



**COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

**THE ROLES OF TRADITIONAL BELIEFS IN THE  
CONSERVATION OF FOREST: THE CASE OF KAFFA,  
SOUTHWEST ETHIOPIA**

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**JIMMA, ETHIOPIA**

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**JIMMA UNIVERSITY**  
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**A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Social Anthropology for the Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Social Anthropology**

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Gellila Habtemariam, entitled: The Roles of Traditional Beliefs in the Conservation of Forest: the Case of Kaffa, Southwest Ethiopia and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for degree of Master of Arts in Social Anthropology complies with the regulation of the university and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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## **Abbreviations**

ATR	African Traditional Beliefs
CRGE	Climate Resilient Green Economy
CSA	Central Statistical Agency
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IKS	Indigenous Knowledge Systems
NFPA	National Forestry Priority Area
NTFPs	Non-Timber Forest Products
NGO	Non- Governmental Organization
NRM	Natural Resource Management
SNNPRS	Southern Nation, Nationalities of Peoples Regional State
TB	Traditional Beliefs
TFK	Traditional Forest Knowledge

## **Glossary of Local Terms Used**

**Allaamoo-** core messenger or medium of the sky God and human beings

**Angeshoo-** the coldest climatic region

**Coorootoo-**praying

**Dawusho-** the clan name for a community living around the royal grave

**De'e-tateeno-**the kind king

**Doochi-**the father of all spirits in Kaffa

**Eqqi-Naayo-**a common name given to the group of mediums

**Eqqo-**a male shaman who acts as a medium for the spirits of his patrilineal ancestors

**Gafoo-**village

**Geppee-taato-**king of the hill

**Gojeb (Godefo)-**the name of biggest river in Kaffa

**Guddifoo-**milder climate region

**Gumbo-**means a symbol and vehicle of any clan identity

**Gutoo-**cemeteries only belonged to the spiritual leaders of Kaffa

**Iinoo-** mineral water

**Mikkirecho-** advisories or counselors

**Moogo-**cemeteries only belonged to the kings of Kaffa

**Negiretoo-** the local drum

**Shameto-** the local trumpet

**Share- showoo**-sacred forest

**Shosha**-the common place of the royal grave

**Showee-qolloo**-spirit of the earth

**Taato**- king

**Worefoo**- very hot climate region

**Yeeri**- God

## **A Key to Kafinoono Script**

### **A. Vowels (Shemmiibeetina'o)**

A=as in animal

E=as earth

I=as engine

O=as ostrich

U=put

### **B. Consonants (Shemmeebetina'o)**

B=as in /best/

C=as in 'ጭረሰ' in Amharic since it doesn't exist in English

D=as in /day/

F=as in /fence/

G=as in /get/

H= as in /hat/

J=as in /jet/

K= as in /kettle/

L= as in /Lemmon/

M=as in /may/

N=as in /net/

P=as in /pet/

Q=as in /ቀረቅ/ since it doesn't exist in English

R=as in /rest/

S=as in /set/

T= as /test/

W=as /west/

X= as in /ጠጠ/ since it doesn't exist in English

Y=as /yet/

CH=as in /chair

PH=as in /ኢጥሮስ/ since it doesn't exist in English

SH=as in /share/

### **C. Tawushe Qaareena'o (Borrowed consonants)**

This sounds have some language roots like Amharic and English and exemplified as follows:

NY= as /ነሃ/ Amharic root

TS= /ፀሐይ/ Amharic root

V= as in /Varnish/ English root

Z= as in /Zone / English root

ZH= as in /measure/ English root



## Abstract

This study was designed to investigate the role of traditional beliefs and the indigenous intangible ritual practices in forest resource management and conservation among the Kafficho people who live in Southwestern Ethiopia. The study has focused on traditional beliefs in Addiyo and Tello districts. The reason for the selection of the above sites is based on the availability of ritual practices and personal experiences of the researcher. An ethnographic research design was employed in the study. The data were collected through interviews from the purposively selected spiritual leaders, culture and tourism experts and community elders. In addition to this, sacred and preserved forests were observed to collect data. The major findings of the research indicated that the role of the traditional beliefs and ritual practices like Qoollee Deejjoo (thanks giving) and Baaree Qoco (commemorating one's father or grandfather's belief or practice) are ceremonies that performed for giving special thanks to forest spirit . The fact that the above ritual practices are performed in the forest indicates the long history of the society to protect the forest and the surrounding environment. Based on the research, there are changes and challenges in the role of traditional beliefs in relation to forest management. These challenges includes reduction in the number of participants, the declining interest of traditional wisdom, the expansion and spread of Christianity and disempowerment of local cultural practices, clearances of sacred forests for different purposes like agriculture, searching place for settlement in case of high population growth and overgrazing.

However, the capacity of traditional beliefs for forest conservation and environmental protection remain poorly under stood, largely unappreciated and undervalued by policy makers and concerned bodies. By seen the result the study recommends attention should be given by policy makers and concerned bodies for the involvement and contribution of traditional beliefs for forest resource management.

**Key words:** -Qoollee Deejjoo, Ritual practice, Sacred forest

# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction

### 1.1. Background of the Study

Before the introduction of modern forms of natural resource conservation and management, indigenous African communities often developed elaborate resource management systems, so had other local communities throughout the world (Ostrom, 1990).

Forest resources are the fruits of evolution that are developed through the combined influence of physical environment and people, and play important economic, social and cultural roles, particularly in the lives of many local communities (Regassa, 2001).

Much of the bulk of these forest resources exist outside protected areas and beyond active management authorities of conservation programs and projects. Local communities, therefore, are the primary stewards of forest resources. These resources are usually characterized by the local communities' culture and management systems, where cultures materially and spiritually built upon the physical world of the forests. Forests and culture therefore, have been intertwined throughout human history, and just as people have acted upon and altered forests throughout human history, so have forests profoundly influenced human consciousness and culture. Local communities' proper access to forest resources around them and respect to their traditional institutions and systems of management of these resources provides the opportunity for safeguarding the resources sustainability (Regassa, 2001).

Since time immemorial, the practice of ritual sacrifice was held/performed deep in the forest and these forests were sacred places and were kept in fact without any violation among Kafficho people (Orent, 1967: cited in Zegeye, 2017).

“Kafficho believe in all manner of spirits, like the spirits of trees, paths, rivers and water, who animate everything and bring good and bad omen to mankind”. Hence, these communities have designated special sacred forests, which are important as a part of the history and identity of the people. (Lange, 1982 : cited in Bekele, 2010).

In Kaffa, the traditional belief system holds the deep and secret relation of supernatural powers from *Yeeri* “God”. The major tenet/ideology of this traditional religion and belief system lies in the belief that the abode of the *Yeeri* is located on forest, streams, pond, trees, land or anywhere they so desire to live within the community. The God choose his followers through the rites of initiation with *Allaamoo* “a core messenger or medium” that is the mouth piece of the God living among human beings. The God communicates its will and pass message to the people through *Allaamoo*. These beliefs and strategies are passed on to those who become initiated into adulthood in the community during the rites of initiation and based on clan lineage. Most often, it is the men who are always initiated into these community cults or sects which are often enshrined in religious or cultural beliefs and superstitions and enforced by taboos. The taboos and beliefs have legal grounds in the rules and regulations of the communities which are strong enough to make people obey the religious and cultural institutions.

The Kafficho people live in south west Ethiopia have enormous cultural and traditional practices. Among the long life cultures and spiritual traditions of Kafficho people, the traditional religious belief which can be explained through ritual practice is the most popular spiritual and cultural assets of the society that is directly associated with forest resource preservation.

The present paper attempted to render forth the salient aspect of conservation borne out of the taboo system in practice surrounding the sacred natural sites, principally the sacred forests, in some communities of the Kafficho people. It also sketched out the vital roles of beliefs, rituals and taboos in traditional natural resources management and its importance for biodiversity conservation and it also identified the factors affect the development of indigenous knowledge in relation to forest resource management.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Natural resource management issue in developing countries is increasingly mimicking western theories, while the contribution of indigenous cultures and institutions are often overlooked (Appiah, 2007).

Local groups of people manage the land on which they live and the natural resources they were surrounded by for millennia (Nelson, 1998). There existed locally well-informed traditional beliefs that helped in conserving the available natural resources.

Attuquayefio and Gyampoh (2010), stated that, before the advent of modern natural resource conservation methods, traditional societies operated a complex religious and cultural belief systems via norms, myths, taboos, totems and closed seasons to preserve, conserve and manage certain natural resources. So one approach is the use of traditional methods that have helped them to regulate interactions with their natural environment and these belief systems was geared toward protecting and promoting communal wellbeing, rather than individual interests.

The various natural resource management (national and international) policies, programs and strategies have marginalized the involvement of traditional institutions and indigenous knowledge systems. It has become necessary to develop more practicable and sustainable approaches for Natural Resource Management (NRM) have to be pursued if the rapid loss of biological ecosystem and cultural diversity is to be curtailed and natural regeneration is allowed to occur (Emerto, 1999).

Despite all positive attributes, Ethiopia does not benefit the most output from tourism and promotion of traditional beliefs. This is also true for the study area. There are some studies which are conducted in the study area.

Among them some are stated as follows: Almaw (2014), studied ecotourism potential of Kaffa zone southwestern Ethiopia; Implication for biodiversity conservation. He conducted study to magnify the ecosystem potential of the area and its importance for biodiversity conservation and also identify the major factors that affect the development of ecotourism.

Yihenuw (2002), studied on access to forest resources and forest-based livelihoods in Highland Kaffa, Ethiopia: His assessment of communities depends on forest resources and their impact on the climate change and bio diversity.

Theodros (2002), conducted his research on factors affecting the knowledge, attitude and practice of forest dependent Manja community towards forest conservation in Kaffa zone. This study was overcome to assess and explained the major and trend factors that influence the knowledge, attitude and practice of the Manja community towards forest conservation.

The current study thus focuses mainly on those districts not covered by the above besides in the major role of traditional beliefs in forest resource management and the positive contribution for the current climate change and ozone depletion. Still few researches are done in the potential and advantage of traditional beliefs in conserving forest resources but they never reach on solution which used to encourage the action taken by indigenous people. More generally, there is still a paucity of such evidence for developing countries, despite increasing attention in the literature to issues of traditional belief on forest resource management in recent years.

The policies mistakenly formulated for conserving and restoring natural sites whilst ignoring the local people's skills. These issues require a holistic approach to natural resource management. This paper seeks to address this lack of evidence on management and practice of traditional beliefs in natural resource conservation. Therefore, the study tried to fill these gaps by trying to survey the traditional beliefs of Kaffa zone and assess their values from anthropological point of view.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

This research has the following general and specific objectives:

#### **1.3.1 General Objective**

The general objective of this study is to explore the roles of traditional belief for the conservation of forest resources among the Kaffa of southern Ethiopia.

#### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of this study are:-

- To identify the importance and role of traditional beliefs to protect forest.
- To describe the role of women in forest resource management
- To describe the factors that hinder the development of traditional beliefs on forest resource management and conservation

- To discuss the beliefs ,taboos and rituals practices that are associated with conservation of forest

## 1.4 Research Questions

This research addresses the following basic research questions:-

What is the major role of traditional belief in the protection of natural forests?

What is the role of women in the forest management?

What factors hinder the development of traditional beliefs in relation to forest management?

What kind of beliefs, taboos and rituals are performed for the conservation of forest?

## 1.5 Scope of the Study

This research were conducted in Kaffa Zone, South West Ethiopia. Two districts namely Addiyo and Tello were selected for the research. The districts were selected because of the better accessibility of traditional belief system and the existence of highest spiritual leaders who lead the ritual ceremonies exercised in the sacred forest. In addition to this, there are still communities known as <sup>1</sup>*Dawushoo* who take responsibility of protecting the common grave of 18 kings of Kafficho people and the surrounding forest in Tello districts. The study attempted to assess indigenous knowledge potential and its implication for sustainable forest conservation in Kaffa Zone. Traditional belief is a broad topic, including every aspect of it; so it is impossible to cover the whole. Therefore, the study limited to assess the traditional beliefs potential and factors affecting its development and contribution for conservation of forest in Addiyo and Tello districts, Kaffa Zone in South Western Ethiopia.

