these amounts like selling off family property or getting bank loans. Therefore, unlike the former time as any young man could easily get married when he rich the age of marriage or when he is enough matured, currently, the accumulation of adequate bride wealth to marry postpones the male age of marriage and reduces the number of children they will have while having a number of children have a great socioeconomic value in the study people. Moreover, even if the man is married and has children, the wife's family will take the children if he does not give them *gabbara*.

Accordingly, the informants argued that rich men these days do not want to marry off their daughter to a poor man and this means a man who is from a poor family cannot easily marry the woman he loves. Those wealthy men also want to get married to a wealthy family. Because if the bride's family is rich, it is expected as they give many gifts as a return to their daughter or the son-in-law. Likewise, the study conducted among the Banyakitra of Uganda shows that economic or class differentiations have proved to be prohibitive especially on the side of men with less income to fail to marry or to go for girls from richer families even when they truly love each other (Asiimwe, 2013). In addition, Muktar (2019) in his study among the Arsi and Bale

Oromo stated that when selecting the one to marry, his family first focuses on her family's wealth rather than personal quality because they expect that her family can give back a good dowry with her. In general, as the data shows the changes in *gabbara* gift among the study people affect unmarried male youths and it's is a sign of an emerging new culture.

5.2.3. The Implication of Gabbara on Newly Married Couples and their Parents

Besides, to the unmarried youths, because of *gabbara* gifts newly married couples are also exposed to extreme poverty; they are always paying their debts and sometimes even they fail to raise their children. According to the informants, many newly married couples are living in extreme poverty because of the gift of marriage or *gabbara* and they are in serious debt. In relation to this, Sambe (2013) stated that high bride wealth has the tendency to subject couples to poverty especially newly marries ones as huge resources are been expended by the groom or his family leaving him strapped economically. Moreover, informants stated that:

Gabbara guddaa gabbaree intala fuudhee yoo manatti galu rakkoo cimaatu isa qunnama. Waan nama irraa liqeebate ykn kadhate kafaluuf umrii guutuu isa gaafata. ...Yoo daa'imni dhalatee waan daa'iima ittiin guddisan dhaban. Abbaa manatii fi haadha manaa giddutti rakkoo guddaa fidaa jira. Abbaan manaa intala fuudheen sababa si fudheef hiyyoome jedhaan. Miidhaa inni geessisu baay'eedha. waan qabatamaan argines jira. fkn: ijoolleen jalaa dhibamtee waan mana yaalaa ittiin geessani dhabanii rakkatan argine jirra. Haati ijoolleefuu waan kennutu dhabdee fira irra deemaa kadhattu argaa jira. Rakkoon isaanii itti hammaatee yoo maatii rakkisani fi isa kaleessa kenne naaf deebisi kan waliin jedhaa wal arrabsan baay'eedha. (Interviews made on, April 2021).

The above text describes that the bridegroom gets into big trouble when he marries by giving more than he can afford. It takes a lifetime effort to pay back what he has borrowed or taken from relatives and friends. When a baby is born, from such a messed-up family, it has nothing to eat for its proper growth. It creates a big problem between the couples. Because the husband complains about his wife telling her that he has finished his property when he marries her; he considers her as she is the source of his poverty. This causes a lot of problems; for instance, informants said that “we have seen their children getting sick and father and mother struggling to get medicating their children. We have seen a mother begging for support from her relatives to feed her children”. Furthermore, *gabbara* has caused a conflict between couples, the bride's family, and the son-in-law.

Thus, according to the study informants, *gabbara* results in a very serious problem in a spouse's life. The couple ends up giving away their property to the bride's family and losing their livelihood. In this regard, the study conducted in Uganda shows that impoverishment due to bride wealth gifts may mean that the family is not able to educate their children or pay school fees, so that disadvantage is reinforced (Thiara,2009). Likewise, according to the study community nowadays *gabbara* results poverty on many spouses' life since young couples are started their life in extreme debt and destitution.

In addition, it is one of the reasons of spouse's conflict since the husband thinks he is poor because of his wife; it rests couples from caring and respecting each other. In the same way, Sambe (2013) in his study of marriages in African societies stated that bride wealth could also lead to marital desolation as most grooms cannot afford it, the resultant effect is the bride family taking their daughter back home. Hence, *gabbara* currently influencing the life of many newly married couples and their parents. Furthermore, one of the married informants stated that:

... seenaa kiyyaa yoo isinitti hime, ani erga fuudhe amma wagaa 8 na ta'ee jira. qabeenyas hin qabu, maatiin kiyyas qabeenya guddaa hin qabani. akka carraa intala abbaa qabeenyaa jaaladhee isiinis na jaalatee fuudhe. Qabeenya waan hin qabneef, gannaataa'ii 4,000 warra intalaatiif yoo ergu qarshii 4000 kan soogiiddaan bitadhaa jedhanii nuu deebisani waggaa 5f gadoon jiraanne. Isinis hin deetti warri itti hin dhufu, booya waliiti hin deemnu. Achii waggaa shaniif hojjadhee firaa fi hiriyyoonni kiyyas na gargaaranii sadarkaa isaan barbaadaniin gabbaree fixadhe. Yeroo ammaa hiyyummaa guddaa keessa na galchee jira. (Interview made on, April 2021).

