

**JIMMA UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**AND HUMANITIES**

**Marriage Practices and the Status of Women Among the  
Bench, Southwest Ethiopia**

By: Netsanet Tadesse

February, 2020

Jimma, Ethiopia

Marriage Practices and the Status of Women among the  
Bench, Southwest Ethiopia

By: Netsanet Tadesse

A Thesis Submitted to Department of Social Anthropology, School of Graduate Studies of  
Jimma University, in Partial Fulfillments of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of  
Arts (MA) in Social Anthropology.

Principal Advisor: Dejene Teshome (PhD)

Co-advisor: Mr: Zerihun Mekuria (MA)

College of Social Sciences and Humanities

Department of Social Anthropology

Jimma University

February ,2020

Jimma, Ethiopia

## Table of contents

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Pages</b>
Table of contents.....	1
List of Maps .....	i
List of Figures.....	i
Glossary of Bench Terms.....	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iv
Abstract.....	v
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1. Background of the Study .....	1
1.2. Statement of the Problem.....	4
1.3. Objective of the Study .....	6
1.3.1. General Objective .....	6
1.3.2. Specific Objectives .....	6
1.4. Significance of the Study.....	6
1.5. Scope of the Study .....	6
1.6. Organization of the Paper .....	7
CHAPTER TWO .....	8
2. LITERATURE REVIEW .....	8
2.1. The Concepts of Marriage .....	8
2.2. Marriage Practices and the Status of Women: A Cross-cultural Overview.....	8
2.3. Marriage and Bride-wealth .....	13

2.3.1. Bride-wealth in Africa .....	13
2.4. Marriage, Bride-wealth and the Status of Women in Ethiopia .....	14
2.4.1. Types of Marriage in Ethiopia .....	14
2.4.2. Marriage practice and women Status .....	15
2.4.3. Bride-wealth in Ethiopia .....	18
2.5. Theoretical Framework .....	19
CHAPTER THREE .....	22
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	22
3.1. Description of Study Area .....	22
Location and Physical Environment .....	22
3.1.1 Study Area Map .....	24
3.1.2. Origin and Early History .....	25
3.1.3. Clan System .....	25
3.1.4. Political Organization .....	26
3.1.5. Religion .....	27
3.1.6. Economy .....	28
3.1.7. Social Institutions .....	29
3.2. Research Approach .....	30
3.3. Research Design .....	30
3.4. Source of Data .....	30
3.5. Data Collection Method .....	31
3.5.1. Key Informant Interview .....	31
3.5.2. Observation .....	32
3.5.3. In-depth Interview .....	32
3.5.4. Focus Group Discussion .....	32

3.6. Informant Selection.....	33
3.7. DataAnalysis and Interpretation .....	33
3.8. Ethical Considerations .....	34
CHAPTER FOUR.....	35
4. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS.....	35
4.1. Marriage practices among the Bench.....	35
4.2. Types of Marriage.....	38
4.2.1. Arranged Marriage ( <i>Purn Donta</i> ).....	38
4.2.2. Elope Marriage ( <i>Garska Hame</i> ).....	40
4.2.3. Widow Inheritance Marriage (Barz).....	42
4.2.4. Abduction Marriage ( <i>GochaHame</i> ).....	43
4.2.5. ReplacementMarriage ( <i>Qoxe</i> ).....	46
4.3.The Status of Women in Marriage Practices .....	46
4.3.1. The Status of Women in Arranged Marriage.....	48
4.3.2. The Status of Women in Elope Marriage ( <i>Garska Hame</i> ) .....	48
4.3.3. The Status of Women in Widow Inheritance Marriage .....	49
4.3.4. The Status of Women in Abduction Marriage.....	49
4.3.5.The Status of Women in Replacement Marriage.....	50
4.4. The Practice of Bride-wealth ( <i>WoreGeak</i> ) .....	51
4.4.1. The Current Condition of Bride-wealth.....	60
4.4.2. Bride-wealth and the Status of Women in Bench.....	61
4.5. Marriage Ceremony among the Bench .....	63
CHAPTER FIVE .....	69
5.CONCLUSION.....	69
6. References.....	70

Appendix One .....	75
Appendix Two .....	80

### **List of Maps**

Map 1	Map of study area	24
-------	-------------------	----

### **List of Figures**

Photo 1	The mediators during message transmission	53
Photo 2	Discussion about bride-wealth	54
Photo 3	The boy's parent waiting message from the girl's family.	56
photo 4	Materials given from the Bride parents to the couple	59
Photo 5	Women provide food to the participant of bride wealth	62
Photo 6	Women grinding maize to prepare <i>dangla bud</i>	64
Photo 7	Roasting of <i>dangla-bud</i>	65
Photo 8	The leaf of false banana prepare to the guest	66
Photo 9	Cultural food preparation for wedding	66

## Glossary of Bench Terms

<i>Bande</i>	: Ostracize group among the Bench clans
<i>Barz</i>	: Widow inheritance marriage
<i>Banchnon</i>	: The language of the Bench
<i>Dange-bud</i>	: Bread made of maize
<i>Danze-dore</i>	: The gift of cow during bride-wealth
<i>Ditchy</i>	: Maize
<i>Dor</i>	: Sheep
<i>Eram</i>	: Cultural punishment
<i>Eregei</i>	: Elders
<i>Garska hame</i>	: Elope marriage
<i>Gea</i>	: A drink prepared from coffee leaves
<i>Gez</i>	: Local drink made from maize or sorghum
<i>Gocha-hame</i>	: Marriage by Abduction
<i>Jazh</i>	: The origin of Bench
<i>Kah</i>	: Traditional religion
<i>Kant</i>	: Basket carried on the back of women
<i>Karshin</i>	: The gift of cow considered as chair during bride-wealth
<i>Ket basse</i>	: Punishment on Groom for marry the girl without consent of her parent
<i>Kes</i>	: Goat
<i>Masekei</i>	: Cultural punishment on abductor
<i>Nonne fereke</i>	: Dialog opening payment
<i>Purn-donta</i>	: Arranged marriage
<i>Qoys</i>	: Replacement marriage
<i>Tishekre-toret</i>	: The gift of ox which considered as shadow
<i>Tyat</i>	: The leader of Bench
<i>Ukars</i>	: Village head men
<i>Vyard</i>	: Marriage
<i>Wore-geak</i>	: Bride-wealth



*Wosnase* : Men go-between the girl's and the boy's parent  
*Yenche-dobe* : The gift of ox  
*Zuqenas* : The negotiator or her husband

## **Acknowledgments**

First and for most I would like to thank my advisors Dejene Teshome (PhD) and Mr. Zerihun Mekuria (MA) for their valuable and constructive comments and suggestions throughout this research. As without their support, guidance and professional expertise, the completion of this work would not have been possible. My special thanks also go to my friends who have devoted their time in reading and editing this work. I would like to acknowledge the contribution of the cultural and tourism officials for facilitating my study. Additionally I would like to thank all informants for their great contributions to the research. Finally, my heartfelt thanks go to my loving, caring and responsible mother for encouraging me to accomplish my work successfully.