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<sup>1</sup> The community living around the grave of 18 kings in Tello district. This group of people are responsible to keep the grave not to attack by people as well as by animals and to protect thick forest

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The finding of this study expected to have contribution by showing the positive influence of traditional beliefs in forest conservation of the study area for all concerned bodies and stake holders. In addition to this, the study bridge the gap which existed between the potential and actual knowledge of the communities in relation to biodiversity conservation in the study area. Moreover, the study supported the effective participation and involvement of spiritual belief leaders in the development, operation and monitoring of indigenous knowledge on forest conservation and persuade decision makers and conservation agents to consider indigenous knowledge as an alternative and effective way of biodiversity conservation.

## **1.7 Limitation of the Study**

In order to conduct any study there are limitations. These limitations can be various in origin and nature. The limitations of the study summarized as followed:-

- Lack of well-organized documents about Allaamoo and Dawushoo community members
- Shortage of transportation during data collection. In order to solve the problem the researcher used other means of transportation.

In addition, there were lack of awareness to give sufficient and reliable information related to the process (practice) of spiritual belief to conserve natural resource.

## **1.8 Organization of the Study**

The study organized in five chapters. The first chapter covers background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions and significance of the study, scope and limitation of the research. Chapter two presents the literature review which encompasses definitions of concepts, empirical review of literatures related to traditional beliefs, indigenous knowledge and trends of different countries in relation to natural resource conservation and management. Chapter three describes the study area, methodology and instruments of data collection .Chapter four consisted of data analysis and presentation. Finally the last chapter were consisted of conclusion.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Review of Related Literature**

This chapter consists of review of literatures to help the study to achieve its objective. To do this, literatures reviewed from books, published journals and browsed from the internet. The review focused on the traditional belief systems, origin of African traditional religion, the role of traditional forest knowledge, forest resource base of Ethiopia, the state of traditional natural resources management knowledge and practices in Ethiopia, traditional beliefs in Kaffa, the Kafficho clan leaders role in forest management and introduction of modern religions in Kaffa are presented.

#### **2.1 Traditional Belief Systems**

Since time immemorial, local people have developed a variety of resources management practices and approaches that continue to exist in tropical Africa, Asia, South America and other parts of the world (Appiah-Opoku, 2007). The contributions of indigenous and local belief systems towards a better understanding of natural resources and its sustainable use and management has been documented in the scientific and grey literature in many domains: biodiversity conservation and wildlife management, customary marine resource management, rural development and agroforestry, traditional medicine and health, impact assessment; and natural disaster preparedness and response (IPBES, 2013). It is therefore evident that the role of traditional belief systems in the conservation of a large number of elements of local bio diversity regardless of their use value dates back to creation (Shastri, 2002).

One of such numerous approaches to natural resource conservation and management is the use of indigenous belief systems of taboos and totems. These traditional belief systems are capable of protecting biodiversity species in particular and the environment in general as long as the local communities have an interest in them. Traditional African societies also observe environmental ethics that help in regulating their interactions with the natural environment (Shastri et al., 2002).

African Traditional Religion (ATR) and cultural practices in most parts of African communities are environmentally friendly and sustainable, contributing so much to natural resource sustainability and conservation (International Institute for Environment



and Development (IIED), 1992). In Africa, the traditional belief systems hold the ascription of supernatural powers to objects called *gods* and *goddesses*.

According to Mkenda (2010), reiterate that African traditional religion and belief systems lie in the abode of the gods and goddesses located in rocks, streams, ponds, trees, land or anywhere within the community and respected by the people it governs. Indigenous belief systems including taboos, rituals and totems have played significant roles in the conservation and management of natural resources. He further indicated that, social taboos exist in invariably all cultures in the country, and represent a class of informal institutions, where traditional, religiously governed norms or taboo systems that can define human behavior.

## **2.2. Role of Traditional Forest Knowledge in Forest Management**

Traditional forest knowledge (TFK) is an integral component of a network of linkages and relations supported by an overall framework of signs and meanings. It is often base on long historical experiences and deep insight into the dynamics of forest ecosystems and the behavior and characteristics of animal and plant species that are of special economic, social, cultural and spiritual significance to communities. Strongly rooted in the past this collective knowledge is critical to the survival and future well-being of local communities, and especially, of indigenous people as they try to maintain their distinctive culture identities of their livelihoods and the integrity and health of the forests ecosystem on which they depend. For many developed societies the conservation of traditional knowledge and their relative landscapes supports the economic development of rural areas, tourism, promotion of local products, and the conservation of biodiversity generated by human influence on the landscape, and quality of life of the population (Preface, 2007). Rural areas with a long history of activities that integrate forestry into farming activities have also created a biodiversity that is closely connected to landscape patterns.

### **2.2.1 Traditional Forest Management Approaches and Systems**

The cultural and religious belief system centered on local deities maintaining temple forests, the sacred species, sacred groves and sacred landscape and combination of economical agro-forest system and key stone species in all agro-ecological zones. There exist inter-village and intra-village

arrangements related to the imposition of restrictions on grazing in a particular forest or for a particular period, restriction on cutting and lopping of trees, division of forest or common land for cutting grass. According to Gupta (2006), the maintenance of public rights of way, restrictions on cutting of grass and collection of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) before seed fall, bans on the cutting of tree species and climbers with a religious or social value and the customs among the user groups through informal control over forest-use sanctified by reciprocity and consensus arrangements. The practices to conserve and protect an entire forest or a small woodlot in the name of the village deity is prevalent in villages with perennial water source for common use. (Gupta, 2006)

### **2.3 Forest Resource Base of Ethiopia**

Curry Lindahl (1972) , Sahle (1984), Gebremarkos (1998) and FAO (2003), showed that forests have an important role in maintaining the productivity of the environment; trees provide food for animals, serves as a standing cover to protect the land from wind and water erosion, stabilizing the water cycle, facilitates the process of evaporation and keeps the soil porous. They are also used for construction as well as for tools, furniture, fuel, medicine, grass and herbage, for forage and provide edible fruits. They serve to absorb carbon-dioxide to reduce global warming, give off oxygen and renewing the atmosphere. Plants also serve as source of income by attracting tourists, serve as recreational facilities; prevent lakes and dams from silting; clean, regulate and distribute water resources.

Even though natural resources in Ethiopia have great contribution to development, most of them are highly exposed to degradation Demele (2001) and Gebremarkos (1998:28), stressed that “historical evidences revealed that a few hundred years ago more than 63% of the total land mass of Ethiopia was covered by dense forests but it is not greater than 3% now.”

In relation to resource depletion, EPA (1998), Tarekegn (2001) and FAO (2003), argued that Ethiopians are facing rapid deforestation and land degradation that has been fueled by increase of population which in turn resulted in extensive forest clearing for agricultural use, overgrazing, exploitation of existing forests for fuel wood, fodder and construction materials, setting of fire to create pasture land and expansion of settlements. As a result, there has been a rapid decreasing percentage of the forest cover of the country from 40% in 1900 to 16% in 1954, 8% in 1961, 4% in

1975, 3.2% in 1980 and now it is estimated to be less than 3%. Most scholars agreed that current rate of deforestation is estimated to be 160,000-200,000 hectares per year (Gebremarkos, 1998) and (EPA, 2002) which is extremely high.

According to Dessalegn (2001), state natural resource policy was also responsible for aggravating the process of land degradation. The imperial regime laid claim to all “unutilized” land, land that had no “legal” owners, and all forests, lakes and river systems which ended up with friction between communities and the government. To deny the state rights over a given piece of land, individuals cleared it of vegetation and ploughed it up; large tracts of pasture land, land that was fragile in nature and forest land were changed into cultivable land in the 1950s and 1960s. This alarming rate of deforestation is the major cause of the disappearance of various indigenous wild animals and plants, and it has also brought about adverse effects on the country’s tourism industry, bio-diversity and economy, among others (EPAAE, 2002).

Forest destruction problem studies by Curry-Lindahi (1972) and Demele (2001) cited in Eshetu (2013), described the effects of deforestation as a change of micro/macro climate and in hydrological cycles, causes the disappearance of wild animals, birds and reptiles, affects the natural beauty of an area, accelerates run off and soil erosion, shortage of rain fall, increase in siltation of dams and reservoir, results to increase in carbon dioxide that in turn causes an increase in temperature, causes extinction and loss of economically important indigenous plant and animal species, and land degradation greatly affects agricultural productivity and production. The current government of Ethiopia clearly articulated the seriousness of forest destruction in the Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) document FDRE (2011), and as a solution, reduction of demand for fuel wood by disseminating fuel efficient stoves; increasing afforestation and reforestation schemes; and promoting area closure via rehabilitation of degraded pastureland and farmland are forwarded as a viable strategy. Tree planting activities has a long history in Ethiopia.

During the Derg regime(1974-1991),rapid expansion of large scale and community plantations occurred which resulted in the establishment of large scale plantations mainly for supplying the huge demand for wood products in Ethiopia. For instance, in 1981, per-urban fuel wood plantation projects were launched in Addis Ababa, Nazareth and DebreBerhan and latter in Gondar and Dessie EPA (1998). This is a type of environmental protection paradigm because the plantation scheme was undertaken in response to critical shortage of fuel wood. Environmental protection by its nature Colby (1991), is a defensive or remedial in practice and legalizes the environment as an economic

externality. Rather than showing the ecological impact of forest destruction, more emphasis was given to its economic benefit (source of fuel).

## **2.4 The State of Traditional Natural Resources Management Knowledge and Practices in Ethiopia**

Ethiopia is a home for well over 80 distinct ethno- linguistic groups, of which the majority resides in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (SNNPRS). Many of the groups of people that may be termed as “indigenous” are found in the Region. The different ethnic groups have lived for centuries and institutions relating to the ecosystem of which the primary resources bases for livelihood are the major ones. References to the accumulated repertoire of indigenous knowledge and practices pertaining to the natural resources conservation, agronomical practices, ethno – veterinary medicine, livestock handling, terracing and irrigation, etc in Ethiopia are often made in various sources.

According to the Federal Rural Development Policy and Strategy Document (2002), for example, acknowledge this, stating the need for recording and promoting indigenous agronomic practices. “This indigenous knowledge is not to be lightly regarded,” (p. 39).

Traditional knowledge in soil conservation practices of the various ethnic groups in Ethiopia is also often well recognized. Notable among these is the traditional agronomic irrigation and soil conservation practices of the Konso of south Ethiopia.

Regarding this, Fasil (1993), has this to say:

The highly elaborated system of agricultural production of the Konso represents one of the best examples of how subsistence producers can effectively modify the physical environment and render it more productive. The methods of terracing, irrigation and other technological elements developed by the Konso are probably the most remarkable to be found in the country.

In a country where diverse ethnic groups live in varying agro- ecological zones with multiple subsistent production systems, it can be assumed that there are quite many other times –honored traditional knowledge and practices relating to the environment and natural resource use and management. Needless to mention, the bounteous and diverse nature of Ethiopia’s natural resources is a well-known and often cited fact. Her diverse climatic

conditions, viable topographies, rich fauna and flora, vast cattle, unparalleled water sources, among others, are often mentioned.

However, the current state of natural resources and the way they are managed is often regarded as very disappointing. The country is regarded as one of the most leading poor economies where multiplicity of factors have contributed to the depilation of natural resources and to the near ecological disasters that are taking place (Solomon, 2004).

Despite these well – acclaimed stock of cultural heritages and rich natural resource bases, the Ethiopia peasantry now ekes out their bare existence under “the subsistence crisis” (Fasil,1993).

Among the salient dimensions of this dilemma are the environmental degradation, desertification, soil erosion, deforestation and the depletion of other natural resources. Environmental degradation and resource deteriorations have become key issues in the contemporary environment and society dialogue in Ethiopia. The questions that may be raised in this regard are, “Have the peoples of Ethiopia contributed to the environmental degradation and natural resource deterioration?” "Are there inimical elements in the practices, beliefs and institutions of the peoples of Ethiopia in this regard?" Or, "are the indigenous knowledge, practices and structures of conservation in Ethiopia being disintegrated due to outside intervention such as development projects?" Fuller and adequate answers to these and related questions in Ethiopia may await systematic multi- disciplinary researches. It is, however, assumed that complex interactions of multiplicity of biotic / physical, social- political, cultural and other factors have contributed to the present dismal state of environmental degradation and deterioration of natural resources in Ethiopia. The blame may be shared by all the parties engaged in natural resource uses, including the traditional peoples themselves. Some elements in the traditional, intensive subsistent cultivation of the highlanders and overgrazing of pasture lands among the lowlanders may have practically contributed.