The above data described the life experience of a young married man; he said that, if I tell you my personal history, a practical example for your study, I married before eight years; I and my family have no money and resources. As a chance, I married the daughter of a rich man; due to lack of money to pay, I sent them 4000 ETB to the bride's family as *Gannaataa'ii* gift. However, they were not even polite to accept the money; rather they replied by saying "*soogiiddaan bitadhaa*" which means "buy salt with this money", as a result, we separated for five years. When my wife gives birth, they did not come and visit her. Then I worked hard for five years and my family and friends also helped me and gave *gabbara* to the level of their expectation. However, my gift to my wife's family has put me in a serious economic problem again.

The above informant's life experience shows, as *gabbara* currently highly influencing the life of newly married spouses and their parents. Because it makes the couple fearful and feel inferior

and it creates animosity between the bride's family and the son-in-law. Therefore, this shows that the communal life and values of the community is changing because nowadays the inability to give the requested *gabbara* alienates the spouses from their families. In relation to this, Muktar (2019) states that when the groom does not give the requested gift, family-in-law and the bride's father does not visit couples even when his daughter is sick.

Therefore, isolation from family and the wider community can make a couple feel inferior and prone to psychological problems; put the spouse in difficult economic problems or poverty while they give *gabbara*. In relation to this, the study conducted by Muthegheki (2012) in Bundibugyo district of Uganda shows that bride wealth has resulted in poverty since it is costly and overcharged and sometimes boys are left with nothing after the payment of bride wealth, and therefore suffer after marriage because all the money that would be used to feed the family was used to get married. In addition, other married informants stated that:

Erga fuudhee gara waggaa afurii nata'eera daa'ima waggaa lamaa qaba; jalqaba maatii intalaatiif sabbata gosaa jedhame 6000 kenne, gaaddisa 30,000 kenne, soogiidda haadhaa 10,000, uffata ammoo 12 kennee isaan irraa homaa hin arganne. maaliifuu ammas waan naratti hafeetu jira. horiin, algaa fi cidhaan naa godhaa jedhee gara qarshi 80,000 narratti hafee jira. Yoo kana godhu hin dandeenne maatiin intalaa meeshaa takka naaf hin kennani. Kana irraan kan ka'e haadha manaa tiyya wajiin yeroo baay'ee walddhabaa jirra. Maaliifuu yeroo namoonni ciidha godhatanii maatiin intalaa meeshaa manaa yoo kennaniif yoo argiitu sababa waan cidhaaf kenamu erguu dideef namaa gadi ta'aa jira naan jeedhaarti walddhabaa jirra. Haa ta'uu malee maatiin intalaa gaaf ciidha nu godhanii meeshaan manaa tokko utuu hin hafin waan nuuf kennaniif isaanis miidhamuu danda'an wanti fudhatan hanqateenii fira irra demanii kadhachuu danda'ani. Kanaaf, waggaa kana waan qabu walitti qabee maatii kiyyaa fi hiriyyoota kiiyyallee na gargaaraa jedhee yoo cidha nuu godhanii meeshaa manaa yoo nuufkennani waan nama irraa fudhanne deebisuuf haadha manaa tiyya biyya Arabaa erguuf isii wajjiin waliigalee jira. (Interview made on, April 2021).

The above text in *Afan Oromo* meaning described the life experience of other married informants; the informant said that I married four years and I have a two-year son. First, I gave 6000 ETB for *sabbata gosaa*, 30,000 ETB for *gaaddisa*, 10,000 for *soogiidda haadhaa* and 12 clothes to my wife's family, but I got nothing from them or my father-in-law. Because, there is still additional *gabbara* like cattle, bed, and around 80,000 ETB for marriage ceremony expected from me. If I could not give these remaining gifts, my wife's family would not even give me a piece of furniture or household material. As a result, we are often in conflict with my wife. Because, when my wife sees other people at a wedding party giving furniture to their daughter,

my wife says if you give them the remaining money to my parents, I will get furniture like them and she says you made me inferior. As a result, I often argue with my wife. However, my wife's family can also be affected because they give us a whole lot of furniture during the wedding, and they may seek the help of relatives. The gift I provide may not cover the wedding cost of the bride's family. Therefore, this year I plan to ask for help from my family and friends to give the remaining money. After we received the return gift from my family-in-law, we agreed that my wife should go to the Arab countries (Arabia) to return the money we had received from my relatives and friends.

According to the above data, *gabbara* does not end at once; so that the bride groom gives different gifts over installments. In addition, the gift is not only challenging the life of newly married couples and unmarried youths, but it's also challenging the bride's family as well. Because the bride's parents are exposed to unnecessary costs to buy furniture and other household material for their daughter. The data also shows, even when they lacking money, they must ask for support from their relatives and the neighboring communities. Because they are worried to exceed or balance their gift with that of the groom's gift or what they have taken as *gabbara*. In addition, the newly married couples exposing to excessive expenditure and are left without basic needs of life.