## ***Abstract***

*This research aims to investigate marriage practices and the status of women among the Bench, southwest Ethiopia. The study identifies types of customary marriages in relation to women status, examines bride-wealth practices in relation with women status and describes marriage ceremony. This study has mainly focused on south Bench Woreda. In this study qualitative approach and ethnographic design was employed. Both primary and secondary data sources were used. I collected primary data through key informant interview, observation, in-depth interview and focus group discussion. The informants were purposively selected. Secondary data were also collected from published and unpublished documents. Thematic data analysis was employed. As the findings of the study show marriage among the Bench is secular. Polygamy is culturally acceptable marriage. The Bench practices five types of marriage, which include: Elope marriage (Garska hame) which is the most common type of marriage among the Bench, followed by Widow Inheritance marriage (Barz), Arranged marriage (Purn donta), marriage by Abduction (Gocha hame) and Replacement marriage (Qoxe). Each types of marriage have differently linked with women status. The Abduction, Widow Inheritance and Replacement marriage have influence on women than Elope and Arranged marriage. The bride-wealth is central part of marriage in the society. It has positive impact on sustainability and reorganization of the marriage. Bride-wealth is not given for all types of marriage. Wedding ceremonies are different based on the types of marriage. Commonly the Bench concludes their marriage based on customary law of the community.*

# CHAPTER ONE

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

Every society in the world has its own cultural practices and beliefs which guide its members on how they should live or behave (Idang 2015). Marriage is among the major cultural elements of human societies. Its practices are different in every culture and that is culturally constructed and socially recognized in every society (Bernard 1973 cited by Emaj 2009). In most parts of the world marriage is usually understood as a relationship between a man and a woman that forms a base of the family, which provides biological and cultural continuity of the humankind. In European cultural marriage is a legal institution and in most religions it is a sacramental institution (Augustyniak, 2009).

In most cultures marriage involves elaborate rituals. In preindustrial cultures, religion covers all spheres of life. Elaborate rituals in marriage are typical in preindustrial societies that practice arranged marriage and that establish large kinship groups as major economic and political units. Modernization somewhat tends to increase secularization and correspondingly to decrease the ritualistic dimensions of the marriage event. However, even in Western societies vestiges of rituals connected with ancient customs remain, such as asking for the prospective bride's hand and giving away the bride (Foley 2001).

Love marriage is arranged by couples, increasingly meet at universities or work places fall in love, and demand and get their way. This kind of marriage is more practiced in United States of America, Britain etc (Cott 2000). Among the Tibet people have two main entrances into marriage that is parent initiated that associated mostly polyandry marriage and couple-initiated monogamy the younger generation respectively (Fjeld 2006).

African marriage is somewhat different from western marriage view. It is not only a relationship between two individuals but also as a structural link between group's or clans (Forkuor et

al.2018). In some parts of Africa, parents choose marriage partners for their children even before they are born. In some other parts, the choice is made for the young by their relatives, while another custom is to let the young people themselves find the spouse they wish to marry and then inform their parents or other relatives. Marriage by abduction is practiced in most Africa countries. It violates the rights of the girl to get married without her consent (Wadesango et al. 2011).

In rural African societies, the contraction of marriage is dominated by arranged marriages whereby parents usually indulged in the selection of marriage partners for their children especially daughters without their consent. To date, this has been altered to the extent that some countries have adopted policies that strive to advocate for the consent of both parties that are to be married (Tanzania Marriage Act, 1971; Ivory Coast Civil Code, 1964 cited by Indongo and Pazvakawambwa 2015). The adoption of these Acts has helped to promote the recognition of the consent of the parties to be married as well as fostered the existence of the acknowledgement that is the right of prospective partners to select their partners. Despite this development, the selection of marriage partners is still done with the consent of family members (Indongo and Pazvaka wambwa 2015).

The opportunities to arrange spouse in Africa are on the condition that through social gatherings, dance and communal work and other people in the neighborhood (Mbiti 1969 cited by Kyalo 2012). In Namibia, marital union choice is dictated by parental guidance, childhood sexual abuse, poverty, culture, age and religion. The common form of marriage conclusion is through religion, court and customary marriage (Indongo and Pazvakawambwa 2015). In another context, a Nuer man elects a girl to marry and his family has a final say to approve the marriage, and usually no objection is voiced if the man owns cattle (Evans-Pritchard 1951 cited by Foley 2001).

In a country like Ethiopia where different ethnic groups live together, the customary marriage varies greatly. Like other African countries most marriages in Ethiopia are arranged by families. Commonly, elders from the prospective groom's family approach the father of the prospective bride to propose a marriage. If the union is acceptable, the families negotiate marital exchanges and set a wedding date (EGLDAM2008 cited by Annabel 2013).

In Ethiopia, early marriage is practiced mostly in Amhara and Tigray region (Alula et al. 2016). In this form of marriage arrangements, the mothers and fathers of the bride are the main decision makers. In some cases the brides do not meet their spouse until the wedding day (Annabel 2013). Those married during early age are arguably the most vulnerable, as they frequently enter marital relations without prior knowledge rather through force. It is less likely than others to have known about the marriage in advance or to have wanted it, and they were at elevated risk of intimate partner violence (Annabel 2013).

Marriage among the Gumuz is exogamous and men have the right to marry wives through one of these ways: sister exchange, bride wealth gifts, elopement, abduction and inheritance. Sister exchange marriage is the most elaborate form of marriage practiced among Gumuz. Meanwhile, males have married only Gumuz females. A girl is married at any time if her elder brother or her father wants to marry (Wohabie and Teka 2018).

In the southern region of Ethiopia, marriage by abduction is largely practiced. In most of these cases, the abductor with the support of his friends and family members kidnaps a young woman in the course of her normal activities (Annabel 2013). These indicate that women in Ethiopia as anywhere else are victims of various traditional practices simply because of their gender. Patriarchal domination, cultural practices and economic deprivation are among the reasons for violence against women in Ethiopia (ENR 2004). This study focuses on marriage practices and the status of women among the Bench, southwest of Ethiopia. The *Bench* has its own culture, language, social organization and ways of life. Marriage practices are the major aspects of the *Bench's* culture. The *Bench* practices exogamous marriage, they marry out of their clan members.

## 1.2. Statement of the Problem

Different studies were conducted on the issue of marriage and status of women in the world. Kyalo (2012) studied on African traditional values of marriage and sexuality concluded that now we have seen problems with the marriage institutions and what we have done is to place emphasis on the need for a recovery of our traditional values in marriages. Customary values that were associated with marriage attract a lot of attention, for indeed they were meant to protect and preserve marriage institutions. In other words, to educate a sense of duty to intending couples while also producing a healthy and conducive society for all.

Africans understood marriage and sexuality in their own rite and had a way to maintain the richness of the value of marriage. African marriage was stable. Most African marriages were hinged on the centrality of life, its preservation and propagation, such was their understanding and worldview, a heritage that need to be recovered if we have addressed the wave of destructions that abound in marriage and have affected society in recent time(Kyalo2012).

Bocquier and Khasakhal 2009 cited by Indongo and Pazvakawambwa (2015) study on Perceptions of Women on Marriage in Namibia indicate that recently, customary marriage practices are reduced and new marriage trends are adopted from other parts of the world. In most parts of Africa newly adopted marriage may negatively affect the people. Recently, in Kenya, Namibia and South Africa cohabiting without formal marriage was the most prominent and increasing marital form especially among the younger generation. However, cohabiting unions has risks related to gender-based violence and passion killings.

Ethiopia has diverse ethnic groups and marriage practices. Recently, in most parts of Ethiopia, attitudes towards marriage, patterns of marriage and marital relationship have been changed. However, among the Bench, customary marriage is still widely practiced. This study was initiated in order to understand customary marriage and identify the cultural practices related to marriage that have transcending effects on the women. In addition to that, documenting customs like marriage practices is necessary to transfer cultural practices to the next generation.

Some scholars conducted studies on marriage practices in different parts of Ethiopia. For example, Gemechu and Assefa (2006) studied marriage practices among the Gidda Oromo,

Northern Wollega, Ethiopia. They concluded that every society makes it a point to pay attention to marriage regardless of the technological advancement it has achieved or the geographical location it is in, irrespective of its being rural or urban.

Likewise Seyoum(2016) study on Irra Dhaaba: a customary marriage among the Gelan Oromo. His study shows Irra Dhaab marriage and its implication on women. The researcher concludes Irra Dhaab marriage is time and cost effective and negatively affected the bride and her family members.