## **2.5 Local Institutions Engaged in Forest Resource Management**

According to Stellmacher (2005), local institutional arrangement can provide the “rules of the game” for human behavior towards forests, both as enabling as well as constraining factors. Furthermore, he argued that local institutions are grouped according to their genesis, upon which community-initiated institutions, governmental initiated institutions and NGO-initiated institutions are distinguished.

Stellmacher and Mollinga (2009), contends that, there are local institutions, both formal and customary/informal/indigenous, having a crucial role in the livelihood of local dwellers. This can be categorized into state-initiated formal institutions and community initiated indigenous institutions that are principally based on the indigenous knowledge and/or long experience of local people. Indigenous institutions are categorized into self-help work organizations groups, council of elders, religious institutions and other customary knowledge of forest conservation and use.

Zewdie (2009), identify various form of formal and informal/indigenous institutions that are directly or indirectly involved in forest conservation as well as other natural resource management activities. There are formal institutions related with forest management that operate at local or higher levels. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Institute of Biodiversity Conservation, Woreda and Keble Administrations, and Oromia Government Forest Supervising Agency are some of the formal organizations operating in forest management or own potential relevance to the coffee forest management. *Qoro*, *abbalagaa*, and *abbabokkuare* heads of the Oromo indigenous institutions existing until the coming of the *Derg* regime. *Tuulla*, *xuxee* and *shaneare* the other territorial-based indigenous institutions that operate in descending chain of command under the *Abba Lagaa*.

### **2.5.1 Demarcation Rule and Forest Resource Management**

The EPRDF government basically retained the NFPA concept by integrating the demarcated sites into the forest categorization concept and the regionalization policy of Forest Proclamation 9/1994. Accordingly, the Forest Proclamation 9/1994 assigned five forest administration categories outlined as ‘state forests’, ‘state protected forests’, ‘regional forests’, ‘regional protected forests’ and ‘private forests’ (Stellmacher ,2006). Furthermore, Stellmacher indicated that after demarcation of forest as a

national forest priority area different management zone are categorized by the government as (core, buffer and transitional zone).

To serve the three functions, a Biosphere Reserve should have an appropriate size: a *conservation function*, to preserve genetic resources, species, ecosystems and landscapes; a *development function*, to foster sustainable economic and human development, and a *logistic support function*, to support demonstration projects, environmental education and training, and research and monitoring related to local, national and global issues of conservation and sustainable development as set out in Article 3 of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (Andinet, 2010).

### **2.5.2 Ownership Right and Forest Resource Management**

As Agrawal and Ostrom (2001) argued, ownership right is an enforceable authority to undertake particular actions in specific domains. The rights of access, withdrawal, management, exclusion and alienation can be separately assigned to different individuals as well as being viewed as a cumulative scale moving from the minimal right of access through possessing full ownership rights.

Ownership right is defined as defacto or dejure based on the nature or sources of the rules and it can be defined as a bundle of right including, access right: the right to enter the defined physical property; withdrawal: the right to obtain the products of resources; management: the right to regulate internal use patterns and transform the resource by making improvement; exclusion: the right to determine who will have an access right, and how that right may be transferred; and alienation: the right to sell or lease either or both of the above collective choice rights (Agrawal and Ostrom, 2001)

According to USAID (2006), report indicate that, ownership rights and the role they play in sustainable natural resource management, good governance and empowerment of poor communities is gaining significant attention in development and environmental programming. The report also shows the due emphasis that given by many literature and practical experience to ownership rights as an important consideration in rural empowerment and sustainable management of land and natural resources. Moreover, development agencies are increasingly recognizing ownership rights as a critical factor determining how land and natural resources are used, managed, and how benefits from these resources are distributed.

Yeraswork (2000), clearly stated, the importance of secure tenure system in the management of land and land related natural resource. He argued that, secure tenure system play a great role in managing the natural resource whereas, insecure tenure system is constrain the adoption of conservation practice by local communities.

### **2.5.3 Local Community Attribute and Forest Resource Management**

As many literature indicated, local communities are important in the process of enforcing and maintaining the rules to manage forest resource that exist in their surroundings. One of the important attribute of the local community is that, it lays conducive ground to protect the forest resources. Cohesiveness, homogeneity and integrity of the community play an important role in the process of managing their forest resources (Yeraswork, 1997).

Community attributes have made crucial contributions to the enforcement and maintenance of the rules constituting the management of the common property forests. These community traits are: Cohesiveness of communities (engendered by history/myth as to the common origin, the existence of venerated community symbols, and fairly small size, homogeneity of communities, in terms of occupation and wealth, insulation from external forces such as commercial interests (Yeraswork, 2001).

According to Agrawal (2007), indicates that, characteristics of groups, among other aspects, relate to size, levels of wealth and income, different types of heterogeneity, power relations among subgroups, and past experience have an impact on the management of commons.

Stellmacher (2006), contends that, attribute of the community especially heterogeneity and group size have a great impact in the forest resource management. Nowadays commonly accepted to perceive appropriators as a heterogeneous entity, with axes of differentiation within each group, and multitude differences which crisscross groups and form sub-groups. Main differences among appropriators occur along dividing lines such as class, origin, age, caste, religion, ethnicity, and gender. Dispartment can be undertaken in two ways, 'horizontal' and 'vertical differentiation'.

As a matter of fact, composition of people using resources from Ethiopian forest is highly diverse in terms of origin, ethnicity, culture and religion. For example, a specific family or political elite may hold privileged positions regarding resource endowments. A particular ethnic clan may hold



relatively more power, and a village elder may have a final say in who is empowered to use a particular forest resource.

Regarding the impact of group size Ostrom (1999), devised three supplementary explanations. First, cost for devising institutions increases with larger groups of appropriators. Second, larger groups enhance ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity, hence reduce homogeneity and thereby complicate shared understanding about resources and their management. Third, larger appropriator groups have more heterogeneous concerns, perceptions and assets.

#### **2.5.4 Forest Land and Forest Resources Attribute**

Forests constitute critical habitat for humanity, providing a range of ecological and environmental services including protection of biodiversity, sequestration of carbon, provisioning of fresh air, renewal of soil fertility, and maintenance of hydrological flows. Rural communities worldwide also depend on forests heavily, as these contribute significantly to their livelihoods, providing basic needs, cash resources, and safety-nets during times of crisis.

Yeraswork (2001), study contends that, attribute of forest resource can be viewed as primarily owing the characteristics of the forest resource and its derived goods and services that helps the adjacent community for different purposes. The characteristics of forest resource indicate, whether forest resources are located on very steep hillsides or river banks, or on well accessible plains may significantly impact on human-forest interaction, as forest land may be virtually inaccessible for ploughing by oxen or for constructing infrastructure, and hence less likely to be deforested.

Regarding this idea Ashenafi and William (2005), study reveals that, the Guassa area has not been brought under crop cultivation or extensive tree plantation, despite the general craving for land in Menz, due primarily to its peculiar physical attribute it lies above the tree line and neither tree nor crop cultivation yield good return. Hence, there is no permanent human settlement in the areas. The community of the area managing this resource as a discrete common property resource and cultivation had to be prohibited.

Distance from the forest is also considered as contributing factor for forest management activities. For example Gunatilake (1998 ), indicated that, Proximity to the forest has an effect on natural resource management. Those who are close to the forest will rely more on natural resource than

those far from it. This means if people travel small distance to collect natural resource products, there is a high tendency of visiting on daily or weekly bases.

The other positive attribute that enhance the protection and maintenance of forest resource are, its derived goods and services. It endowed with different resource that necessary needed by the local community, these are its quality of being a source of abundant forest products and/or services when humans invest time, labor and/or capital input to extract them from forest resources. Products are visible and transportable. Whereas, services tend to be less tangible, such as aesthetic and cultural value of forests, its importance as a flora and fauna habitat, and regulation functions (Stellmacher, 2006).

## **2.6 Traditional Beliefs in Kaffa**

Before the introduction of Christianity and Islam, each Kaffa clan and tribe Gumbo had one or two traditional spirits. This traditional spirit is called Eqqo<sup>2</sup>. The man who hosts this spirit is also known as Allaamoo or medium and referred to as Eqqe-Nayo<sup>3</sup>. This Allaamoo has a special talent of healing sick people by giving traditional medicines and by forecasting the future lack of an individual. There were a few individual Mediums or Allaamos (a plural form of Allaamoo) who had their own fame and popularity from the people for their special achievements (Bekele, 2010). There is no exact evidence and accurate time when this religious practice started.

The traditional religions of the area are highly valuable in making each parcel of forest become under the supervision of a specific clan and used only by that clan (Bekele, 2010). Accordingly, the members of the clan are responsible for the management efforts of the forest. In other words, traditional religions in Kaffa enforce codes to protect the forest from destruction, i.e. from illegal logging, charcoal making or unwise use of the forest by its members and out siders.

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<sup>2</sup> A male shaman who acts as a medium for the spirits of his patrilineal ancestors. A man who inherited his father's spirit (Eqqo) and being selected from a group of brothers by the spirit. He is a holly person who has been discharging his custodian responsibility in the communal Qoollee deejoo of Kafficho people in general.

<sup>3</sup> A common name given to the group of mediums.

### **2.6.1 The Kafficho Clan Leaders Role in Forest Management**

Social organization and stratification plays tremendous in the management of the forest in the Kaffa. Though the Kafficho social organization had been affected by the past regimes. However, it continues to play a pivotal role in natural resource management currently. At the top of social organization there was *Tato* “a King”. Under the king, there are *Mikirecho* “advisories”, *Gepetato*<sup>4</sup> “clan leaders” and individuals appointed under them. These social organizations maintain systematic relation among members (Yeshambel, 2009). The Gepetato has a double role that is politics and religion. The role of Gepetato in religion is organizing and leading annual feast ceremony for blessing the social environment and the people. The Gepetato had the responsibility to purify the land and the people, and allocate it for the new settlers. Furthermore, in that period the Gepetato had been a responsible person to manage the forest and water bodies since it has religious significance (Bekele, 2004).

Generally, the Gepetato protect the forest from destruction for agricultural purpose and over use by the local community. And also, Gepetato prohibits people from cutting down tree, collecting fire wood and keeping beehives. All these show that the Gepetato has a responsibility to manage the forest sustainability.

### **2.6.2 Introduction of Modern Religions in Kaffa**

Apart from the above traditional beliefs, the people of Kaffa follow different religions like Orthodox Christianity, Catholicism, Protestant Christianity and Islam. There is no evidence when and by whom Christianity was introduced into Kaffa. However, Christianity was widely spread into Kaffa soon after the invasion. Due to this, fact the people was forced to accept the new religion, Christianity, and to quit the traditional order and beliefs (Bekele, 2004).

The second religion introduced to Kaffa was Islam. The followers of this religion are called *Negado*, which means traders. The word *Negado* is derived from Amharic term, *Negade*. This clearly shows that the introduction of this religion to Kaffa was through trade. The introduction of this religion was thought to be over a long period, although it was not spread widely until the fall of the kingdom of

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<sup>4</sup> The term *Geppoo* derived simply from “hill” and the owner of the land. He functioned in both secular and sacred capacity. He led annual celebrations that held in the sacred forest and over control the whole resources found in the forest, was thus appropriately entitled “king of the hill”.

Kaffa. The followers of Islam were considered as foreigners and even as enemies of the people and the king of Kaffa. This was because of two factors: one, most of the Muslims came from outside the country and competed with the natives and the second most important factor was that they were suspected to have told the secret of the defense systems to the enemies of Kaffa (Lange, 1982: cited in Bekele, 2010).

In addition to the above religions, Catholicism spread in Kaffa towards the middle the nineteenth century (1850s) by the Italians and Portuguese priests; like Cardinal Massia and Ceasaro respectively. Catholicism was preached during the reign of Galli-Sharochi r.188-1890. This religion has large number of followers second to Orthodox Christianity (Leon R. M, 1906: cited in Bekele, 2010).