Besides, there is a time when spouses are separated; the women migrating to the Arabia countries to return the money they have received from their friends. This in turn results, in different socioeconomic problems for spouses as well as their relatives. For instance, if the spouses have children, those children lose their mother's care and protection and are affected by psychological problems and it also reduces the affection between husband and wife. Therefore, it has various influences on spouses, their parents, and the children. In relation to this, Sambe (2013), in his study on the effects of high bride-wealth on marital stability stated that high bride wealth has serious implications on marital instability. This is resulted in high rates of divorce, domestic violence, poverty among newly married couples. In general, men's manhood is also questioned if they are not able to give all *gabbara* gifts and this may result in conflict among spouses. For instance, as a young man said his wife used his non-payment to degrade him when she said "why not give *gabbara* for my parents"? and the like.

Fig 8: When the bride father's close relatives contributing money to her father



Source: From researcher's Field Work, April 2021

The above picture describes when the bride's father's close relatives contributing money to her father to give to the bridegroom or son-in-law; during my data collection I observed when they collect thirty thousand (30,000 ETB) to support the bride's father. Since there are guests in the tent, the bride's relatives are in the backyard and no outsider can hear what they discuss because

it is considered as family's private issue. Therefore, the picture helps to apprehend the fact that stated by the study informants.

5.2.4. The Implication of Gabbara on the Community

In addition to the above-mentioned *gabbara* consequences, it also results different problems on the community. In this regard, informants stated that:

Gabbarra guddaa fudhachuun kun aadaa nu harkaa balleessaa jira. Ilmi abbaa qabeenyaa, ka alaa jiru, ka fira biyya alaa qabu gabbara gaafatame gabbaruun yoo fudhu ilmi hiyyeessaa immoo fuudhuu hin dandeenye. Yoo ilmi tokko fuudhu fira, ardaa fi gosa irra deemee kadhata waan ta'eef firri, ardaan fi gostiis ka fuudhu waliin rakkataa jira. yoo ilmi fuudhu na gargaaraa jedhee kadhatu aadaa waan ta'eef diduun hin danda'amu. Nama biraa irraa illee ta'u liqeeffatanii kennuufii qabaatan. Kuni immoo jireenya namaa irratti rakkoo guddaa fidaa jira. Namoonni ollaa fi gandaatis baay'ee rakkataa jira. Maaliifuu, duri cidha kamiyyuu yoo deemani gammachuudhaan marqa, daraaraa, foon nyaatanii aannanii fi daadhii (booka) dhuganii taphatanii wal eebbisanii deebi'an. Yeroo ammaa garuu cidha deemuun rakkoo guddaa ta'eera maaliifuu, qarshii harkatti qabatanii deeman waan ta'eef. (Interviews made on, April 2021).

The above data described that *gabbara* is highly changing our culture. Those who have relatives from foreign countries and rich parents can easily give what they are asked from the bride's family and they are easily got married. Whereas, those who are from poor parents remained unmarried while they look for adequate money. When the poor want to marry, he has to ask his relatives as they support him. When the groom or the young man asks for support to marry, all his relatives must give what they have, because, it is considered as a culture; resisting to give money or cloth is not allowed or is forbidden among the members of the community. Even if, his relative has no money or other material, they have to borrow from somebody else. This in turn highly challenges the life of the wider community. However, in the former time, the people freely attend any marriage or other events; eat, drink and play with one another freely. Whereas, nowadays, the marriage or wedding party is becoming a great tricky of the community. Because at this time no one can go to such events without having money.

Thus, according to the study informants, *gabbara* is currently changing the culture and social life of the study community. This means even though there is still a culture of helping each other in the community, its traditional symbolic meaning is changed. Because in the former time, the people were giving any kind of gifts to get internal satisfaction; it symbolizes love, respect, and

mutual aid. However, currently the tradition is changing; the people giving something to each other by expecting any return in the future. For instance, if someone does not return the material or money, that he received from others, it will result in disagreement and dishonoring among individuals and families. In this regard, Asiimwe's (2013) study among Banyakitra ethnic group in Western Uganda shows as the current bride wealth practices and other actions therein reveals that that with modernization and modernity setting in, even the bride wealth practices have dramatically changed to the extent that the original meaning, which was just to honor each other has changed over time to something hard to explain.

Here, it is expected that once society reforms or modernizes; traditional practices also changing due to several factors. However, the mechanism used to conserve the indigenous knowledge, good practices, and the way the people adopt the change more determine the consequences that come with the change or it's important to critically investigate whether all changes are good or bad. For instance, the competition to give or receive large sum *gabbara* and expensive materials, preventing many young youths from getting married and creates coercion between individuals and families. Moreover, if a person does not have money, it's shameful for him/her to attend different social events like wedding ceremonies because there is a guard who sits to collect money from the people. Therefore, the current trend is changing the value that the community has had in the past.