The other scholars were Wohabie and Teka (2018), who studied marriage practices and gender role socialization among the Gumuz of Ethiopia. Their finding implies that Polygyny and sister exchange marriage are widely experienced. They are highly needed among the Gumuz women and girls for their economic contribution before and after the marriage.

Few studies were also conducted on marriage practices among the Bench. Scholars such as Muluneh and Derege (2013), studied on Ethno-History of the Bench People. The book dealt with history and culture of the Bench. However, the study did not have details of information on marriage and they showed only the overview of marriage practice of the Bench. Their study did not focus on the detail description of women status in relation to marriage practices. The other study is the work of Adam (2018) “Marital Rights of Women: Assessing the culture of bride Price among Bench people; the case of Semen Bench *Woreda*”. The research focused on the legal aspects of bride price. The study did not focus on the cultural aspects of bride-wealth and the processes of customary marriage. Therefore, there is a gap on the anthropological part of marriage and bride-wealth among the Bench. I focused on the major concern of anthropology by giving attention to the cultural aspects of bride-wealth and its overall implication to the society.

This study described the process of bride-wealth payment, the cultural implication of Bride-wealth towards women, local attitudes towards bride-wealth and current situation of bride-wealth. As far as my knowledge is concerned, there is a shortage of previous research on marriage practices and the status of women. Accordingly, this study tried to fill the mentioned gaps of the former studies.



### **1.3. Objective of the Study**

#### **1.3.1. General Objective**

The overall objective of this study is to explore marriage practices and the status of women among the Bench, Southwest Ethiopia.

#### **1.3.2. Specific Objectives**

In order to address the general objective, the following specific objectives were set:

- To identify types of customary marriage in relation to women status among the Bench.
- To examine the bride-wealth practices in relation with women status among the Bench.
- To describe marriage ceremony among the Bench.

### **1.4. Significance of the Study**

This study is important in different ways. The first significance of this study is to give insight to practitioners and professionals regarding marriage practices among the Bench, southwest Ethiopia. The study also shows the relation between marriage practices and the status of women in study area that will be used as input for policy makers. In addition, the study will contribute to the limited literature on marriage practice and status of women among Bench southwest Ethiopia. Finally, this research provided data for an appropriate intervention like creating awareness for the community about the relation between some cultural practices with the status of women.

### **1.5. Scope of the Study**

This study has both thematic and geographical scope. Thematically it is confined to describe customary marriage practices and the status of women among the Bench, Southwest Ethiopia. Geographically, the study is delimited to South Bench Woreda of *Bench-Sheko* Zone, South Ethiopia.

## **1.6. Organization of the Paper**

The first chapter introduced the study, the research problem and objectives of the study that were met in this research. It also described the significance, scope and limitation of the study. The second chapter includes reviewed literatures, empirical studies and a theoretical framework that guided the study. Chapter three presents all aspects of the study area including geographic location, origin and early history, clan system, political organization, religion, economy and social institutions. The research approach, research design, source of data and the data collection methods used to collect data for this thesis are also presented. The data collected from the informants, observation and documents were presented and analyzed in the fourth chapter. The fifth chapter concludes the findings of the research.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this section, I reviewed the conceptual and theoretical literature on marriage practices and the status of women. Moreover, the literature on customary marriage practices, status of women and bride-wealth are discussed.

#### **2.1. The Concepts of Marriage**

Marriage has been conceptualized by many scholars and writers of marriage. John (2011); Wimalasena (2016) conceptualized marriage as publicly recognized union established between one man and one or more women, or between two women, or between a woman and one or more men, in accordance with the defining rules of a society or social stratum given legal status by the society and enjoys protected rights, privileges and obligations by virtue of having been established according to recognized social and legal institutions.

Marriage is a socially and legally recognized institute that establishes a family as a social unit that regulates sexual activity, produces and raises children, implies some reciprocal rights between the spouses and between them and their offspring and constitutes a basic economic unit. In short, marriage could be seen as a set of rights that gives access to the spouse's sexuality, labor and property, although not all of these aspects are necessarily present in all marriage (Foley 2001).

But, the marriage I studied is a publically recognized union between opposite sexes, one man and one woman or one man and more than one women with the expectations that children will born in the relationship.

#### **2.2. Marriage Practices and the Status of Women: A Cross-cultural Overview**

Different types of marriage are practiced in the world according to different customs, laws and religions.

There are two types of marriage based on number of mates: monogamy and polygamy. Monogamy refers to a marriage of one man with one woman at a time. Polygamy is a type of marriage in which a man is allowed to marry more than one woman at a time. Based on the rules of mate selection, marriage can be endogamous or exogamous. Endogamous marriage refers to the marriage within one's own group or clan. Exogamy is a marriage in which an individual marries outside one's own clan (Seyoum2016).

Brown (1975) cited by Lewellen (2003:143) conceptualized status as either deferential treatment or actual power over resources and decision making. Dixon (1978) quoted by Nigatu and Gete (2016) defines the term as

*The degree of women's access to (and control over) material resources (including food, income, land and other forms of wealth) and to social resources (including knowledge, power, and prestige) within the family, in the community and in the society at large.*

Hence, the status of married women varied from one society to the other due to cultural differences. In most societies, husbands and wives have personal rights and either spouse may claim certain duties of the other. It is also common to find that a husband has possessive rights in relation to his wife. Her seduction, her abduction, or her murder would constitute a serious infringement of her husband's rights (Jensen and Thornton 2010).

In the following pages, I tried to briefly review the nature of marriage and status of women in different parts of the globe. Cott (2000) indicated that in the United States of America, marriage is protected in legal doctrine. The constitution protected a private realm of family life which the state cannot enter. At the same time marriage represents personal love and commitment and participates in the public order. In United States, monogamy is practiced and marriage is formed by the mutual consent of couples. Currently, marriage is concluded more in secular rather than religious (Cott 2000:3).

In a study of the social changes in the United States Cohen (2006) indicate that women achieved significant progress in every aspect of their lives during the twentieth century. Women in the United States are as likely as men to acquire education, income and other opportunities. Married women work outside the home to earn income. Their husbands are no longer expected to earn all

income to support their wives and children. Married women are expected to share the burden of earning a livelihood for their families (Caplow et al. 2001 cited by Cohen 2006). Women expect to balance work and family, whereas boys expect to give themselves to their careers and regard caring for a family as a woman's work (Spain and Bianchi 1996 cited by Cohen 2006).

On the other hand, among the Santal communities in Kalna village of Bangladesh traditionally married life begins when respective parents or elder members arrange marriage between a man and a woman. The marriage relationship between them is a relatively stable relationship involving in economic cooperation and allowing exclusive sexual relationship leading to child bearing and rearing (Emaj2009).

The Santal community is patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal in nature. Their culture permits polygyny, levirate and widower remarriage (Madani1993 and Sarker 1997 cited by Emaj 2009). Their marriage is ethnic endogamous and clan exogamous (Ali 1998 cited by Emaj 2009). Earlier age at marriage are exercised for both males and females due to socio-economic reasons (Kayes 1995 and Uddin 2006 cited by Emaj 2009). Santal adult men and women take part in agriculture as manual laborers and work outside home and household responsibilities was done sometimes shares with husband (Ali 1998 cited by Emaj 2009).

In India, women cannot inherit their caste or surname of their mother. In spite of education of women, they occupy an inferior position in the family. Important decisions like pregnancy, size of family, purchase and ownership of property, vehicles and cell phone are mostly taken by male members. Economically independent women are also helpless. They begin their day at the crack of dawn. They take care of entire family, send children to school, pack their husbands' lunch and go to the vehicle stand to catch overcrowded vehicle for reaching at work places. They have to perform their duties equivalent to their male counterparts. On returning home they have to complete all their household works and have to manage the same routine of the next day. The works they do at home are uncountable. The household work and childcare are not considered as productive work (Mohapatra 2015). Mohapatra (2015) concluded that wives are within the control of husband in Indian society.