According to the explanation given by Bekele (2004), this religion spread more in Kaffa during the Italian occupation (i.e. 1936-1941). Even though this religion contributed for the development of modern health and education.

## **2.7 Theoretical Framework**

This section of the research described the theories that provide the theoretical framework for analyzing the role and systems of traditional beliefs in relation to forest conservation from different theoretical perspectives.

The cultural ecological theory is one of the major theoretical approaches to study the relationship of humans to the environment. It considers how environmental forces influence humans and how human activities affect the biosphere and the Earth itself. The study of the environment's effects on humans was especially prevalent in the 1950s-1970s when Julian Steward founded the anthropological theory of Cultural Ecology. Steward defined Cultural Ecology in his 1955 book, **The Theory of Cultural Change**, as "a heuristic device for understanding the effect of environment upon culture."

Cultural Ecology focuses on how cultural beliefs and practices help human populations adapt to their environments and live within the means of their ecosystem. It contributes to social organization and other human institutions. Cultural Ecology also interprets cultural practices in terms of their long-term role in helping humans adapt to their environment.

First, based on the theory, the Kafficho community through long period of time developed different cultural mechanisms in order to adapt the natural environment. Based on this, the community practiced cultural beliefs like, Qoollee Deejjoo (thanks giving ceremony) and Baaree Qoco (commemorating one's father ritual) to protect the environment and to sustain the ecological equilibrium with the forest.

The Cultural Ecology theory can be used to analyze the distribution of wealth and power in a society, and how that affects behaviors of exchange. The tradition increases prestige and social bonds while meeting the community's subsistence needs.

Cultures interact with both the natural and cultural environment. A culture must first meet the biological needs of its members. Then the cultural needs of its members must be met, accomplished through religion, social regulation, and other mechanisms. The Kafficho community developed the sense of separating and identifying the forest as sacred and untouchable by humans. To do this, the community leaders play an important role by teaching the members of society as the forests are the properties and home of spirits who keep the earth and human creator from evil or bad things.

As the environment (abiotic, biotic, and cultural) changes, humans adapt both biologically and culturally. As all environments are dynamic (even if the changes are small ones), a culture must make constant adjustments just to maintain some sort of equilibrium, and there is a constant interplay between cultural practices and biological adaptations. For instance, a people can be anatomically cold adapted but still wear coats. A variety of cultural practices can mitigate the impact of environmental change and so level environmental differences. Culture chooses from a variety of solutions to various problems, and as some solutions become unavailable, others present themselves. Technological change also will alter the equation, likely increasing the potential set of options available to a culture. (Dobzhansky, 1972)

The other theory explaining the role of traditional beliefs in conservation of forest is symbolic theory. According to Spencer (1996), explain symbols and the processes, such as myth and ritual, by which humans assign meanings to these symbols to address fundamental questions about human social life. Moreover, symbolic theory according to Geertz (1973), humans are in need of symbolic "source of illumination" to orient themselves with respect to the system of meaning that is any

particular culture. It views culture as an independent system of meaning deciphered by interpreting key symbols and rituals.

Here, the Kafficho community performed ritual activities to maintain the peaceful existence with the natural environment. The ritual practices and cultural songs exercised in the thick forest explain the existence sky God in the forest. It was also believed that this forest was the communal home for the earth spirits so disturbing the environment can led to different natural disasters. Generally, for the Kafficho community forest is the symbol of identity and means of life.

On the other hand, Turner (1967), states that symbols initiate social action and are “determinable influences inclining persons and groups to action. Besides, Schneider (1980), states that the connections between cultural symbols and observable events and strove to identify the symbols and meaning that governed the rules of a society.

This research is, therefore, an effort to address different methods of traditional beliefs and their interrelations, the ritual they involve and the role of rituals in conservation of forest, the symbolic meaning of actions performed in relation to conservation. The traditional methods of conserving natural forest among the Kafficho peoples of Southern Ethiopia within the context of the existing theoretical framework.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3.1. Description of the Study Area**

#### **3.1.1. Physical Setting**

Kaffa Zone is located in the South Western part of Ethiopia in between  $6^{\circ} 24'$  to  $7^{\circ} 06'$  to  $7^{\circ} 70'$  North and  $35^{\circ} 69'$  to  $36^{\circ} 78'$  East, some 460 km South West of Addis Ababa. Kaffa zone is found in Southern Nation Nationality and peoples Government and lies between  $6^{\circ} 24'$  -  $8^{\circ} 13'$  North latitude and  $35^{\circ} 30'$  -  $36^{\circ} 46'$  East longitude. The total area of the zone is 10.636 Skm<sup>2</sup> which accounts 7% of the entire area of the region. It shares boundary with Oromia region in the North, North East and North West direction. In the East and South East with Konta special district. In the South it shares boundary with South Omo Zone .In South West part boarded by Bench Maji zone.

Administratively Kaffa zone is divided into 12 districts and 2 city administration, namely Sayilem, Gesha, Gewata, Gimbo, Addiyo, Tello, Chena, Decha, Goba, Cheta, ShishoInde, Bita, Bonga and Wacha city administration.

#### **3.1.2 Topography and Soil**

The different relief features of the zone are the results of the geological episodes of the tertiary period and the subsequent geomorphic processes. The relief of Kaffa is generally characterized by a highly dissected rugged highland in northern and central majority and undulating lowlands in Southern part. In the Zone, altitude generally varies from less than 500 m.a.s.l. in the undulating plains of the south such as Decha district (lowest 500 m.a.s.l. near Omo River) and to about 3000 m.a.s.l. in the highlands of Addiyo and Tello district (peak 3348 m.a.s.l. at amount Shetra).

The soil sample produced by WBISPP (2004), shows that the dominating soil unit in the study area is Dystric Nitosol (ND), Addiyo, South Western part of Tello and North and North Western part of Gewata districts are dominated by Orthic Acrisols (Ao). Eutric Fluvisols (Je), Chromic Luvisols (Lc), Chromic Vretisols (VC) and Pellic Vertisols (VP) are also found within a certain extent.

### **3.1.3 Climate**

Three traditional agro-ecological Zones, *K'olla*, *Woynadega* and *Dega* (cool humid), can be recognized in Kaffa. According to the modern agro-ecological classification scheme (MOA, 2000), Kaffa Zone belongs to cool sub-humid mid highlands sub-zone. The local classification corresponds to that customarily used at the national level in that '*Angesho*' (the coldest area in Kaffa) is equivalent to *Dega*, this area is suitable for cattle breeding and particularly for sheep breeding and also provides very important sources for the collection of honey. Moreover, wheat, barley, *oat*, beans, peas and false banana, outto and it is also called *Ensete* in Amharic are cultivated under this hospitable climatic condition. This area is the most populated because of its healthy climate. '*Worefo*' to *K'olla* is a climatic region found in the lowland area. The climate in this area is very hot and is the hottest part of Kaffa. Here, maize, sorghum, millet and teff, are cultivated. And '*Guddifoo*' to *Woynadega* is a milder climate region, is found in the high land area. The temperature and other properties make this area suitable to grow crops like maize, barley, teff and false banana.

### **Rainfall**

The Kaffa highlands are part of the Southwest Ethiopian highlands which receive the highest amount of rainfall in Ethiopia. According to the meteorological data obtained from Bonga the annual rainfall in the central part of Kaffa highlands is between 1300-2000 mm.

As to Ayele (2011), the number of rainy days ranges between 150-200 days. Despite some cyclic fluctuations, the inter-annual trends of rainfall during the past 20 years didn't show significant changes. Although all months of the year receive significant amount of rain, the rainfall in Kaffa area is uni-modal pattern where the largest amount of rain occurs between May and September.

### **Temperature**

The mean monthly temperature of the area ranges between 18°C - 20° c. The warmest months are February, March and April while temperature drop during the peak rainy months due to the effect of cloud cover. This climatic condition is very ideal condition for the growth of coffee.



## **Drainage**

Kaffa is endowed with rivers. One of these major rivers is Gojeb (the biggest river in Kaffa). The main tributary of the Gibe is the Gojeb (Goddefo) and its outlet is Gesha flows from the North toward the North-Eastern part of the zone to join Gibe River and form the Omo River. There are also other rivers such as Woshi, Gumi, Gicha, Addiyo and Beko that flows toward Omo and Gilo Rivers.

### **3.1.4. Vegetation**

Kaffa is one of the most densely forested areas in the country. In the thick forest of the area there are many species of vegetation. Vegetation is one of the main sources supporting the needs of the Kaffa people. In fact, the people in each gaffo (village) have consciously protected and maintained it. The peoples used vegetation for variety of purposes like construction, food, medicines, fuel, animal shelter and moreover, for keeping the balance of nature.

### **3.1.5 Geology**

The different relief features of the zone are the results of the geological episodes of the tertiary period and the subsequent geomorphic processes. The relief of Kaffa is generally characterized by highly dissected rugged highlands in Northern and central majority and undulating lowlands in Southern part.

### **3.1.6 Socio-cultural aspects**

#### **Demographic Characteristics**

According to the summary and statistical report of population and housing census produced by the Central Statistical Agency (CSA, 2007), the population of Kaffa was more than 1.2 million. Of this total 812,387 or 92.3 percent are living in the rural areas, while the remaining 67,864 or 7.3 percent are dwelling in urban areas. According to the same source the female to male proportion was 50.64 to 49.36 percent.

## **Language**

The common language in Kaffa is known as kafinoono, but the Kafficho who are bordering other zones speak both kafinoono and other dialects like Bench, Dawro, Konta, Oromigna, Nao, Chara and others respectively. The language of Kaffa and Sheka are designated by other neighboring peoples as the Gomara language. Gomara is designated not only to Kaffa and Sheka but also to Bosha and Hinnaro by the Bench and She (Se) peoples. (Lange 1982: cited in Bekele, 2010). The Shuro or the Menit call the Kaffa people as Golach, which means people that cannot be pushed a side. The above Gomara, Anfillo and Shinasha language are grouped under the Gongga language group. The Gongga language group is referred to different writers as Kefoid.

## **Ethnic group**

According to the statistical information collected from Kaffa zone Finance and Economic Development Office there are 20 ethnic groups living in the zone and the ethnic composition shows that Kaffa, Amhara, Sheka, and Bench accounts for 71.8%, 6.86%, 6.36% and 5.23% respectively. The Dawero, Sheko, Chara, Nao, Me'en, and Mezengir ethnic groups and others share the remaining small proportion in the area.

### **3.1.7 Economic Characteristics**

Kaffa zone has significantly been dominated by sedentary agriculture, although there are still small pockets of areas adjacent to some of the forests where slash and burn or shifting cultivation is practiced (Bekele, 2010). The economy of Kaffa was based on land (agriculture) and trade. Traditionally the land was said to be the property of the King. The peasants cultivated different crops including cash crops like coffee and spices. The most expensive type of spice which the people collected from forests is cardamom, wild-pepper and others.

## **3.2 The Research Methodology**

According to Kitchen and Tate (2000), research methodology means a coherent set of rules and procedures that are used to explore a problem within the framework of philosophical approaches. Besides, Mikkelson (2005), also argues that a research methodology includes the tools and techniques of data gathering and analysis. In the sub sections that follow, I discussed in detail about

research approach, research design, method of data collection, sample procedure, data collection procedure, method of data analysis and ethical consideration of the proposal.

### **3.2.1. Research Approach and Design**

There are two types of research methodologies in any research: these are qualitative and quantitative. Nevertheless, for this study, I employed qualitative research method. In undertaking of this research, ethnographic research design would be applied mainly in the form of open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews for the purpose of data collection.

According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), qualitative methodology is a typical research approach which enables to come up with data that cannot easily produced by statistical procedures or other means of quantification. It is also the means for exploring and understanding the meanings individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problems (Creswell, 2009). The need of choosing qualitative approach is to study things in their natural setting, interpret phenomena and getting in touch with everyday social events (Lincoln, 2000).