Fig 9: Assigned individuals by the bride's family to collecting money from the community



Source: From researcher's Field Work April, 2021

Those people observed in the picture are assigned by the bride's family and they are collecting money from the community and the amount is determined based on the willingness of the giver. A woman in the picture comes from the adjacent rural kebele and she gives two hundred birr (200 ETB). The man holding the pen and notebook was recording the women's name and the amount of money she had offered. Accordingly, the following picture also shows the communities attitude towards giving

Fig 10: Assigned individuals by the bride's family to collecting money from the community



Source: From researcher's Field Work, April 2021

Likewise, a man who is sitting on the left side of the man who is counting money (the man who wore the hat) gave one thousand birr (1000 ETB); he told me that one upon a time the bride's father gave him five hundred Ethiopian birr (500 ETB) when his son gets married. As a result, he gives one thousand birr (1000 ETB) in return. In addition, the person standing and laughing is honoring the person who is giving them money. The picture also shows that there is still a tradition of respecting elders in the community while the tradition of gifts in the study

community changing over time, and giving the greatest gift gives honor and social respect among the people. In addition to this, the informants stated that:

Yeroo ammaa kana namni harka duwwaa cidha dhaqu hin jiru. Cidha namaa hafuunis hin danda'amu. akka tufiititti laalama waan ta'eef namni yoo gadoo walirraa hin qabaanne cidha, booya, daabboo kkf wal irraa hin hafani. yoo hafan nama gaafachisa. kuni amoo baasii karooran ala waan ta'eef nama irratti miidhaa guddaa fida, nama hiyyoomsa. Duri namni jaalalaaf nama kenna. Amma garuu akka liqii walii kennuuti. Namni ani uffata biteef gaafa ani cidha godhadhu naa deebiisuun isaa dirqama. Yoo naaf hin kennine immoo waldhabbi uuma. Gara hawaasa baldhaatti immoo maatiin lamaan yoo walitti hin dabalanne, ilmi ebaluu intala ebalu fuudhe gabbaruu dadhabe yoo jedhamu maatiin lamaan waldhaba, waltufata, waan gosaa taati, jiruufi du'aatii waliiti hin dhufani. Kun ammoo jaalala ummanni waliif qabu, kabajjaa waliif qabu... balleesaa jira. (Interviews made on, April 2021).

Accordingly, the above informant's idea described that, nowadays, attending a marriage ceremony or other social events without having money is impossible. To be absent is also not allowed because it's considered as disrespecting the person who called you. Unless there is a conflict between individuals, being absent from grief or joy of the neighbor like wedding, lamentation, *debo* and from any others is impossible. If you do so, it results in punishment or exclusion by the community. However, the changes in *gabbara* gift leads people to unplanned expenses. This in turn can challenge the daily life of the people and make them poor. In the former times, the gift people give to each other symbolizes respect, good luck, expression of love, etc. While at this time, if someone gives you something, you have to return one day in the future. It's just like a mortgage. Otherwise, it results in a disregard and disagreement with the people. Consequently, if the bridegroom fails to complete gifts, then it brings conflict between the groom and the bride's family; it becomes the issue of *gosa* and they never visit each other even during grief time. Thus, currently *gabbara* reducing love and respect communities were had for each other.

Therefore, the data, show that there is still a culture of solidarity and supporting each other in the community. Yet, as the current living conditions have changed the lives of the people, the culture of supporting each other and solidarity is also changing over time. In this regard, most informants and focus group discussants have not opposed to the *gabbara* and marriage ceremony, rather they are opposed to the current *gabbara* gift and changed meaning to an

expensive happy-making issue and the trend that restricting the people from getting married and different social practices.

5.3.The Link between Gabbara and Women's life and Marital Stability

5.3.1. The Link between Gabbara and Women's life

According to the informants, besides the above-mentioned problems, *gabbara* results in various challenges in women's life. Because, when a man marries a woman, he gives different gifts to the bride's family. As a result, most of the time the women are considered to be men's private property and they have many activities. For instance, household tasks and child care are considered to be the role of women in the community. And if a wife does not follow her husband's orders, she may be beaten or insulted, because if a wife does not perform or accept her husband's command, he thinks as she despises and does not respect him. In this regard, a study conducted by Adjei (2018) in Ghana shows that a wife has an implicit moral obligation to respect and obey her husband's command and wishes as a gesture of reciprocity for the respect shown by a man in accepting to pay what her family demanded as bride wealth.

The data also shows as husband and wife have different socially constructed roles in the community. For instance, all household activities and child care are considered as exclusively assigned to women. Here even though nature gives an exclusive role to women like giving birth and breastfeeding, a husband also has an equal responsibility to care for and protect his child. However, all household activities and child care are considered as women's routine activities or their daily responsibilities among the study people. As a result, even if the women know the burden they have, they have no way to escape from it because the husband was giving a lot of *gabbara* to her family. In relation to this, a study conducted by Oguli (2004), show that the payment of bride wealth is sometimes used to control a partners actions, rights for example to movement, to decide on the number of children; the responsibility to care for the children, acquisition and management of property and her independence.