Contrary to the above experiences in India, in Java women's are active parts in courtship and had high expectations of sexual and emotional satisfactions. The independence and high status of

women's sphere extended from the household to include a broad range of productive economic activities, including rice planting and harvesting, gardening, weaving, pottery and marketing. Women were also active in spiritual matters, as ancestor cults and spirit mediums (Reid's 1988 cited by Hirschman 2016). The bilateral kinship system creates a strategic resource for Malay women to maintain their status and to moderate the patriarchal influences (Djamour 1965 cited by Hirschman 2016).

In the Tibet people greater variety of customary marriage practices existed. These are both in terms of marital forms and nature of arrangement. Three type of marriage are practiced these are monogamy, polygyny and polyandry. In terms of arrangement there are marriages arranged by the parent and interest of the couple (Fjeld 2006). The ideal marriage in traditional Tibet was hypogamy, (marriage arrangement between a higher ranked man and a lower ranked woman) and endogamously (marriage with in higher classes) (Fjeld 2006).

In Africa, marriages are not only those relationships that have been contracted in front of a civil servant, priest or a person who has sanctioned power. Also relationships that have been contracted in a traditional way receive the marriage status (Augustyniak 2009).

The major characteristics of African households are mostly patriarchal and hierarchical, polygamous and open to kinship networks and finally they attached substantial importance of lineage continuation (Paulina 2001 cited by Seyoum 2016).

The socio-cultural attitudes almost all weigh against African women. Traditional ideologies of patriarchy exclude African women from public affairs or from holding positions of responsibility in serious matters of state and society, such as marriage arrangements and settlement of domestic disputes (Mesatywa 2009).

The child bearing and the ability to have children in African communities are central to a woman's status and value in the relationship (Wood and Jewkes 1998 cited by Mesatywa 2009). Male domination is prevalent in most African societies and due to cultures and traditional practices women may find themselves in situations that make them prone to abuse (Mesatywa 2009).

In Africa, women tend to have lower status than all the members of their husband's family. In most Sub Saharan society's women were voiceless and powerless. Male supremacy has also being altered a bit even though it still has a prominent strong hold in the society (Seyoum 2016).

Bride abduction is still practiced among some rural communities in South Africa. After abducting the girl they inform to the girl's family not to be worried because the girl is safe with them. They indicate what earnest cattle they propose to pay and how soon that can be done. A friendly relationship is thus established between the two families and the status of the girl is immediately elevated to that of a young wife. Later some cattle will be paid to the girl's family (Tshabalala and Msimang2009 cited by Wadesango et al. 2011). The root causes of marriage by abduction are enshrined in the patriarchal attitudes of the community emphasized by the inferiority of women (Stormorkenetal. 2007 as cited by Wadesangoetal 2011).

Among the Kung of the Kalahari Desert of South Africa marriage the man asks his parents to arrange a marriage. He may be ten years older than his prospective bride, most likely a teenager. The girl's parents also stress the demonstrated hunting ability of their prospective son in law because the hunter whose poisoned arrow hits the animal first receives the hide, which is used to make pubic coverings for both men and women. The parents may arrange a son's marriage during infancy sometimes before the prospective bride is born. The marriage is then consummated and celebrated when the spouses come of age (Foley 2001).

Aondohemba (2012) studied on types of marriage in Tiv people of Central Nigeria mentioned two types of marriage exist in Tiv-land that is exchange marriage and bride-wealth marriage. In exchange marriage the cost was necessary to a human being. It has a good moral behavior. A man needed sister to exchange for a wife. If a man was not born with sister, he would postpone marriage until he gets one from his brothers within the immediate or extended family to do so through exchange. The wife introduced into the group took over the place of the daughter for that particular exchange in both families.

The predominant ideology in exchange marriage was the continuity and equality of the family or lineage. The only sure way for the continuity of the family was through fertility. Thus fertility was not equal to anything or objects; therefore, fertility must be for fertility in exchange. The value of women was exceedingly high. There was mutual respect and endurance between the

couples. The family was supported by the entire community because of the continuity of the family, lineage and community. The family was peaceful and stable (Aondohemba 2012).

The bride-wealth marriage of Tiv people was looked forward to with such great anticipation degenerated from its inception into commerce in human lives because of materialistic disposition of the Tiv people. “The costs of marriage in the new marital arrangements were (a) money (b) material objects (c) relatively less good moral behavior” (Aondohemba 2012:65). In the bride-wealth marriage power relation between the man and his wife or wives changed. It tilted favorably to the men’s side. The men now thought that they could get married again using money if the first one did not work (Aondohemba 2012).

### **2.3. Marriage and Bride-wealth**

The practice of bride-wealth is ancient dating at least as far back as 3000BC, being used by the ancient Egyptians, Mesopotamians, Hebrews, Aztecs and Incas (Anderson 2007 cited by Ashraf et al. 2015). Anderson (2007) as cited by Ashraf et al. (2015) define that bride-wealth is a transfer of property at the time of marriage from the groom or his family to the family of bride. The payment is transferred in the form of cattle, iron tools, beads, grain, bark, cloth, animal skins and money. The Bride-wealth was included some agreement that are once bride-wealth is fully paid, the woman belongs to the husband’s kin group (Forkuor et al. 2018).

Bride-wealth is important to authorize the marriage, giving a certain degree of self-respect to both husband and wife. It entitles the husband to adultery fees in the event of unfaithfulness by the wife and legitimizes children in the union and so on (Forkuor et al. 2018).

#### **2.3.1. Bride-wealth in Africa**

The cultural practice of bride-wealth is commonly experienced in many parts of the world including Asia and Africa (Ashraf et al. 2015). Bride-wealth is the most common practice used to validate customary marriages in Africa including Nigeria, South Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, Zambia, Ghana and South Africa (Hudson and Matfess 2017; Ashraf et al. 2015).



The bride-wealth is an important part of marriage rites and ceremonies in African culture (Ashraf et al. 2015).

In many parts of Africa, bride-wealth is practiced in different forms for example among the Zulu and Xhosa of southern Africa, the bride-wealth started from 10 cows to 60 cows. In Ghana, bride-wealth varies on matrilineal and patrilineal society. The matrilineal societies paying a smaller amount of bride-wealth compared to men in the patrilineal societies. In Northern Ghana most are patrilineal bride-wealth takes the form of cowries or livestock or both as custom demands (Korah 2014 cited by Forkuoretal. 2018).

Similarly, among the Agikuyu of Kenya giving of bride-wealth was an important part of the marriage process. It is important to stabilize marriage as a physical symbol of the marriage union, as a source of income and as a source of approval for the bride and groom. The bride-wealth acted as compensation for loss of a worker in her parent's homestead (Nganga 2010).

Among Agikuyu people money are not used to get wife yet only sheep and goats are used as bride-wealth payment because sheep and goats played an important role in the economic, religious and social life of the community (Kenyatta 1978 cited by Nganga 2010). The bride - wealth is positive relation with women status and benefit in rural Agikuyu (Leakey 1977 cited by Nganga 2010).

## **2.4. Marriage, Bride-wealth and the Status of Women in Ethiopia**

### **2.4.1. Types of Marriage in Ethiopia**

The revised federal family code (2000) recognizes the practices of marriage ceremony in Ethiopia as it is categorized in to religious marriage, customary marriage and civil marriage which are practice in different way. The religious marriage takes place when a man and a woman have performed such acts or rites as deemed to constitute a valid marriage by their religion or by the religion of one of them (RFC 2000). As a result, the formal requirements for the conclusion of religious marriage are dictated by the religion itself. A religious marriage takes place when a man and a woman have performed such acts or rites as deemed to constitute a valid marriage by their religion or by the religion of one of them (RFC 2000).