Besides, qualitative research methods are praised for exploring people's life in a detail and enriched manner (Silverman and Marvasti, 2008). Furthermore, qualitative research is preferred to collect data about human life realities, experiences, behavior, emotion and feeling, organizational function, social movement, cultural phenomena and their interaction with nature (Straus and Corbin, 1998). Therefore, the method that I employed in this research is qualitative approach to explore the role of traditional beliefs in conservation of forest in the study area.

As stated above, this study were designed to be ethnographic research. The reason for using such an ethnographic method is that the topic needs in-depth exploration and detailed view on cultural lens to the study of people's lives within their communities (Hammersley, 1995). This study explores the role of traditional beliefs in conservation of forest in Kafficho people of Southern Ethiopia.

As Kruger (2006), explained in purposive sampling, the researchers select a sample with a purpose in mind. Usually there are one or more specific pre-defined groups the researcher is seeking. Hence, the Addiyo and Tello districts has been selected based on my prior work experience in the area.

In this case, I observed valuable traditional belief assets of the communities in the area of forest conservation that interested me to further explore their experiences. Since this study dedicated itself towards understanding the issue at community level, it is not worth to stick on a single district.

### **3.3 Method of Data Collection**

In order to get the required data for successful completion of this study the following methods of data collection was used:

#### **3.3.1 Key Informant Interview**

Key informant interview (KII) was also conducted to collect qualitative data. The purpose of key informant interview is to learn about people's view on the topic of interest, to learn their terminology, and judgments and to understand their perceptions and experiences (kikwawila study Group , 1994). Key informant interview (KII) helps the researcher to gather sufficient information about the issue under study and in sharing the experiences of the people. Informants for in-depth interviews were selected purposively based on criteria such as their good ability in oral tradition, occupation custodian responsibility in the process of conservation of forest in the form of traditional beliefs. Thus, elders of the community, higher experts in culture has been used as sources of information. Therefore, in order to get relevant data on past events and circumstances and even on the current reality, I conducted key informant interview with 6 knowledgeable individuals. In order to get sufficient information from key informants I promised to keep the interview confidentially which means except me no one hear their voice. So I analyze their voice only by words. Hence, this study has employed this method to supplement the findings obtained through other means.

#### **3.3.2 Observation**

The other additional method I employed in this research is observation. Using observation in combination with other qualitative methods such as interview and FGD is an integral part of the research process which helps and enables the researcher to facilitate and develop positive relationship among key informants and stakeholders whose assistance and approval are needed for the study to become reality. Data gathered through observation is also valuable in determining whom to recruit as an informant for the study and how best to recruit them (Mack, 2005).

Observation enables researchers to be open-ended and inductive, to see things that might otherwise be unconsciously missing, to discover things that participants might not freely talk about in interview situations, to move beyond perception based data (e.g. opinions in interviews) and to

access personal knowledge (Patton,1990). Moreover, observation enables the researcher to gather data on the physical setting (the physical environment including forests) (Morrison, 1993) and their interaction between human beings and their physical environment.

In the process of data collection, the information obtained through interviews led me to the observation of sacred forest sites for more clarification and understanding.

Therefore, in order to get reliable data for the successful accomplishment of the research, observation was another major method of data gathering system to get valuable information. Because what peoples say and do may sometimes contradict with each other. Thus, direct observation was the best solution. By using this method, the researcher tried to meet and interact with residents who live around the sites and able to observe the attraction sites critically. Besides, during the process of forest conservation, the researcher observed how indigenous mechanisms play role in conservation and sustainable use of forest based on their customs, traditions and worldview of the people under study.

### **3.3.3 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)**

On some specific issues different people may have different concerns. Thus, to look at concerns of different individuals and even to explore their level of understanding on some issue the researchers used FGD as another method of collecting data for this study. There are several reasons, according to Bryman (2004), for using focus group discussion as a data collection tool. Among other things conducting an FGD help the researcher to develop an understanding about why people think the way they do, members of the focus group can bring forward ideas and furthermore the interactions found in group dynamics are closer to the real life process of “sense making” and acquiring understanding. Focus group discussion has been also used to triangulate the reliability and validity of the data collected by other methods. The main reason for using the focus group discussion is to gain understanding on the respondents’ attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions, (Camic and Yardley , 2003: cited in Yewubineh,2016).

Therefore, considering the advantage of conducting FGD and the time given for completing the research, two focus group discussion sessions was conducted with various categories of informants with the aim of accessing different views about the role of traditional beliefs in conservation of

forest. In this study the member of focus group discussants were selected from local community who participate in different social group activities including men, women and elders. They categorized based on their homogeneity to make them free to feel their ideas without any frustration.

### **3.4. Secondary Data Source**

The secondary source of data collected from different secondary data sources such as:-, various registers and publications like books, journals, research reports, papers, report documents, brochures and newspapers, internet materials and annual magazine of the sector which is used to supplement the information gathered from many sources. Additionally Kaffa Zone, Addiyo and Tello Woreda Culture, Tourism and Sport Bureaus and Kafficho Culture Counseling Sector provided information for the study.

### **3.5 Method of Data Analysis**

In order to examine, explain and analyze the cultural values of the people in the study area, the researcher administered thematic data analysis method. After collecting the necessary data through the help of the above data collection tools, the next task that needs to be done was the categorizing, combining, synthesizing, and thereby analyzing of the collected data. Before the actual analysis of the data, the collected data was sorted and categorized in accordance to its source and type. The data obtained through interview were transcribed and translated from *Kaffinoo* into English. The data obtained through observations and those jotted down in the field notes were reorganized and some themes were identified. For the purpose of clarity and convenience some selected data was collected by each data collection technique was transcribed, compiled and further elaborated into meaningful and patterned information soon after the completion of that particular data collection session.

### **3.6. Ethical Consideration**

Yeraswork (1997), has clearly pointed out that “research must be regulated by ethical norms and values”, the researcher has been directed by the following obligatory ethical guidelines while collecting data from the sample of survey respondents and in-depth interviewees.

- All information was collected from respondents and key informants with their consent and willingness
- All information obtained from the sources was kept and treated confidentially
- The data were analyzed and interpreted without naming any of the respondents or informants
- Limitations and failures of the study were honestly explained
- The different assumptions and theories that were utilized from other sources (books, journals and research reports) were properly cited and acknowledge.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Data Analysis and Presentation

#### 4.1.1. The Traditional Beliefs and Religions of Kaffa

The Kafficho people believed in different traditions and beliefs. Like the ancient Greeks and Romans, all spirits in Kaffa have a father or king. So the father of all spirits in Kaffa was “Dochi” or ‘De'i- Taateeno”. “De'e-Tateeno” means the kind king or the king god. In this aspect the host Dochi is also the king of all Allaamoo in Kaffa. This Dochi-nayo is known by the people of Kaffa as “Ibedechino/Hibedechino or Ibede –Godeno. There are a few individual mediums Allaamoo (plural form of Allaamoo is Alamos or allaameyaho) who had their own fame and popularity from the people for their special achievements.

**Table 1: Each Spirits, “ekko” and their names**

No	Special Name of Spirit	Location of Area
1	Damochechi	Found around Channa locality
2	Yaferochi	Found around Sharada and Addiyo
3	Wogidochi	Found around Sharada and Addiyo
4	Asheellochi	In many areas of Kaffa
5	Gaara- maanji or Gaara-maanjoochi (famous among Bench )	Found around Nao, Meinit and Tsara people
6	Dochi or De'e-taateeno	Famous among the people of the whole of Kaffa

Source:-Bekele W/Mariam /2010:80/

Each spirit or ekko/hekkoo belonged only to a certain clan members. Of course, there are repetitions of spirit names that can be identified by their locality names. In other words there are synonyms of spirits easily identified by their areas. The following table explain the names of spirits and their hosts.



**Table 2: The name of the spirits and their host clan**

No	The Name of Spirits	Host Clan Names
1.	Dochi or De'e-Taateeno	Dugo
2	Yaferochi	Yahilo
3	Gomerochi or Kaworochi	Matto
4	Gaara-maanjoochi	Amo
5	Mashochi	Bala Hinbaro
6	Bullee Gayochi	Wacha Hinbaro
7	Sheka Asheellochi	Sheka Gado,etc

Source:-Bekele W/Mariam /2010:81/

#### **4.1.2. The Origin and Early History of Dugo Clan**

According to Lange, the Dugo clans had played a significant role in the establishment and in the strengthening the kingdom of Kaffa. The Dugo clans who were in Adio Worofe-Showo, crossed the Adio River and settled in North East of Sharada district/ibid: 195/Minjo and Dugo believed to be sons of the same ancestors. The Minjos were the political leaders since the 14<sup>th</sup> century while the Dugos were the spiritual leaders of the kingdom. These clans supported each other in strengthening their power.

Nevertheless, the *Minjo* clans ruled until 1897, but the Dugos, spiritual leadership continued up to the 1974. After the interval of seventeen years the Dugo clan member called Agarasho Imamo holds the spiritual leadership for several times and transferred to Hibedagoda Abera Imamo.

According to my informants the *Dugo* spiritual leaders had created good stability in the kingdom of Kaffa; they first meet in the time of the new year of Kafficho people. The king from the palace moved to Adio, Shaka in order to give gifts to the Allaamoo and gain future blessing from him. Until the arrival of the king Hibeda stayed at home and it has been tradition that the approach of the Kaffa king to Shaka, the Centre of the *Dochi-nayo* was announced through beating of drums (*Negaretto*) and the blowing of trumpets (*Shametto*). It was a traditional rule that the *Dochi-nayo* /host of the spirit/ went down to the Adio river or to welcome his overload ship and both wash their hands in

order to refuse bad things as well as forecasting the New Year to bring good for the community and the whole nation.

They say “*Natooch natooch no kuxaaye,*

*No showoo diggeba, maccoo iiwoo muccaaya,*

*No goyaa aafeba, no geendaa eeya,*

*No bushishoo dicaa,wodiba*

*Taatoon nayoona shuneba*

*Amihoonaa aaboona tatoona yeeri nooch imba*

*No yesho kuxaaya*

*No showoon Yeeri diiriba” .....*

Meaning we all stay well from year to year, our country and community be secured, we get excess agricultural product ,the kids stay alive , the leader and community stay well, rain as well as sun being appropriate and our integration and unity stay for the future ,finally God bless our country.



**Figure 4.1 Current spiritual leader (Photo by Researcher)**

### **4.1.3. Social Organization and Stratification of Kaffa**

The old lines of divisions between Kaffa social groups were such as: - Slave-master, noble-commons and peasant. The division of the society before the conquest of Kaffa was based on the professions, descent and status. The society of Kaffa according to Bieber and evidenced by my informants was divided the race of Kaffa (Kaffi Yaro) into nine on the bases of “descent, language, beliefs and physical appearance”. The races of Kaffa were:

- Gonga or Kafficho
- She or ‘Se
- Na'o
- Naggaadoo
- Manjo
- Hinnaa or Enarya
- Gongecho
- Guraabboo
- Dajjewoo

On the other hand, the social structure of Kaffa divided into three on the basis of religious criteria. This are:-

- Kaffa Muslims as Naggaadoo
- Kaffa Christians as Amaaroo
- The rest of the people as “Gonga” and caste members

### **The Gumbo Institution**

In early ages particularly, before 1897, the society of Kaffa was divided or grouped into integrative complex known as “Gumbo<sup>5</sup>”. All the Kaffa clans whether they were noble or serf were put or grouped into Gumbo. Each clan used this term “gumbo” as an “expression of surprise or triumph”. Aakki Naayo<sup>6</sup> or something similar, it could be in the time of killing an enemy warrior or scoring in

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<sup>5</sup> Simply means a symbol and vehicle of any clan identity. In other words Gumbo is referred to as “walking stick”. The collective name given for different group of clans or an identical name for clans from the same descent

<sup>6</sup> The word “Naayo” simply means “friend” or “colleague” but this term differs with expression, ‘Aki Nayyo’ for example means me, the son of Aki clan, or me, the son or descendent of Aakki Gumbo (clan).