Hence, based on the above data in many ways *gabbara* gives exclusive authority to the husband over his wife in the community. In relation to this, a study conducted by Sambe (2013) in Nigeria shows that high bride wealth has a detrimental effect on marital stability since it increases the possibility of domestic violence as men consider women as their property, leading

to ill-treatment that could affect marital relationships. Likewise, a study conducted by Thiara (2009), in Uganda shows that bride wealth cements women's inequality and the likelihood of men feeling that they have a right to dominate and control their wives, including through the use of violence. Furthermore, informants stated that:

Sababa gabbara kanaatiin dubartoonni baay'een seeraan ala biyya Arabaa deemaa jiran. Maalifuu dargaggeseesi wamaa hin qabu gabbaree fuudhuu hin dandeenye. Yeroo biyya Arabaati deebi'ani ammoo akka namoota irratti arginutti abbaa manaa wajjiin jaalala akka yeroo duraa hin qaban, yeroo baay'ee wal hiiku. Sababni isaa namni biyyaa intala biyya Arabaati dhufte akka waan hojii hin taane (sagaagalummaa) keessa turtee dhufteetti yaada waan ta'eef kabajaa hin qabdu. Kun immoo xiinsammuu dubartoota baay'ee irratti rakkoo fidaa jira. Haaluuma walfakkaatuun yeroo tokko tokko haadha manaa isaa biyya alaa ergee qarshii isiin achii ergituun kan hojii hin taane hojjatu baay'eedha. Yoo isiin achii deebitu wanti ishiin achi ergite dhumatee ykn abbaa manaa ishii intala biraa dhoksaan fuudhe argiti. kun immoo rakkoo dubbartoota irratti gahaa jiruudha. (Interviews made on, April 2021).

Because of *gabbara* gifts and the inability of youths to provide it many young women are illegally migrating to Arabia (Middle East Country). The intention is to get money to support their relatives, husbands, and boyfriends. However, when they come back from the Arab countries, the affection of their husbands, relatives, and boyfriends is not as it was when they leave Ethiopia. Most of the time, their marriage is concluded by divorce, because many people perceive as all women who are going to Arabia engaged themselves in activities like that of prostitution and when they finish their money, they have no respect from the people. This, in turn, results in a psychological problem for many returned women. Besides, sometimes these men marry another wife by using the money that they were sent from the Arab countries by the former and legal wife.

According to the informants, traditionally, the main movement of women was rural-rural, for marriage, and to live with their father's or mother's relatives and so on. However, currently, women's migration to the Middle East country is increasing from time to time. Most married and unmarried women are left their homes to change their lives and parents as well. For instance, focus group discussants stated that most young married women are suffered from poverty and different problems while they lost what they have by giving *gabbara*. As a result, many married women are forced to separate from their husbands, children, and relatives and migrate to Middle

East countries to engage in domestic work. Therefore, the data shows as *gabbara* currently results in various socioeconomic and psychological problems in women's lives.

Accordingly, the informants and focus group discussants stated that *gabbara* is one of the reasons for many unmarried young women's illegal migration to Arabia countries; many of them die in exile and the survivors suffer. When they return from Arabia, their acceptance in the community is not as they have before; those returned women are not required to marry if they do not have enough money in their bank account. But as the informants say most of the time returned women do not have a large amount of money because regularly, they send money to their families and friends. As a result, when they return to their family, they lack money to engage in a private job. In this regard, one of the returned informants said that "I have worked in Saudi Arabia for three years but I have no money to open shop or engage on a better job but so many people think as I have money, currently I'm selling coffee on the street instead of sitting at home". Thus, the informant's life experience shows that she and other women who live the same life are face a lot of problems and they are not trusted by the people.

5.3.2. The Link between Gabbara and Marital Stability

Besides, the influences *gabbara* have on women's lives it resulted in marital breakup or marital instability. Because in the old day's women had cattle and used milk and butter for home and the market and no one asks her because milk and butter are considered to be the property of women. So, even though women do not have other personal property like land, it means that they have the income to buy some consumption goods like coffee, salt; etc. without asking for money from their husbands. But now women do not have many cattle as before and other sources of income, so they become economically dependent on their husbands. This in turn results in conflict between couples because the wife regularly asks her husband for different household expenses; the husband on the other hand regularly loses money when he returns what he has taken from relatives or friends. Therefore, poverty and spouses' conflict from time-to-time resulting in family instability and sometimes family dissolution in the community. Moreover, the informants and focus group discussants stated that a wife cannot freely speak to her husband; she is afraid of him because he says to his wife, I became poor after I married you. Thus, the wife does not have the courage to tell her husband about the problem at home and she is psychologically affected.

Concerning this, Rees (2016), argued that women are stressed due to the payment of bride wealth as it's a source of poverty and conflict with the spouse and a possible cause of their anger and psychological distress. Besides, the informants stated that:

Gabbarri jaalala abbaa manaa fi haadha manaa hir'isaa jira. Inni horii hagonaa sitti gabbaree waan qabu sitti fixadhee jedhaan, isinis horii hagonaatiin sitti heerume jettiin. Kana irraan kan ka'e, waldhabiinsatu jidduu isaanittii dhalata. Dubartii hiyoomattee ijoollee deette guddisuu dadhabdee gara maatiitti deebitee maatiin gargaaru arginee jira. Wanti qaban gabbaraan dhumera wanti itti jiratan hin jiru; jiruun itti hammachuu wal himachuu, wal hiiknaa malee, wal jibbuu baay'inaan babaldhataa dhufee jira. (Interviews made on, April 2021).