Civil marriage is concluded before an officer of civil status, a man and a woman need to appear before the officer for the purpose of concluding marriage and give their respective consent to enter into marriage. Hence, the phrase civil marriage basically refers to the fact that the marriage has been solemnized in front of an officer who is empowered to accept the consent of parties wishing to enter in to marriage. The husband and wife take a promise and are issued a marriage certificate. Court marriage offers better options for women in cases of divorce or death of spouse (RFC 2000). In order to conclude civil marriage, there are certain formalities including residence, obligation on the witnesses, consent of both men and women, age, the sign of future spouses and witnesses (RFC 2000).

Customary marriage concluded according to customary practices. It takes place when a man and woman have performed such rite as deemed to constitute valid marriage by the custom of the community in which they live or by the custom of the community to which they belong or to which one of them belong (RFC 2000).

### **2.4.2. Marriage practice and women Status**

In a country like Ethiopia which is the home of diverse culture, it is likely to come across different marriage practices. In some areas, monogamy is the most prevalent form of marriage. However, polygamy is not totally absent (Gemechu and Assefa 2006). Similarly the process of mate selection varies, for instance, marriage is concluded among the Oromo in one of the following forms:

In *Buti* marriages the boy forcefully abducts the girl. This mode of acquiring wife in the Gidda Oromo has its reason of taking place especially on the part of the man, when the boy is refused by girl's parents, by the girl herself, if he is asked too much money as a bride-wealth and different kind of gifts which he cannot afford (Gemechu and Assefa 2006). The boy abducted a girl after that the boy's family sends elders to the girl's family to settle the matter. Settlement is usually difficult yet the girl parent did not have interest to take the girl. However the girl family asks high bride-wealth these can be mediate by elders. After the agreement the marriage for which the boy has carried out the abduction will be conducted (Gemechu and Assefa 2006). However it is socially not acceptable since it uses force and violence for the benefit of one side.

Sometimes it becomes causes of conflict between kin groups belonging to the man and the woman (Seyoum 2016).

*Hawwata* marriage is arranged by mutual interests of marital partners without prior knowledge of the boy's and girl's parents. Sometimes, girls can be persuaded by a third party to appreciate their partners. This type of marriage is accepted by indigenous Oromo Religion (Seyoum 2016).

*Dhaalais* a marriage between woman and the brother of a deceased husband (Seyoum 2016). The reason of *Dhaala* marriage is to preserve the children of the deceased man within the family and save them from mistreatment by the stepfather to whom the widow may marry (Moges 2005 cited by Seyoum 2016). The woman is obliged to stay idly thinking of her husband's death for a period of at least one year. This type of marriage depends on the number of children born to the couple and on how well the widow is liked by the parents of the deceased man. If the man has married his own wife before this arrangement, he turns to work in the fields between the two households, but if he is a bachelor, he will later marry a girl because it is culturally credible and socially valued to marry a young girl (Seyoum 2016).

*Aseennaa* marriage the girl takes the lead instead of the boy. She takes this initiative if she goes beyond the standard age of marriage sets for girls, as socially agreed upon (Seyoum 2016). Second, if she is not asked by anybody, either due to problems of beauty or due to her family's social background. When she decides, "no more stay with parents" she leaves her parent at dusk and goes to the boy's parent that she has already had in her mind. She carries with her greeneries, nine *hiddii* fruits (solemn) and other items which are conventionally known by society as symbols of fertility, prosperity and peace. She directly goes to the house of the boy's parent and calls his name. Then, she enters the house and leaves those symbolic items under the pillar of the house. Sitting there, she waits for the response of the boy, which, according to the traditions has been concluded with positive result for her. A family established by the *Aseennaa* marriage is usually found to be stable (Seyoum 2016).

*Rakoo* marriage is an arranged form of marriage whereby the boy's parent takes the first initiative for engagement. On behalf of boy's parent, elders go to the girl's parent and ask them to give their daughter for marriage. If the girl's parent accepts the demand, they pay bride-wealth

to the girl's parents. After the final wedding ceremony takes place she is officially engaged to him. This form of marriage is more stable than others (Yonas 1998 cited by Seyoum 2016).

In *Irradhaaba* marriage the girl and her parents do not have any prior knowledge until the boy accompanied by a group of men of different social classes arrive at the gate of the girl's parent. If the girl parent reject boy request to be considered as a bad fortune for the girl. If they accept, the girl is formally given, being blessed by her parents and relatives (Yonas 1998 cited by Seyoum 2016). The completion of the whole process in one day except for some inconveniences and its being practiced among the Oromo's only (Seyoum 2016). This form of marriage is solution to economic and socio-cultural problem for the bride groom and his family and a problem to the bride and her family members in particular. At the current time the frequency and continuity of *Irradhaaba* marriage is low (Seyoum 2016).

The division of labor between men and women are existed. The allocation of time within household maintenance activities are the major tasks of women. The housework consists of numerous and regular activities across which women distribute their available labor time (Seyoum 2016). The major reasons for social exclusion of women were "*patriarchal values, family ideals, traditional and cultural norms lack of access of women in decision-making position, and women's lack of knowledge of their legal rights*" (Seyoum 2016). In contrast to the above women have full right in inheritance and controlled the immobile resources; the house, the grain and other products, even cattle around the house are under their control, women milk them and so on (Seyoum 2016).

Marriage practices in Gumuz studied by Wohabie and Teka (2018) a Gumuz girl is made to get married usually with a form of sister exchange even before she achieves sexual maturity. In this form of marriage, two females from different clans will be exchanged to be wives for male members (Wohabie and Teka 2018). Polygyny is common among the Gumuz society in which men are allowed to marry more than one wife. It occurs among if there are no matured daughters at home who can contribute labor for the family or if the first wife gets older, physically weaker, reaches menopause and could no more bear children (Wohabie and Teka 2018). The fertility of a girl is the most important component of stable marital life. Failure to give birth by a female is really a disaster for the couples and believed to be a great misfortune which may ultimately lead to divorce. In the case of exchange marriage, the girl would be sent back to her family if she is

not fertile and a replacement with a fertile one is requested (Wohabie and Teka 2018). The females have no decision making power about whom they are going to marry and accept orders from males (Wohabie and Teka 2018).

### **2.4.3. Bride-wealth in Ethiopia**

The dowry and bride-wealth payment are commonly practiced in different part of Ethiopia. In Tigray, dowry payments traditionally practiced. Dowry involved 10 to 15 head of cattle and a horse or mule, land and weapons (Shack 1974 and Bauer 1977 cited by Alulaetal.2016).

In Amhara, gifts were presented by both sides, gifts given by the bride-groom to the Bride and bride's parents to the bride-groom. However, the gift frequently expected more from the groom's side. In Amhara gifts were transferred in the form of livestock, clothing, ornaments and other moveable materials (Wodajo 1953; Ambatchew 1956 and Hoben 1973 cited by Alula etal.2016).

Mamitu (2000) indicate that bride-wealth is varied on the types of marriage. When the marriage is arranged by the family of the Groom the parents of the Bride would be requested by the Groom's family formally and if the bride's family agrees to the marriage proposal, they will buy a skirt made up of skin, a necklace made from glass beads called chiriwana and chimra, a hand ornament made from a giraffe's tail that will be given to the Bride. Once she accepts these presents and wears them it is a sign that she is engaged. However if the Bride and the Groom are engaged without the knowledge of their respective parents, when the time for the marriage approaches, the groom's family will send elders to the family of the Bride.