*Gannoo* meaning the Christmas game. In short, a person calls his Gumbo or the name of his clan identity, not only in times of triumph but also in times of losing. I consider this term, Gumbo in a broad sense as a “clan” because in Kaffa, under each Gumbo there are more than thirty clans. The people of one Gumbo (clan) were also called “Ikke ginde asho” it means “the people of the same root” or “Ikeshiijo” this also means “people of the same birth”. (Lange, 1982: cited in Bekele, 2010) and Hinbaro clan elder and member). In each Gumbo there are different clans (Yaroo or tommo). According to Lange, who came recently, and studied the history of Kaffa and other Gongga people, identified over two hundred clans, Yaroo or Tommo. The concept of Lange on Gumbo was observed as follows;

“...A Gumbo was a group of territorially based, land owning clans of common descent. Their associative serf clans coalescing as an operating group in times of battle...” (Lange 1982: cited in Bekele, 2010).

On the basis of ownership and occupation in one of the four strata:

1. The clan of great people, *Ooge Ashi Yaroo* ( these clans were land and slave owning classes)
2. Clans of good people , *De'e Ashi Yaroo*
3. Simple are referred to as thin people, *Sharaare Ashi Yaroo*
4. Clans of bad people *Gonde Ashi Yaroo*, the occupational casts the *Manjas* and slaves were included in this group (Manjo is for male and Manjeche for female).

In Kaffa traditions, when a woman is married she would automatically be called by her father’s clan. For instance, if a woman from Gado clan is married to a certain person; she would be called *Genne Gadeche* and if she is from Minjo clan she would be called *Genne Minjeche* and so on. Whatever the condition is she would not be called by her former or by her first name. On the other hand, if there are identical male names in the village, the only way to differentiate these persons is by putting their clan names. Such traditions are still observed in Kaffa localities.

#### 4.1.4. The Political Structure of Kaffa

Kaffa before its incorporation into the Ethiopian central authority in 1897, was identified as an independent kingdom. The main factors influencing Kaffa's survival as an independent state for many centuries were many and include the following points. Its unique defense system, political structure and its economic power that is its control of the trade and trade routes in all directions linking the center of Kaffa , Bonga to the north east, the north west and to the east coast of Ethiopia.

According to the explanations of (Lange, 1982: cited in Bekele 2010), the political structure of Kaffa was very unique and had set an example to Africa, south of the Sahara. When the political structure of Kaffa is compared with others, one can see how the structure was unique and strong. For instance, in Kaffa the ruling class was divided into several parts and had seven ministerial cabinets assigned in order to run the political as well as other related issues. So it was believed to have been founded in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century during the reign of **Bongi Tato, Bongi (1565-1605)**.

Kaffa also established the following political structure. The kingdom of Kaffa from its foundation was led by hierarchical ruling bodies, the king at the top and parallel to him was, the state councilors, the *Mikerecho* and others came or followed them down to the bottom with the division of powers. The administrative body was headed by the king and by the *Mikerecho*.

**Table3: The state councilors (Mikerecho)**

No	Title	Position
1	Gujje-rasho (Guche- rasho)	Prime minister
2	Kateme-raasho	War minister
3	Bunde-raasho	The protocol head of the court
4	Shode- raasho	The head of security
5	Arche-raasho	Promotion minister
6	Adi-raasho (Ade-raasho)	The head of construction
7	Awaa-raasho	The herald of the king (Mouth of the king)

#### **4.1.5. The *Dochi –Naayo* (host of the spirit) Loss of Dignity**

According to my informants, it has been tradition that the approach of the Kaffa king to Shaka (the Centre of Dochi-Nayo) was announced through beating of drums (*Negartto*) and the blowing of trumpets (*Shametto*). It was a traditional rule that the Dochi-nayo (host of the spirit) went down to the Adio River to receive or to welcome his overlord ship. But during the reign of *Aadiyo Kamo* r.1843-1868, the tradition of welcoming the king was violated. The Dochi-nayo of this period was misguided by his councilors.

The councilors told the Dochi-nayo.....

“Kafi tateeno baaree qoccooch (Deejjooch) Shekka beddaahaa waree  
diree wottebonaan akka addiyi acooch kindiyoone...”

Meaning that “if the king of Kaffa is coming for ritual services to your palace, why should he go down to the Adio River to welcome him? So the Dochi-nayo was convinced by his councilors and simply waited for the approach of the king inside his compound. The Kaffa king (*Aadiyoo*) Kamo who signaled his approach, waited for a while and continued to the court of the Dochi-nayo. The Dochi-nayo welcomed his king at his gate but the reception being such unusual and was very cool. The king Kamo was anger for the unusual reception, returned home after the ritual services to the Dochi Spirit. Then the king held meeting with his state counsillers (*Mikkirecho*). They decided the Dochi-nayo was to be exiled. However very soon after the exile of the Dochi-nayo, *Aadiyo Kamo* declared that he was the host of Dochi spirit.

My informants clearly told me the oral history of immigration of Dochi-nayo to the neighboring Bench Maji region through his journey he met a person who is building a house and told him the history of his exile from Kaffa and lived there for several times and died. So the exile of the Dochi – nayo and Kamo’s hostage of the spirit were evidenced by both writers and by the informants. *Aadiyo Kamo* became both secular and spiritual leader of his people. (Amnon Orent 1969).

After 1897, the grandson of exiled *Allaamoo* called *Arito* or *Alito* went back to Kaffa after downfall of the kingdom. He was not willing to collect the gifts from peoples to himself. After the death of *Arito Hibeda Goda Wudi Arito* (*Alito*) became the new host of the Dochi and collected many items of gifts both in cash and in-kind. He did not only perform old traditions of spiritual rites, but participated in the political affairs and other activities of the Ethiopian Empire.

## 4.2 The Role of Traditional Belief Systems in Forest Resource Management

The forest management based on long historical experiences of traditional beliefs and improved by rural communities over the decades of times, have contributed significantly to the wellbeing of local communities and to maintain their distinctive cultural identities of their livelihoods that was the forest they depend.

According to the explanation given by Preface (2007), for many developed societies, the conservation of traditional knowledge and their relative landscapes supports the economic development of rural areas, tourism, promotion of local products, and the conservation of biodiversity generated by human influence on the landscape, and quality of life of the population. So, rural areas with a long history of activities that integrated forest into the farming activities does not affect the ecological patterns and closely connected into the landscapes that was fashioned by traditional practices often shown a high level of habitat diversity due to different management form which introduced over the years to develop scientific and social functions.

According to my informants, the existence of traditional beliefs more contributed to the imposition of restrictions on grazing in a particular forest, restrictions on cutting and lopping of trees, restriction on division of forest or common land for farming activities and cutting grass. The values and respect people attach mostly to their natural environment and especially the forest land emanates from combinations of these age- old traditional religious beliefs in forest spirits. This close attachment to nature might be attributed to their belief in the interaction of the *Yeeri* (Sky God) and *Showee Qoolloo* (the earth god). It is also indicated that the local peoples aware of protecting forest for the maintenance and peaceful existence of life and avoid doing harms to the natural environment and sacred forests for they traditionally believed to be the domains of their land inhabited by *Qoolloo*.

The data from group interview indicated that the Kafficho people consider and perceive the natural and sacred forest as part of their main symbol of identity. Thanks to the traditional beliefs and rituals some of the sacred forest found in the study area probably one of remaining indigenous forests present in Kaffa zone.

### 4.3 *Share-Showo* (Sacred forest)

In this thick forest areas people are not traditionally allowed to enter and cut down trees. Under this theme, the informants indicated that cultural practices (beliefs, taboos, myths, and, soon) were the traditional methods that have been used to preserve the forests, which belonged to the communities. Forests are considered as the most valuable aspects of the society through their cultural, economic and ecological importance. These thick forests mainly conserved for different religious and cultural practices and ritual sacrifices are conducted during famine, drought, pandemic disease outbreaks, unexpected disasters...etc. So, people gather under the shade of sacred forest or selected trees to pray to God. The trees in forests, especially large trees are considered to have spiritual powers and believed as umbrella for the community that protects them from natural and man-made calamity. My informant explained the following about this thick forest.

*“Ebi share-showo eqqoona bari-bare maraakeena’och kashee xaa’oone. Boonoshiyoo Yeeriwaane woochon maccooch beshiiheete. Ubbee maccoo iiwoona bi beyemmooch, no showoo diggemmooch, beddaahaa coorootiyeete. Mixon, xaqqoon, aaconaa bari-bare kashechi mooyina’o Yeeri halleena’one. Showee indee tunemmoona Yeeri wotta nihoone. Gijjee shijjooch ,mayooch, beeyemmi kexoonaa iiwoon no danaabeeti hallee gaannoocheniye. Ebich, ebi hallee gaannoon shiimoonaa qopphii yechi shiijjerooch beshiyoo qawihe. Ikki-ikke mixina’o, xaqqeena’o, kubbi cooxina’onaa aachi gogginoona diireetina’one geta gibeenebeeti qoodooch kupphiita quyoonaa shiimo qaawihe. Ashi bushee beemooch gacciibeeti maayo,michi aafu,beemi kexo aaconaa biiyooch attemmi becheena’o daneebeeti xaa’oone.”* (Source: An elder from Dawushoo community)

This sacred forest is the part of life for the (spiritual) ancestors and other gods live within them and communicate and send



message to us through them with the help of soothsayers and earth priests who are their protectors for good health, high crop yields and peaceful co-existence of the whole eco-system. The earth that consists of trees, rocks, water bodies, and all the things that it holds is considered "life" of the God Almighty. The earth is the mother and God the father. Livelihood - Production of goods and all the basic needs of human being like food, shelter and health come from the natural resources hence the need to protect and conserve them for future generations. Certain places with trees, rocks, and wildlife and water bodies are considered sacred and needs to be protected. Every basic needs like food, fruits, leaves, shelter- wood, earth, stones, water and health-roots, leaves, bark of trees and grasses are used as the sources of herbal medicine are existed in this sacred forest.

This is confirmed by their philosophy of life is aimed at the eternity of all objects, both animate and inanimate. Their collective natural resource knowledge and ethics are expressed in terms of religious beliefs and a range of sacred and cultural practices. For instance, the belief that lesser gods or spirits dwell in such natural resources as trees, hills, rocks and certain animals is equivalent to attaching intrinsic value to all objects. Contrary, indigenous institutions are rarely involved in plans and policies of development that are formulated most importantly in natural resource management.





**Figure 4.2. The Sacred Forests /Share Showo (Photo by researcher)**

Under these theme informants noted that protecting to any sacred forests in Kafficho communities is governed by strict customs, which include the practice of rituals and sacrifices. These practices could protect forest biodiversity, certify existing forests, and prevent people from overexploiting resources, resulting in better conservation of their forests. Another example of indigenous peoples' practices is the use of beliefs in wild lives for managing the natural resources and conserving flora and fauna by the community. They believe that killing wildlife's for food would bring a negative impact to their well-being. They also believe that hunting of the animals would prompt bad luck for the community like drought, famine, unconditional rain and sun and soon. Because, it is believed that sky God permit forest as the main shelter for this wild animals.

#### 4.4. The Cemeteries of the Kaffa Kings (Moogo) and Spiritual Leaders (Gutoo)

The royal graves are found in Tello Woreda in a place called “*Shosha*”. The cemeteries of the kings’ wives or queens were separately located by approximately 5 to 7 kms distance from the kings. The grave yards of the spiritual leaders, Alamo, was called “*Gutoo*”. Based on my informants both the cemeteries of the royal and the spiritual leaders were covered with thick forests where no one was allowed to enter.

They say:-

*“Taateeno dukkeet xaa’ooch daggeet ashooye maachi gimo hakkiyaache, ebich arooch beeti kubboon kuxo qayaa gaawichii ciino hakkiyaache, shijjeroochee shijjeeroch quyetaa bi besheemmoch, showee qoolloo boono diggittinoon bi quyeemmoch ubbee aboon corootonaa shafiroon quyoon andi bi beeti daqqooch bechoo hakkitone. Ebiye gubbo no kitaamito miixiyaachemona ebi shafiroo bi kuxiyaachemmooch no bushiishooch dojjaabeetoone”.* (Source: Elder from Dawushoo community)

No one entered in the royal grave except the permitted one. So, it is not allowed to cut down trees around the royal grave. We are responsible to protect and conserve this forest in order to transfer for the next generations within its actual manner. Based on this we are teaching our children the way how to inherit and continue this cultural process.