The above data describe currently, *gabbara* is decreasing the spouse's affection and mutual respect; this, in turn, results in conflict between them. The husband considers it as his wife is the source of his impoverishment. Likewise, when the bride's family gifts exceed the groom's then the wife also considers her husband to rob her family's property. We are observing when a woman lacks diet to feed her children; supported by her natal parents. Because the spouse finished their money while they give for *gabbara*. Therefore, it results from poverty, disagreement and divorce in the family.

Thus, the data shows as *gabbara* currently affects spouse's marital stability. Sometimes if the husband does not give what he takes from his friends, they will complain to his wife. According to married women discussants it results disagreement among spouses and they are often fighting and even sometimes exposed to divorce. In addition, they are the women who have problems with their children even after they divorced because they have more responsibility to care for the children. In this regard the informants also stated that after divorcing their husbands' women are suffer from various social problems, for instance, they lose the respect that society has given them in various places like when they go to fetch water, market place. Despite the fact all of this is happening to women, court records show that divorce has been on the rise among the study people. According to the lawyers and the court record shows *gabbara* is the first of the reasons for spouses' conflict and divorce nowadays among the young spouses in the study people.

Table1: Divorce rate record

Year E.C.	Recorded Cases	In progress	Solved through marital reconciliation	Divorced	Total
2010	318	-	77	241	318
2011	652	-	144	508	652
2012	401	-	90	311	401
2013 (8 months record)	897	376	81	440	897

Source: Negele Arsi District first instant court (May, 2021)

The above court record shows while there are several factors for marital breakdown, the divorce rate is increasing in the community. Besides, the court records the informants also stated that many women are take divorce as a last solution when they fail to cope up with the problem they face, and move to a place where they do not know each other. Many divorced young women leave their children for their families and migrate to Arab countries. Therefore, this, in turn affects the lives of spouses and their children as it leads to the physical separation spouses and children and all that has been build up during the time together like a family, and material objects.

5.4.The View of the Community on the Rising of Gabbara and the Intervention Initiatives undertaken by different Stakeholders to Address the Problem

According to one expert from Negele Arsi district women children and youth’s affair office, although the community is well aware of the consequences of the gift, they do not want to give up. In addition, he stated that last year when the elders have tried to regulate the kinds and amounts of gifts, the groom’s family began giving cattle and clothes at night because the bride’s family do not want to marry their daughter without taking the usual *gabbara* from the son-in-law or his family. However, currently, the Gadaa leaders, community elders, religious leaders, and other concerned offices and stakeholders are in talks with the community to come up with a binding law that could solve the current influences of the gift on the community. In this regard, the community elders stated that:

Rakkoo haawaasa irra gayaa jiru hiikuudhaaf Abbootiin gadaa fi jaarsoliin biyyaa akka gabbarri gadi bu'u mari'aataa jira. Bu'aa fi miidhaa inni qabu addaan baasnee barsiisaa jirra. waggaa keessaatti yeroo lama akka aanaa Nageellee Arsiitti waajjira aadaa fi turiziimii wajjiin ta'uudhaan gosoota keessaa nama lama lama waamnee asitti leenjii kennaafii jira. Namoonni leenji'anis bakka idirii bakka cidhaa bakka gabaa fi bakka gara garaatti hawaasa barsiisaa jiran. Nutis Yeroo ciidha deemnu Ilmi fuudha gahe uumaan haa fuudhu jedhaa barsiisaa uumaa durii himaa jirra. (Interview made on, April 2021)

The above data describe that, Currently, abbaa Gadaa and community elders are discussing to solve the challenges of *gabbara* in the wider community. We are teaching the community about the challenges and the negative consequences of *gabbara* gift. In collaboration with the Negele Arsi Culture and Tourism office, we are giving awareness creation training to all *gosa* found in the Negele Arsi district. These trainings are given twice a year for two individuals from each *gosa*. Those individuals also teach the community about the challenges and the negative consequences of the gift. Accordingly, when we attend a wedding ceremony, we also teach the community to reduce the number of *gabbara* gifts and to revive our grandfather's culture.

Thus, as the data shows, the changing trend in *gabbara* becoming a serious problem of the study community. Because currently it challenges the daily life of all community members in general and the poor family in particular. Therefore, by understanding its severity those socially respected people and other concerned stakeholders are currently obliged to give a great emphasis to address the issue. In this regard, one of the key informants from the culture and tourism office stated that:

Aadaan gabbaraa akka hin badne raadaa fi jibicha horii afur qofaan akka ta'u, kan nama miidhaa jiru kun ammoo akka hafuu qabu walii galleee ummata barsisuu jalqabnee jirra. Gara duriititti deebi'uun hin danda'amu garuu akka aadan fuudhaa fi heeruma Arsii hin badne akka waajjira aadaa fi tuuriiziimitti abbootii gadaa, maanguddoota biyyaa fi dhimamtoota wajjiin ta'uudhaan aadaa miidhaa qabu hanbisaa, akka addaan hin badne immoo isa gaarii ta'e itti fufsisuuf waliin hojjachuuf mari'ataa jirra. Ilmi hiyyeessaatis akka fuudha hin dhabne, hawaasnis rakkoo keessa akka hin galle gabbara olka'aa kana gadi buusuuf hawaasa barsiisuuf baldhinaan karoorfataa jirra. (Interview on, April 2021)

The above data describes the idea of the culture and tourism office expert; he said that as culture and tourism office we are discussing with abba Gadaa's, community elders, religious leaders, and other stakeholders to reserve customary *gabbara* gifts, and to reduce the existing number of gifts. Thus, we agreed to limit the amount to four heads of cattle and four clothes. Currently, we

are in the process of teaching the community. Even though it's impossible to return to the former and original tradition, as a culture and tourism office, we are strongly working with all stakeholders to teach people, to preserve the good culture, and to eradicate the harmful trends that emerged very recently. In general, as the young man can easily get married and to solve its influences in the community, we are planning to expand awareness creation on the reduction of *gabbara* gifts.