The family of the Bride would ask for fine money called Korata and the parents of the Groom will agree to pay. After they agree on the amount of the fine money, which will not be much ranges between 15 to 85 birr the Groom's family will give the agreed amount of money to the Bride's family. Among the Konso accepting large amount of bride-wealth is considered as selling one's daughter, which is considered to be negative, and oppose the konso social value. So, because of this reason they do not asking a big sum of money (Mamitu 2002).

## **2.5. Theoretical Framework**

This study draws on the theory of Feminism to analyze marriage practices and the status of women, and the theory of the gift to make sense of the exchanges involved in the form of bride wealth.

### **Feminist Theory**

There are several categories of feminism theory with different philosophy towards women let see some of them. Radical feminism, which was born during the new feminist movement of the 1960s, identified women's oppression as the most fundamental and pervasive form of oppression and expressed how patriarchal power and control over women's bodies have dominated every area of life including paid employment, housework, love and intimate partnerships, violence, childbearing, and child rearing (Enns and Sinacore 2005). According to MacKinnon (1987) as cited by Abbott et al. (2006) mentioned that radical feminists have approached the dismantling of patriarchy through the pursuit of political action calling for change in gender relations, drawing political strength primarily from women's organizations (Abbott et al. 2006). This theory suggested alternative way of living together to become free from men.

Similarly socialist feminists share the radical feminist views that gender oppression is a major form of oppression and that social activism is an essential feminist activity. Oppression is shaped by and intersects with class, economics, nationality, race, and history. Socialist feminists believe that individual opportunity alone will not lead to an egalitarian world; the realization of human potential can only be achieved through the restructuring of personal and public experiences of men and women. Universal access to economic and work options, education, housing, birth control, and child care is essential (Enns and Sinacore 2005).

The theory also argued that social transformation is essential and have examined ways in which sexism, classism, and racism are reinforced through economic means. The theory supposed social policy and capitalism reproduce systems of domination (Enns and Sinacore 2005).

In contrast to the above Cultural feminists highlight the special, unique qualities of women and the importance of intuitive, non-rational aspects of human experience. Cultural feminists have envisioned social transformation that calls for the infusion of feminine or maternal values into

society; the promotion of relatedness and connectedness among humans; and an appreciation of altruistic, cooperative, nonviolent values that support harmony and peace. According to Donovan 2000; Freedman 2002; Tong 1998 and Whelehan 1995 as cited by Enns and Sinacore (2005) cultural feminist goals are consistent with social reforms that focus on revaluing communal roles and relationally based ethics. The ideology of Cultural Feminism is not much with the objectives of this research.

Liberal feminism is found by Betty Friedan's. It historically promoted the ideals of human rationality, the importance of critical thinking, and the conviction that men and women share the same inherent rights and capacity to make productive individual choices. The ideals of individual dignity, autonomy, equality, and right to seek self-fulfillment are central to liberal feminist analyses (Enns and Sinacore 2005).

Liberal feminists argued that women's unequal position is a result of artificial barriers to women's full participation in the public sphere (Abbott et al. 2006). Oppression is viewed as the consequence of rigid gender role conditioning as well as irrational beliefs that women are less capable than men (Enns and Sinacore 2005). It also emancipated freedom from unnecessary social, political or legal restrictions and the creation of a just society (Abbott et al. 2006).

According to Berkeley 1999; Donovan 2000; Freedman 2002; Tong 1998 and Whelehan 1995 as cited by Enns and Sinacore (2005) the solutions to these problems are achieved through engaging in rational argument, overcoming traditional gender role injunctions that have limited individual achievement, and enacting institutional, legal, legislative reforms and gender neutral policies designed to ensure that all individuals have access to equal opportunities to exercise their free choice and skills (Enns and Sinacore 2005). Liberal feminists have focused primarily on reforming existing systems and institutions in general, have not challenged the basic structures of these institutions (Enns and Sinacore 2005).

As mentioned above there are several feminist ideologies however, the writer believed that with all its limitations, liberal feminism ideology is more related with the objective of the study. The assumption of liberal feminism is to create equal opportunity to women as men in political, economic and social or cultural aspects and not totally eradicate the existing structure as opposed to radical feminism, but to improve the structure that favors for men. In addition to that liberal

feminism is not opposed with Ethiopian culture than other feminist theory. Generally liberal feminism ideology enables the researcher to study various women right abuses and status of women with in marriage practices among Bench. Due to the above reasons these theories are selected and applied in most parts of this study.

### **Theory of the Gift**

Gift is normally an object of some value. The gift is thus something that are given and that must be received at the same time (Mauss 1966). The system of gift exchange is included gifts voluntarily and obligatorily given, received and repaid. To receive it is actually to commit one to return the desirable gift. The gift is subject to numerous prescriptions. It is probable that entirely to create different relationships. The gifts are still obligatory and have special features and forms (Mauss 1966).

There is propriety at every step. It is not the same as a market where a man takes a thing objectively for a price. *Nothing is casual here. Contracts, alliances, transmission of goods, bonds created by these transfers each Stage in the process is regulated morally and economically* (Mauss1966:58).

He concluded that exchange of gift have goods a moral transaction, bringing and maintaining human, personal, relationships between individuals and groups. This right is expressed and conceived as a sort of spiritual bond. The gift creates strong bond between the giver and the receiver. Some gifts are expressing the legal implications of their acceptance, in which case the affair is considered to be settled (Mauss 1966).

When we look at a system of bride wealth using the gift theory we get the complete picture from every angle. The theory position in relation with the gift exchange is in one side it is very important to legitimization like customary marriage as bride-wealth among the Bench. In other side the gift is used to promote right and obligation between giver and receiver that it is also true in study area between Bride family and bridegroom family. In addition to that bride-wealth has created strong bond between families and social implication on Bride family and Bride as well as Bride-groom and his parents among the Bench.