According to my informants still now the grave of the kings and spiritual leaders kept by the community through performing different cultural activities. Not only that, the elders play role in creating awareness on the importance of forests for the continuation life. Based on this the natural environment also secured. So they teach their children to manage the ecological features and to pass suitable environment for the next generations.

Based on my personal observation, the communities of the environment are well informed to keep the bio diversity through local practices and the royal grave yards are kept still today with a high esteem by the local population as sacred places.



**Figure 4.3 the current status of royal grave /Shosha Moogo (photo by Researcher)**

According to my informants the reason for the selection of *Shosha Moogo* for the burial of the Kafficho kings was based on the oral story which inherited from their grandparents. In the time of the death of the first king this place was selected by *Mikirecho* and other advisors to rest the soul of the king. At that time they selected this place through direction given by the *Dawushoo* community elders. This community elders are close advisors of the king. So, they promised to keep the common graves of the kings for the rest of their life and transmitted to the coming generations. Still now the *Dawushoo* community members living around the royal grave. Except them no one enter in the royal grave and the have the right and promise to keep the royal grave and the surrounding forest.



**Figure 4.4. Celebration of New Year around Shosha Moogo (photo by Researcher)**

The celebration of the New Year in Kaffa seemed to be at the end of September (26-28) that is the end of the *Gaasho* (Teff) cultivation. It was because on these days, there was big banquets or grand feasts in the royal place. For the celebration 300 horses are ready for the ceremony. The color of the horses are white, black and red which indicate the flag of Kaffa. After the preparation the king led the community to *Shosha Moogo* and held different activities. This is because in order to keep the oath that the king promised to Almighty God and for the forefathers. During his time, the king promised to rule people by being accountable and transparent, to ensure the peace, to manage the land and boundaries and to control the whole issues within community and to administer foreign affairs. Finally, the king moved to the cemeteries and prayed for their sole and back to his palace. Then, the New Year celebration continued for one month.

#### **4.5. The Role of Women in Forest Resource Management**

Forest is considered as one of the most important natural resource and it is become mandatory to preserve it. Women have a great potential in managing the forest and an active participant and a great manager. It is important for maintaining the ecology and women play a very vital role in its protection. Women's role is considered as the most familiar manager, collector and protector of forest. Beyond, preparing and offering special food for the ritual ceremony women's teach their children about the importance and benefits of protecting natural forests through traditional way. By saying, "we inherited this forest from our great grandfathers and we have a strong belief that the forest is home to several deities, who lived there in order to protect the entire community from calamity. This inspires reverential fear in us and we are careful not to disturb any part of it."

According to my informants, It is forbidden for the women's to inter in the sacred place during the ritual is performing. This is because the women's are the symbol of Saint Mary and they contribute more for the continuation of generations by giving birth. It is believed that when the women's meet bad or evil things in the forest they become infertile. So, their task was preparing and collecting fresh food for the ceremony.

According to the data gathered from focus group discussion that women's participation in decision-making is least and limited. Its domain is limited at the household level. At the community level, their participation in decision-making is nearly non-existent. Additionally, the experiences and knowledge that women have accumulated about forest management and the environment is rarely acknowledged. On the other hand, women's desires and concerns in relation to forest management are frequently neglected.

However, in present time still gender inequalities can be seen in the study area. In the informal sector women still struggle hard to get recognition. The customary social constraint of the patriarchal society relegates women to the inside sphere. The work and contribution of women in the informal sector is never recognized and the products are under the control of men domain.

## **4.5 The Beliefs, Taboos and Rituals Performed for Forest Conservation**

### **4.5.1. The Meanings of Qoolloo and Qoollee Deejjoo Practice in Relation to Sacred Forest**

The Kafficho people define *Qoolloo* from different angles. The data that obtained from group discussion revealed that *Qoolloo* is spirit which believed to live in the forest, water and everywhere. Based on my informants explanation, *Qoolloo* is the spirit of the forest that controls the existence of human life, either it gives good harvest, fertility and continuous of meaningful life and/or cause unexpected natural disaster and other negative effect on the life of community in violence of natural law. Based on the above explanation, the researcher defines *Qoolloo* in general term meaning the “the spirit of forest”. *Qoolloo* spirits that reside in some selected forests and bushes in every village are said to be big creatures. It has the power to influence the activities of men (Kifle, 1992).

*Qoollee Deejjoo* is a ritual activity of offering different food items and animals to the god of harvest. This god of harvest is called “*Qoolloo*” and the offering (sacrifice) is known as “*Deejjoo*”. The main purposes of offering new food items and animals to the god of harvest was : to thank the god of harvest for collecting such good fresh crops safely, for getting many products, for keeping away climate change, for preventing diseases, evil things and soon.

### **4.5.2. The Ritual Ceremony of Qoollee Deejjoo**

The *Qoollee Deejjoo* is mostly held after the harvest or collection of *gaasho* (teff) and *baaro* (maize) and it was held at the end of December and in July. It was greatly performed in the study site twice a year. The people who offer these practices believed that “we do this because the earth has given us fresh grains. We give offering to the *showee-qoolloo* (spirit of the earth) for the grains that we received. My informants clearly brief that “on the day before we give the offerings, we wash our bodies with *Inno* (mineral waters) because the *Inno* purify us from physical and mental dirtiness. Neither of us is permitted to have sexual intercourse with in twenty or thirty days before the ceremony. After that the community becoming in the ritual places one by one then *Allaamoo* (spiritual leader) starts *Coortoo* (praying) to the ultimately God:



*“Yeero Taatoonaa bi naayona shuuneba!*

*No ikkittinoon shaccaaayin!*

*No showoon quyeeb!*

*Yeero biyoon no waane wokkiib!*

*Gochibeeti gatoon,shappabeet mimmin quyeb!*

*Sheexaanoon no waanee wokkiib!*

*Biyoon no waane wokkiib!”*

Oh! Lord the spirit of our ancestors’ father,

Grandfather and the sky God keep our promise:

Let our land remaining standing,

Let keep cattle and the oxen from die,

Keep us from evil,

Let the people live and strength our solidarity.

After this special praying the assistant of *Allaamoo* dug and clean a hole then the *Allaamoo* cut the throat of a chicken and the assistant collected the blood in a cow-horn cup. Thus, the *Allaamoo* poured the blood of a chicken in to the hole. Then the assistant gave him teff or gaasho bread, *Kaffi-doco* (grain beer) and roasted chicken. He put all these into the hole. While he poured the blood into the hole, he said a prayer:

“Protect our king!

Protect our government!

Give as plenty of grains!”

After the ritual ceremony process everyone in the village allowed to eat the fresh grains.

In general, the main purpose of offering different food items and animals *Qoollee Deejoo* (thanks giving) is to thank the god of harvest in general, to change the perception of communities in natural resource protection, to make cohesion and to strength social solidarity among them.

### **4.5.3. Traditional Songs of the Ritual of Qoollee Deejoo**

After the ritual meal and beverages are consumed, traditional songs and dances continued for several minutes in group. This is because in order to give thanks for the forest spirit for this day and to bless the sky God for keeping the forest, people as well as the country peace and safe. The traditional songs of the ritual are as follows:

*Wooho mishiraacha haayeho (2x)*

*Yeero deebe de'oo koce*

*Aagetooch deebe Aachooch deebe*

*No showooch deebe*

*No dicoch deebe*

*Andi duusha shiike bitoo*

*Andi daacha bekke gimboo*

*Awuroona gofaa dichoo*

*Yebboo beega gomme kaayo*

*Yeeri beega maroo woddo*

*Hittitillebe koroche kindoo*

*Hiccii kotechii nuuchoon ceego*

*Ne malloona maxo woce*

*Ne malloona maachoo wobe*

*Wooho mishiraacha haayeho*

*Yeero deebe de'oo koce*

*Arichebe xibeboone*

*Angaadebe wollebon*

*Maachaa echeemmo uuxo kexo*

*Maayoon kachiimmo mixo aacoo*

*Ellee yalloomo taan bakkerebe*

*Ejji umboommo taan tuguceba*

*Tabakereta ellooch getta*

*Ta bagoon maataa mahooch geta*

*Ta yiich waato womo tuneba*

*Ta yikkireto kaayo tuneba*

*Taachi waanne barawaanne*

*Tawushenne erettenne*

*Damba angesha shookketi teephoo*

*Deshi worefa shookketi gaashoo*

*Shiida shiillo gimbechooch*

*Shigo doono taateechoch*

Woho mishiraacha haayeho (2x)

God forgive us, make things easier

Forgive the world

Forgive the water

Forgive the land

Open ways for our prosperity

Make the local beverage sweetening

Make the construction easier

Within group song the journey easier

God forgive us

Respecting the elders

Respecting neighbors, sharing everything

With your best chance bees make honey

With your best chance women become fertile

Woho mishiraacha haayeho

God forgive us, make things easier

Please promote our harmony

Make us knowledgeable

Make the crop fertile

Water and wood makes the food

Make me like Columbus monkey

When I enjoy consider me as Columbus monkey

When I ate sheep consider as cheetah

Consider the body movement as song and playing

Good opportunity come for us

Make the cold area good for teff

Make the hot area good for wheat

Oh! God who live in the heaven

Oh! God the one who wisdom with respected name.

According to FGD discussants, the message of *Mishiraacho* ritual songs was wishing blessing and good opportunity for the land, forest, community, wild and domestic animals, farming...etc. So, everybody who participates in the ceremony would enjoy the songs and shares the blessing given by elders or *Allaamoo*. The ceremony is held in the forest of the ritual can take at least 3:00 hours. After the final ceremony *Allaamoo* or selected community elders give final blessing and wishes the future and the coming year to bring peace, security and prosperity for the country as well as for the community. The final blessing goes like this:-

*Yeero no gooyo shakkitocho*

*No manjaa ebich beechitoocho*

*Hin geenoo imam gepe tato dejja Qoollooch ne de'e*

*Noon qiddebe*

*Hagoor baakkoona waatone*

*Nachi maa'oono no woyeemmo noo ganniibe*

*Kubbi beeti cooxon kubbi dege*

*No buushon qiddebe*

*No gijjoon qiddebe*

*No gattoon qiddebe*

*No goyaa maayo shakkiib*

*No hajjaa yeero giijjoo daniib*

*Gennoon Yeero qiddebe*

*No ashoon diggiibe*

*Qoolloocho no showoon qiddebe*

*Qoolloocho miinji damoon de'ani*

*Qoolloocho no buusho damoo deqqaaye!*

Oh! God you make the land fertile

You feed us still today

Please take the sacrifices given by elders

Keep us

In this year we sacrifice hen

In the coming year we wish to bring oxen for you

Please keep wild animals in the forest

Please keep our children's

Keep our oxen

Please bring prosperity for us

Keep elders of the community

Keep the community from disasters

Oh! Spirit of the earth keep our country

Oh! Spirit of the earth take the blood of cows

Oh! Spirit of the do not take the blood of our children's

After the blessing, everybody who participated in the ritual ceremony takes duties and responsibility given by Gepetato. According to my informants the duties are:-

- Keeping the forest from being exploited by members of the society.
- Keeping the peace and security of the environment.
- Resolving conflicts which occurred in the community.

#### **4.6 The Role of Baaree Qoco Practice in Relation to Sacred Forest**

The Kafficho people has a number of cultural practices in relation to forest resources. From this *Baaree Qoco* (commemorating one's father or grandfather's belief) is the one which was performed at family level. As like as other traditional beliefs in the world it was believed that the beginning of *Baaree Qoco* started before the introduction of Christianity and Islamic religions. The elders say that they inherited the activities from their fathers and grandfathers. Furthermore, in this ritual ceremony the members are participating from only one clan lineage. The ceremony does not need much more long term preparations as like *Qoollee Deejjoo*. According to informants *Baaree Qoco* is celebrated more than four times in a year. The celebrations are *Gannooba* (in Christmas), *Maadee gufooba* (in the beginning of fasting), *Maadee kaamooba* (in Easter), *Baaraabboo* (two weeks after Easter holiday).

For this ritual fresh grain is grind by hand. These is because in order to secure the purification of food and beverages made for the *Showee Qoolloo* (the spirits of land). After local food and *Gaashee doco* (beverage) preparations every family members are come together into their fathers or elder brothers' home. According to my informants, if there is conflict or disagreement between families it is not allowed to participate the ceremony without settle the disputes. For this instance, beyond forest conservation system *Baaree Qoco* ritual had more advantage.