Currently, although there are internal and external factors like globalization, and urbanization, the community elders' efforts to reduce the problem with the concerned stakeholders are commendable. Because it's helpful to protect the indigenous knowledge and culture of the community. In this regard, one of the religious leaders stated that nowadays taking *gabbara* is considered as prestigious and honor in the community. But it's not allowed to ask money or other material more than one can have in Islam doctrine or religion and we are teaching the people not to ask large amount of money as a gift. However, the people don't have much to do with what we are taught rather they are competing to take too many blankets and money in their daughter. But we are still teaching the people and working with the community elders and other stakeholders to reduce *gabbara* gifts.

In general, the cooperation of all concerned stakeholders will help to solve the current influences of *gabbara* by teaching the people about the benefit and effect it has and through making obligatory laws. As the data shows, if a community-centered solution is not taken, the above-mentioned internal and external influences are harming the indigenous culture or marriage gifts of the community and promoting a new trend in the community. Overall, while, change in human life is always inevitable, it is important to critically investigate whether all changes are good or bad to maintain good values of the people. Moreover, the identity and good indigenous knowledge of the people also need to be passed on to future generations.

CHAPTER SIX

6. Summary and Conclusion

6.1. Summary

The purpose of the study was to find out the changing trend in *gabbara* gifts among the Arsi Oromo. From the specific objectives the research set out to describe *gabbara* from historical perspectives, the new trend, its implication on the community and in women's life and marital stability and the key roles played to resolve the problem. I found out that in historical perspectives *gabbara* has various functions and it symbolizes appreciation to the girl's family, a sign of honesty, mutual respect to parents and a sign of honor to the woman. However, currently, it results in several influences on unmarried youths, couples, parents and the community. For instance, it's difficult for unmarried men to get married. This, in turn, has made youths engage in premarital engagement, cohabitation, unwanted pregnancy and abortion; then many young girls pay a lot of money and have an abortion. In addition, those who don't have wealth are denied women of their choice because they cannot afford the expected gifts. Poverty at the younger's aspect may also imply the land or properties they own have to be sold to give the gift. Thus, *gabbara* seems to have lost its original symbolic meaning which is for appreciation and is instead being replaced by a girl's parents seeking to promote their status. In addition, it results in violence among couples and their families and marital instability and divorce in the community and highly affects marriage stability.

In general, the data shows that many women are faces domestic violence; men considered their wife as they are the source of their impoverishment. Besides, the gift is currently one of the reasons for many young women's migration to the Middle East countries. How the influence can be minimized is through revised measures of this practice, community education or awareness creation and stakeholders and cooperation to reduce the influences of *gabbara* in the community.

6.2. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study I made the following conclusions. The findings of the study show that informants think the gift of *gabbara* is important and a cultural norm that shouldn't be abolished, but rather regulated or revised. However, informants also agree that there are several effects related to the gift that affect the lives of youths, couples, their families, and the community. Besides, informants agree that it results in marital instability, poverty, and violence against women. Accordingly, the informants also stated that the community or parents should avoid excessive *gabbara* in order to protect the traditional values of marriage gifts from not to be forgotten.

Generally, *gabbara* is currently causing different challenges like economic, social, and psychological on the study community. It also resulting fear of marriage in most unmarried youths and disagreement between couples, the man and his family-in-law; bride's family-in-law and between the two families. As a result, people are developing dishonoring, disliking, disregarding, and overlooking among them due to the increment of uncontrolled *gabbara* in the community. While the community elders and the concerned stakeholders have recently planned to address the problem.

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Appendix 1: Interview Guides

In-depth interview Guide

Dear Sir/Madam,

The purposes of these questions are to collect information from you about the changing trend in Gabbara gift among the Negele Arsi Oromo. To attain this purpose your honest and actual participation is very important. I am therefore, highly appreciating you for sparing your time for the interview that will takes 40 minutes to 1 hr. Your response will be used solely for academic purpose and all your responses will be kept secret.

1. What do you hear about Gabbara from your father or grandfathers and what types of gifts was given?
2. Do you know the processes undertaken before giving *gabbara*? to whom it was given? Why?
3. What benefits does it has for couples, their families and the community?
4. How do the Arsi Oromo viewed *gabbara* gifts?
5. Can you compare past and present situations related to the types and amounts of *gabbara*?
6. What are the changes and continuities? What are the main reasons for the changes?
7. Do you think that the current *gabbara* challenges the life of spouses, unmarried youths and the community? How?
8. What influence does *gabbara* gift have on women's lives?
9. In your opinion does the current *gabbara* affects the relationship between spouses and their families? How?
10. How do the community view the current *gabbara* gift?
11. What kind of actions taken by the people to address the challenges?