## CHAPTER THREE

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Description of Study Area

##### Location and Physical Environment

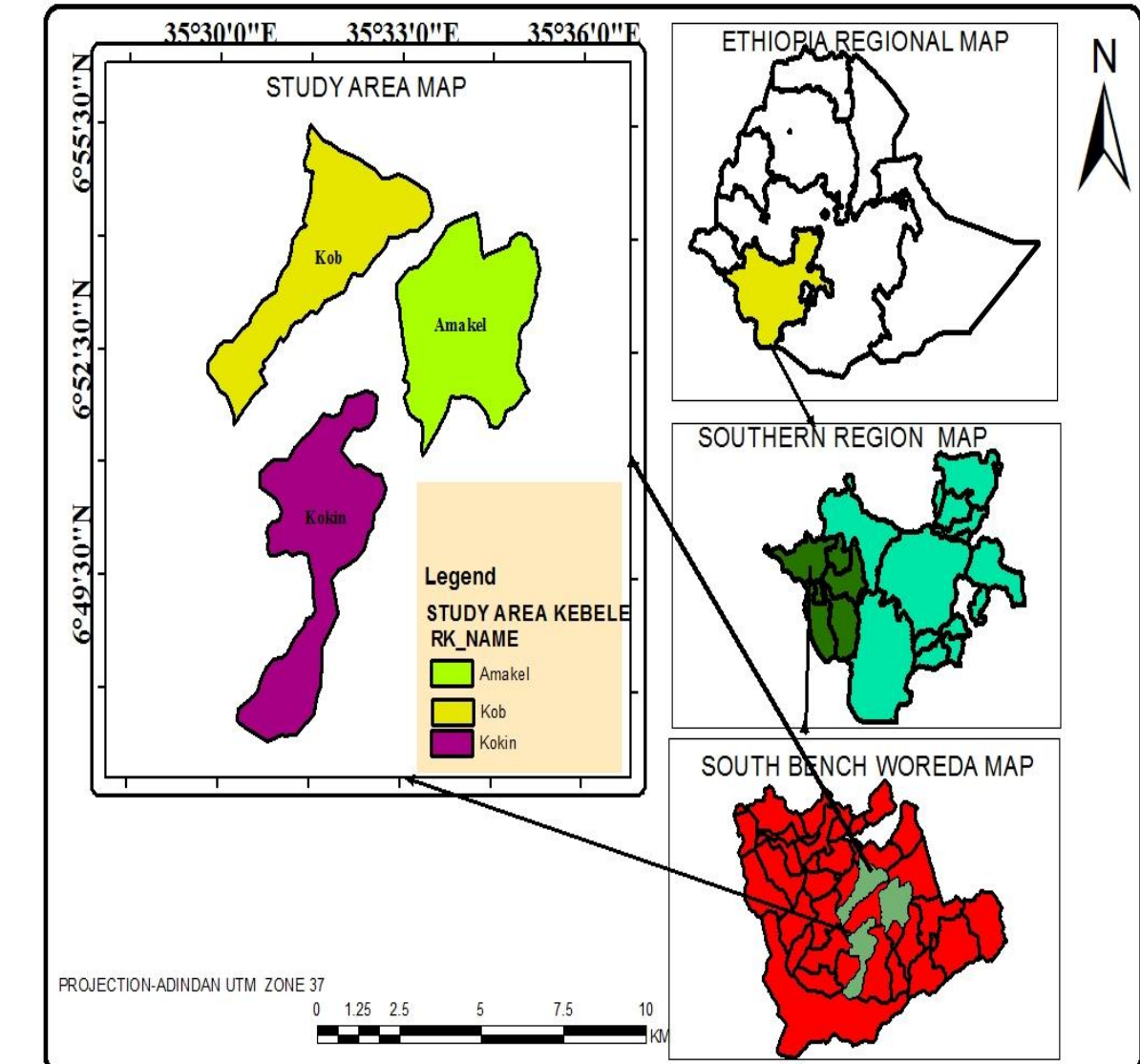
The Bench, who call their land *Benchdod* (Bench land) is situated in the southwest part of Ethiopia. Administratively, the area lies within the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State in Bench-Sheko Zone. The Zone is located in 3404-451 to 360-101 East 50-401 to 70-401 North. The Bench is bordered with Kaffa Zone to the Northeast, Shaka Zone in Northwest, South Omo Zone in Southeast, Gambela Regional State and West Omo Zone in the South. The Zonal capital Mizan-aman is found 561 Km southwest of Addis Ababa and 850 Km from the regional city Hawassa (Bench maji cultural and tourism office 2012). The Bench is predominantly live in three *Woreda* that are South Bench, North Bench, Shey-Bench and Mizan-Aman administration town. They also live outside of the Zone such as, in Kaffa Zone in Dacha (Goba-chara) and Sheka Zone in Yeki Woreda (Muluneh and Derege 2013).

This study is conducted in South Bench Woreda. It is one of the woredas found in Bench-Sheko Zone. South Bench is geographically bordered on South by *Meiniteshasaha*, on the west by *Gurafereda*, on the North by *Sheko* and on the northeast by *Semine* Bench Woreda, on the east by the *Shey* Bench Woreda and on the southeast by *Meinitgoldiya* woreda. The woreda found approximately 27 km from administrative town Mizan-aman, 877 km from *Hawassa* and 588 km from Addis Ababa. The Woreda have 26 kebele with the total number of populations 136,327 among this male population are 66873 or (49.09%) and female 69454 (50.01%) (CSA 2007).

The topography of the area is characterized by hilly mountains and rugged high lands cut by deep valleys. It is also endowed with considerable number of waterfalls and rivers. Tsosingud, *Baybagud*, *Mochingag*, *Garsigag*, *Ganjen*, *Opem*, *Oysa*, *Ombes* and *Dimot* are among the highest peaks in *Benchdod*. Along these hilly mountains, there are also few attractive and

beautiful waterfalls. Among others the *Denbi* waterfall, located at *Kitte* vicinity, *Kosokol* waterfall near *Mizan-aman* town magnifies the aesthetic values of the *Benchdod*. The altitudes and intensity of rainfall in the area is generally varies from 1500 meters to 2500 meters and from 1700 millimeters to 2000 millimeters respectively. The area is endowed with considerable number of rivers, dense natural forests, fertile soil and various wild animals. Regarding the rivers, *Gacheb*, *Shonga*, *Keker*, *Kei wuha*, *Kosokol*, *Det*, *Dama*, *Arbiqa*, *Kashu*, *Chur*, *Dinboit*, *Zib*, *Kashu*, *Bayni*, *Shasha*, *Gomej*, *Dal* and *Weyta* are among the major rivers (Kundisam 1981 cited by Tsehaye 2017).

### 3.1.1 Study Area Map



**Figure1:Study area map(Ethio-Gis and CSA (2007)**

### 3.1.2. Origin and Early History

The original homeland of the Bench has controversial because writers pointed out different places as original homelands from where the people came to their present settlement.

However, the most widely accepted tradition about the original homeland of Bench people was *Jazh* (beyond the present day Bench land). The *Jazh-tyat* had three sons, named *Bayba*, *Meru* and *shey*. The *Jazh-tyat* was both the political leader and the high priest of the *myang* cult in *Jazh*. While when they grow up *Jazh-tyat* gave *Weyjin Sayfesh* to *Bayba*, and *Kerbas* to *Mieru*. The surroundings of *Jazh* were also given to the younger son of *Jazh-tyat*, the *Shei*. Then after, they become *Tiyat* and changed their name to *Benush-tyat*, *Mer-tyat* and *Shey-tyat*(Adam 2018).

The *Bayba* was considered as their leader during their movement and expansion from the *Jazh* to *Wocqen*, on the *gachab* river basin. *Benuc* was one of the son of *Jazh-tyat* in *Jazh*. Hence, the name of the people is derived from this origin. The term Bench is the official name for the ethnic group. The area inhabited by the Bench was called *Bencdod*. The three ancestral clans of the Bench traced their origin to the place called *Jash*, now situated within the Bench land in the district of *Shey* Bench. That the three original clans went out towards different directions and lastly they settled in the present territories. The Bench speak the langue family of Omotic language and also claim their origin from Omotic peoples (Muluneh and Derege 2013).

### 3.1.3. Clan System

Similarly to many African societies the Bench is organized along the clan line. The *Bench* proper of today first and foremost comprises the three major ancestral clans; namely *Bench*, *Mer* and *Shey*.

These chief clans further sub-divided into various sub-clans (Werner 1975 cited by Muluneh and Derege 2013).

<b><i>Bench chief clans</i></b>	<b><i>Mer chief clans</i></b>		<b><i>Shey chief clans</i></b>		
<i>Baykes</i>	<i>Zangnd</i>	<i>Bockes</i>	<i>Koynkes</i>	<i>Yatkes</i>	<i>Gagen</i>
<i>Hakas</i>	<i>Korzh</i>	<i>Gamkes</i>	<i>Naykes</i>	<i>Vyaskes</i>	<i>Oyxkes</i>
<i>Qornkes</i>	<i>Gizh-nyav</i>	<i>Dakes</i>	<i>Tom</i>	<i>Balkes</i>	<i>Bitkes</i>
<i>Bokes</i>	<i>Dargam</i>	<i>Koyg</i>	<i>Komkes</i>	<i>Zexkes</i>	<i>Sob</i>
<i>Xhyatkes</i>	<i>Mag</i>	<i>Godkes</i>	<i>Bat</i>	<i>Gitkes</i>	<i>Mayskes</i>
<i>Duykes</i>	<i>Ers</i>	<i>Maykac</i>	<i>Byak</i>	<i>Dudkes</i>	<i>Yadkes</i>
<i>Zmakes</i>	<i>Dachbah</i>	<i>Demziqn</i>	<i>Gomkes</i>	<i>Gebkes</i>	
<i>Cakes</i>	<i>Gompu</i>	<i>Xsyaxs-kes</i>	<i>Yitkes</i>	<i>Alkes</i>	
<i>Byatkess</i>	<i>Vyark</i>	<i>Dud-nyav</i>	<i>Agas</i>	<i>Goytkes</i>	
<i>Gashkes</i>	<i>Gorsh</i>	<i>Cockes</i>	<i>Wozhkomt</i>	<i>Goskes</i>	
<i>Mushkes</i>	<i>Mayk</i>	<i>Zoykes</i>	<i>Nachkes</i>	<i>Qep</i>	
<i>Taskes</i>	<i>Dushkes</i>	<i>Gizhkes</i>	<i>Aytkes</i>	<i>Ganchkes</i>	
<i>Tur</i>	<i>Saykes</i>	<i>Band</i>	<i>Tankes</i>	<i>Goqkes</i>	
<i>Mankes or Mannd</i>	<i>Ockes</i>		<i>Gashkes</i>	<i>Kotskes</i>	