From this:-

- It reduces the extravagancy of food items
- One mechanism for peaceful co-existence
- It develops harmony between families
- It also develops the spirit of sharing

The ritual ceremony was held in the *Baaree Kexo* (new house) which constructed behind the ordinary house. The elder of the family began the ritual by *Coortoo* (praying) as follows:

*“Ta nihoo ta nihi nihoo qocaa deqqaabeeti  
baaroocho ta qocaa de’e. Ebiich shakkiiti  
doonocho galleteebe, ta nihoo kashoon maaribe,  
ta kexon, ta maaxon, ta bushiishoon diggiibe,  
quyebe. No yeshoon kuxxaaye.”*

The spirit of the earth who takes the ritual given by our fathers and forefathers please take the sacrifices given by us. Thanks to God for keeping us, give apologize for the sole of our father. Please keep our house, the surrounding, the kids and everything behind us. God make our intimacy strong and smart.

By saying this the elders put the food and beverages in the new house. After four days they come together and *tucee waaxxoo* (opening of the bottle) program begins. Then everyone shares the blessed food and beverages together and make ties their harmony.





**Figure 4.5 Baaree Qoco house (Photo by researcher)**

#### **4.7. The Role of Qoollee Deejjoo and Baaree Qoco Ritual in Conserving Forest Resources**

The Kafficho spiritual leaders and community elders use the forest as main input in carrying out their many religious, social and cultural functions in their society. The values and respect people attach mostly to their surrounding natural environment especially forest emanates from age-old long history of traditional religious beliefs in forest spirits. Based on the data gathered from focus group discussion shows that the natural and cultural sacred forest of Kafficho people considered as the main symbol their identity. Furthermore, the community believed that the forest spirits protected the land and reasons for their survival. Indigenous belief systems have strong elements of conservation techniques that can be adopted for effective protection of the environment and conservation of natural resources. This is due to the fact that the belief system attributes certain powers to some parts

of the environment as the places of the gods, this place is strictly prohibited from exploitation by any one, in this regard, and resources are left untouched and preserved in its natural state. In almost every Kafficho community, each community has what they revere or hold sacred as the ancestral home of their forefathers, or there is a very important symbolic reason attached to such objects in the course of their existence, every community has a sacred grove, sacred river, forbidden animals and earth shrines. Where some part of the environment is delineated for the worship of the gods.

#### **4.8. The Current Status of Qoollee Deejjoo and Baaree Qoco in Forest Conservation**

In the present situation *Qoollee Deejjoo* and *Baaree Qoco* ritual plays a significant role in forest conservation and resource management. It is one of the traditional religious belief and identity of the people. The presence and existed identity of natural forests relatively in a good condition as in some parts was based on the better protection of forests in ritual areas, the settlement of local people on the margins of the forests living with the forest together and using the branches for fire and construction of houses with the permission of *Gepetato* still indicates the presence and continuity of traditional beliefs on conservation as well as management of forests in traditional belief systems. The cultural value and taboos help this ritual to be inherited and promoted from generations to generations among the people in the study area.

#### **4.9. Factors Hindering the Development of Traditional Beliefs in Relation to Forest Management**

There are a number of intricate factors that have hindered the progress of traditional beliefs in the world. As the factors are complex and intertwined, it is very difficult to form distinct categories for them. Likewise, factors that have been hindering the development and use of traditional beliefs of the Kafficho on forest conservation are so complex. They are mainly related to external factors, the influence of modern religions. Based on this my informants explained as follow:

*“Amaari kittinoonaa protesitaanite gibeene  
yaabechina’o no dabbaabeeti gibenoonaa no*

*baaraabeeti baaroon sheexaanochiye iyeete.  
Tuneebaan, ebiye aaf qabbechina'o ebi shafiroon  
dabboona hallee gannoon mixaani gommona  
nooch boono beshiit qodooch beeti irtoon qiccoona  
andi beddaaha quyaa shijjerooch  
beshiyaabeetoone. Dakkoona taatoo kociitaa  
gurmaasheena'o diiddaaroon goyoch getona  
kubboon dappii gii'iii hallee gaannoon  
miixiibeeteete. Dakkoona, maccoo  
qaabbechina'och sheeroon  
beshoona daggiyaan xaa'ooch mixon kuxona  
gacheehe. Ebi bullee shuunoo no iiqqooye damba  
bi tunetooch beqqimmi taatee kuxoowaane  
kupphiitaa kechit sheeroo aalli-qodooch  
shaggibeeti irtoon biishoch hakkiyaache. (Source:  
Spiritual leader from Dugo clan)*

Orthodox and protestant Christianity have declared traditional religion as evil and satanic. That has no link with God the Father Almighty and a retraining force for development especially the present generation of humankind. Even though we follow and continue the doctrine of our elders in order to protect and maintain the natural resources. Additionally the government creates jobs for youths that was dependent on forest resources in case of minimizing joblessness. There is no enough motivation even though the government policies on environmental management is very weak. So, the community therefore exploit these resources to satisfy their needs, where we used not to cut trees or even used fire wood from the trees, people now cut trees from these places.

These are all indications that, Christianity and government policies has seriously eroded the rich cultural and belief system of the indigenous Kaffa people. Places and things formerly held sacred have been destroyed and the ascription of supernatural powers to parts of the environment and objects of worship have been removed. This modern religions have put negative impact on the tradition of the society particularly in relation to forest conservation by weakening the traditional beliefs and norms of the society in which they give respect and care for trees and forests. Additionally, government policies does not proclaim the contribution of indigenous beliefs on the natural environment and there is no demarcation of forests to perform ritual beliefs and practices in general. However, the government distribute places for jobless youth and this eroded the sacred forest which kept by the system of traditional beliefs.

However, beyond the challenges and discouragements the *Allaamoo* (spiritual leader) performed the following traditional responsibilities:-

- Lead the ritual and religious ceremonies
- Impose punishment related to violation of forest
- Resolve disputes in the community

According to my informants the spiritual leaders not only play important role in forest resource management; they also contributed a vital role in conflict resolution honestly so this reduces the burden in the government courts and build up strong linkage between community. They further stated in case of modern religion and external intervention the traditional belief system was at risk and needs more attention from the concerning bodies.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5. Summary and Conclusion

#### 5.1. Summary

The study was designed to investigate the role of traditional beliefs of Kafficho community on forest conservation. In this study, traditional belief is considered as understandings, rituals and practices of the Kafficho community in sustainable use of forests which obtained as a result of positive interaction with their environment.

The literature related to issues in Africa, Ethiopia and Kafficho concerning the role of traditional beliefs systems, forest resource management and indigenous knowledge in relation to forest resource management was read and reviewed.

The study employed a qualitative ethnographic research design to investigate the role of traditional beliefs in forest conservation. Accordingly, the necessary data were collected from purposively selected knowledgeable individuals. Interview, focus group discussion and observation were used to collect the data. Finally, analysis of data were presented thematically through maintaining the perspectives and viewpoints of the participants with explanations and interpretations of the researcher. Based on the above issues, the study has come up with the following major findings.

- The Kafficho community give high values for traditional beliefs in relation to forest
- The Kafficho community respect and protect *Share Showo* (Sacred forests)
- The belief system and the norm they have developed helped them to give respect and care to forests, considering forests as home for *Showee Qoolloo* (earth spirit)

Generally, the existence of this traditional belief system face many challenges currently. Like *Qoollee Deejjoo* and *Baaree Qoco* considered by modern religions as sacrifices given for Satan or evil. However, this challenges were resolved not only by followers of traditional beliefs but it also needs attention from government and concerning bodies.

## 5.2. Conclusion

The Kafficho community practiced different rituals and ceremonies in order to conserve the forests and the surrounding environment. The cultural value and belief systems of the community inhabiting these areas, which have very strong and practical bearing on such resources that contributed to the current forest resource conservation. The findings of this research also confirmed that the utilization, conservation and management of forest resources (plants and animals) was done with respect and guided by conservation requirements of traditional beliefs and practices. The traditional institutions played a key role in ensuring for the protection and management of the forest. However, there was strong rules and regulations for those who break the rules are punished. These collective actions in forest resource management were expressed through religious beliefs, moral sanctions and a range of sacred and cultural practices. Among the cultural forest protection mechanisms *Qoollee Deejjoo* and *Baaree Qoco* rituals are performed during two times a year in order to secure the existence and ensure the positive relation of the forest spirit and the community in the study area. Anything associated with the values and beliefs of the society was deep rooted by *Qoollee Deejjoo* and *Baaree Qoco* rituals. In Kafficho societies, this rituals are believed as a way to promote socio-economic and cultural values among the people. It is one of the traditional religious belief and religious identity of the people. Through this beliefs the community protected and conserve the sacred forest as a symbol of identity. Based on the finding of this study, the role of traditional beliefs are facing challenges. In current the indigenous community perform the cultural and ritual practice by fearing of external actors. This actors teach and preach the traditional ways of forest conservation mechanisms as the sacrifices which performed for evil.

The resilience of these beliefs and practices stood the test of time in forest resource management through the use of taboos, totems, traditional protected areas, moral sanctions and rules and regulations. However the belief systems and cultural practice loss its dignity in terms of diffusion of external cultural and religious activities which reduces the role of indigenous knowledge for forest resources conservation. Therefore, traditional institutions can still serve as points of entry in the search for local options and broad-based approaches to the management of forest resources. So it is important to proclaim the rule and cope up with the concerned bodies in order to sustain the bio diversity.

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## Appendix-A

### Lists of Informants

No	Name	Age	Profile	Place of Interview
1	Hibeda Goda Abera Imaamo	54	Spiritual leader	Shaka/Addiyo district
2	Shawujjeraasha Ashebir Haile	56	Expert in culture	Bonga & Tello district
3	Ato Worku W/Mariam	60	Higher expert in culture and tourism office	Addiyo & Tello district
4	W/ro Wudinesh Adello	49	Expert in cultural food and member of the Kafficho cultural council	Bonga district
5	Ato Wondimu Mamo	45	Forest and tourism high expert	Tello & Addiyo district
6	Ato Asres Adaro	48	Manager in culture and tourism office	Bonga district
7	Ato Beyene Bekele	60	Manager Kaffa cultural council office	Addiyo & Tello district
8	Ato Kocito W/Senbet	85	Member of cultural council and high culture expert	Tello district
9	W/ro Abresh Alemu	74	Member of the Dawushoo community	Tello district
10	Ato Abate Akalu	42	Member from Dawushoo community	Tello district
11	Ato Asefa Alemayehu	55	Lawyer and Gujerano (cultural prime minister)	Bonga district
12	Ato Asefa G/Mariam	70	Historian	Bonga district
13	W/ro Tewabech Tekle	53	Kafinoono language teacher in TVET	Bonga district
14	Tilahun G/Tsadik	30	Lecturer and high expert in language	Tello district
15	Shamble Asrat Haile	51	Cultural musician	Addiyo district

## **Appendix-B**

### **I. Interview Guide for Gepetato/Elders**

1. What are forests for you?
2. What do you do to conserve the forest traditionally?
3. What beliefs are there for forest conservation in your community?
4. At what state or level is the traditional practice?
5. Is there destruction of forests in your area? What are the causes for their destruction?
6. What is the role of Allaamoo/Gepetato in forest conservation?
7. Are there protected forests under the control of the traditional belief leaders? What traditional beliefs and practices of forest conservation are there in Kaffa community?
8. What are the major hindrances to the use of traditional conservation belief practices in these days?
9. What do you recommend to be done for better conservation of forests?

### **II. Interview Guide for Culture and Tourism officers**

1. What role do government contributed to conserve forest traditionally?
2. What do you recommend to be done to use traditional practice in modern conservation efforts?

### **III. Interview Guide for Women**

1. What role do woman have in traditional conservation practices of forests in Kaffa community?
2. What do you recommend for better conservation of forests?

## Appendix-C

### A. Photos of some informants and cultural beverage



**Photo – 1 Focus Group Discussants with researcher at Addiyo District**



**Photo 2 Focus Group Discussants around Shosha Moogo at Tello District**



**Photo 3 Kafficho elders**



**Photo 4. Traditional beer (Shoko)**