Focus Group Discussion Guide for Married Women

Dear Madam

The purposes of these questions are to collect information from you about the changing trend in *Gabbara* gift among the Negele Arsi Oromo. To attain this purpose your honest and actual participation is very important. I am therefore, highly appreciating you for sparing your time for the interview that will takes 50 minutes to 1 hr. Your response will be used solely for academic purpose and all your responses will be kept secret.

1. What is *gabbara*? And what was given in the past?
2. How the women currently view *gabbara* gifts?
3. Do you remember the process that took place in your marriage? What was given by your husband and your parents as a return?
4. Do you think that, *gabbara* gift challenges spouse's lives? How?
5. Does *gabbara* affect women's lives and marital stability? Why?
6. Have you ever seen young women who left their marriage and went to Arabia?
7. Have you ever seen a husband and wife in your neighborhood who fight because of *gabbara*?
8. From your life experience what will happen to a wife if she does not obey her husband's order? Why?
9. What do you think has to improve regarding *gabbara* gifts?

Focus Group Discussion Guide for Unmarried Women

Dear Ladies

The purposes of these questions are to collect information from you about the changing trend in *Gabbara* gift among the Negele Arsi Oromo. To attain this purpose your honest and actual participation is very important. I am therefore, highly appreciating you for sparing your time for the interview that will takes 50 minutes to 1 hr. Your response will be used solely for academic purpose and all your responses will be kept secret.

1. What do you hear about *gabbara*? And what was given?
2. How the unmarried young women currently view *gabbara* gifts?
3. Do you think that, *gabbara* influence the unmarried women's lives? How?
4. Have you ever seen young women who left their family and went to Arabia? Why?
5. Do you think that, currently *gabbara* results health-related problems? How?
6. What will happen to young women if they marry without their husband giving *gabbara*?
7. Do you know any women migrating to Arabia? Why? How do the community view women who return from Arabia?
8. What do men think about marrying young women who have returned from Arabia?
9. What do you think has to improve regarding *gabbara* gifts?

Focus Group Discussion Guide for Unmarried men

The purposes of these questions are to collect information from you about the changing trend in Gabbara gift among the Negele Arsi Oromo. To attain this purpose your honest and actual participation is very important. I am therefore, highly appreciating you for sparing your time for the interview that will takes 50 minutes to 1 hr. Your response will be used solely for academic purpose and all your responses will be kept secret.

1. What do you hear about *gabbara*? And what was given?
2. How the unmarried young men currently view *gabbara* gifts?
3. Do you think that, *gabbara* gift challenges unmarried men's lives? How?
4. What will happen to young men if they marry without giving *gabbara*?
5. How do young unmarried men get married if they don't have money?
6. Do you thing that *gabbara* will prevent unmarried youths who do not have money from marrying? And what can happen if he can't get married?
7. What do you think has to improve regarding *gabbara* gifts?

Focus Group Discussion Guide for married men and elders

Dear Sir/Madam,

The purposes of these questions are to collect information from you about the changing trend in Gabbara gift among the Negele Arsi Oromo. To attain this purpose your honest and actual participation is very important. I am therefore, highly appreciate you for sparing your time for the interview that will takes 50 minutes to 1 hr. Your response will be used solely for academic purpose and all your responses will be kept secret.

1. What do you hear about Gabbara from your father or grandfathers and what types of gifts was given as a *gabbara* gift in the former time?
2. What was the process before *gabbara* gift given and to whom it was given? Why?
3. What benefits does *gabbara* has for couples and their families?
4. Can you compare past and present situations related to the types and amounts of *gabbara*?
5. Do you think that the current *gabbara* challenges the life of spouse and their children? How?
6. In your opinion does the current *gabbara* affects the relationship between spouses and family-in-law? How?
7. How do people view the current *gabbara* gift?
8. What kind of actions taken by community elders to address the challenges?

Key informants interview Guide

Dear Sir/Madam

The purposes of these questions are to collect information from you about the changing trend in *Gabbara* gift among the Negele Arsi Oromo. To attain this purpose your honest and actual participation is very important. I am therefore, highly appreciate you for sparing your time for the interview that will takes 50 minutes to 1 hr. Your response will be used solely for academic purpose and all your responses will be kept secret.

1. What do you hear or read regarding the former *gabbara* gifts?
2. Does your office conduct any study on the process, type and amounts of the former traditional marriage gifts?
3. Can you compare past and present situations related to the types and amounts of *gabbara* gift?
4. Do you think that is there any changes in *gabbara* gifts? If you think so, what are the main reasons for the changes?
5. Does the current *gabbara* challenges the lives of youths, spouses and their parents? How?
6. Does *gabbara* results any health-related problem on unmarried youths? How?
7. Do you think that *gabbara* gift results any influence on women's lives? How?
8. How does *gabbara* affects the relationship between spouses and the family-in-law?
9. How do people view the current *gabbara* gift?
10. What kind of actions taken by community elders, religious leaders and stakeholders to resolve the problem?