### **3.1.4. Political Organization**

Until the introduction of the modern government system with the incorporation of the Bench in to Ethiopian empire, the local administration of the Bench had relied on indigenous

administration system. The Bench had their own traditional justice system by which they maintained the solidity.

This indigenous administrative organization of *Bench* was characterized by a hierarchical structure of clans. In administrative all clans are equally involved through their representative. The *Bench*, *Mer* and *Shey* chief clans are representing all clan in the society. Based on this from the *Bench* chief clans the *Baykes* clan was considered as the king of Bench (*Bench-Tyat*) and from *Mer* chief clan, *Zangnd* and *Korz*h clans was considered as king of *Mer* (*Mer-tyat*) as well as from the *Shey* main clan, *Koy*nk*es* was considered as the king of *Shey* (*Shey-tyat*). They have equal status in political and religious affairs of the society (Muluneh and Derege2013).

For the administrative purpose, the Bench territory was divided into six regions and many sub-districts which were headed by *Tyats* and *Ukars* respectively under the canopy of the supreme ruler of the region, *Bench-tyat*, *Mer-tyat* and *Shey-tyat* (Tsehaye 2010).

The *Bench-tyat* supervised the districts, insured the loyalty of *Tyats*, reconciled conflicting *Tyats* and approved the accession of *Tyats*. Below him, the *Tyats* performed administrative functions in their respective districts. They developed rules and regulations, and implement them; render judicial service and collect tributes for themselves and the *Bench-tyat*.

The villages in the district of *Tyat* were governed by village head men, *Ukars*. The *Ukars*' duties include, among others, implementation of the order of *Tyat*, hearing complains and settling disputes, collecting tributes and coordinating villagers for carve labor for the *Tyat*. Except *Ukars* who were appointed and dismissed by *Tyat*, the power of other rulers (*Bench-Tyat* and *Tyats*) was hereditary (Muluneh and Darege 2013).

### **3.1.5. Religion**

Before the introduction of world religions to the region, the Bench was followers of indigenous religion. For the long period of time traditional religion was served as part of Bench's day to day activities like hunting, farming, getting marriage and others. They are belief in the spirit of *Kah* and belief in ancestral spirit called *Miange* (Tsehaye 2010).

As Muluneh and Darege (2013) stated the *Kah* is sky god held responsible for thunder, lighting, the movement of the stars and other heavenly bodies in the sky. Moreover, they asserted that the *Kah* cult is the most dominant religious system. Thus, it is believed to have the power of life and death.

The second dominant cult was the cult of *Miange*. It is the spirit of the deceased *Bench-tyat*. The *Miange* passes from the deceased king to his eldest living son. The *Miange* cult had a priesthood known as *Bench-tyat* (Girmaye 1941 cited by Gebreigezeyabher 2018). The spirit is acting as mediators between the existing human being and supreme natural force. The chief of the *Miange* (*Bench-tyat*) was regarded as king of the sun and the rain and provided with gifts of cattle and honey so that he makes the sun rise and the rain rains (Tsehaye 2010).

After the Emperor Menelik II of Shewa territorial expansion to the area, Orthodox Christianity is introduced into the Bench land. Even though the process of systematic conversion of the Bench people into the Ethiopia Orthodox Christianity was designed, the numbers of Bench convertors were insignificant. After that the introduction of Protestant Christianity with the work of missionaries of American United Presbyterian Mission was the main initiates of Protestantism in Bench. The missionaries were positively welcomed by the local people of the Bench (Tsehaye 2010). Currently the majority of the Bench is the follower of protestant Christianity and traditional religion.

### **3.1.6. Economy**

The Bench is predominantly agriculturalist. The climatic condition of the area with the fertility of soil helped for the production of a variety of food crops and the practice of animal husbandry. The existing farming system is traditional mixed farming based on animal traction and human labor. Cultivation was possible all-year round. They cultivate cereals, vegetables and root crops. Among these cereal crops, maize and sorghum are the dominant ones. They also cultivate teff, millet, barley and wheat. The varieties of root crops cultivated in the area were taro (*jong*) and false banana (*dash*), which is considered as staple food of the people. They also produced different kinds of cash crops as coffee, tobacco, cat, and fruits like banana, mango, papaya, orange and vegetables such as pumpkins, cabbage, onion, pepper and garlic are grown commonly (Girmaye 1984 cited by Tsehaye 2010).

The Bench also involved in rearing animals such as cattle, sheep, goat and chicken. Of these animals, cattle breeding had great value that had multiple roles since all important transactions including marriage, blood money and gifts were paid in cattle. Keeping of honey bee was another significant economic activity of the Bench society. Almost all the people produce honey in a traditional way. In the past, wealthy individuals such as *Khanan* owned up to a hundred bee hives.

Trade was the other constituent of the people economy. The other income generating activity is metal work, pottery, woodwork, tanning basketry and hound craft (Girmaye 1941 cited by gebregziyaber 2018).

### **3.1.7. Social Institutions**

The Bench has participated in numerous socio-cultural institutions. Among others, the teamwork such as *Baji* and *Dab* were and still are vital societal and economic institution among the Bench. They organized themselves during seasons of sowing, weeding and harvesting as well as house building and other social affairs. The *Baji* is teamwork that was made up of three to five individuals. This was formed among neighboring groups on reciprocal basis. Other types of communal labor that consisted of a large population are known as *Dab* (Muluneh and Derege2013).

If an individual wanted to complete a given work in a short time he or she organizes a labor known as *Dab* (in rotation) by asking the villagers for help. The women prepares a local beer known as *Gez* (local drink made of maize or sorghum) and *Gea* (local drink made from the coffee leaf) and food like bread and roasted grain for the consumption of the participants. However, the type and the amount of food and drink depend on the capacity of the calling person (Muluneh and Derege2013).

It is vital societal and economic institution among the Bench. Except few members of the royal families all section of the society were actively involves on *Baji* and *Dab* (Tsehaye2010).



### **3.2. Research Approach**

Qualitative approach is encouraged to produce rich accounts or the details of a culture (Lincoln and Guba 1985 cited by Bryman 2012).

This study was conducted through qualitative approach. Qualitative approach would be allowed me to get detail information and understand the views of informants on the marriage practices and the status of women. Qualitative approach was also enable me to directly involve and creating intimacy with the community and to collect data by using multiple data collection techniques such as key informant interview, in-depth interview, observation and focus group discussion.

### **3.3. Research Design**

The researcher believes that, ethnographic design is appropriate and suitable among other design to understand marriage practice and status of women in natural setting. Ethnographic research design is allowed to get deep information that are described by native, in their own words, perspective and experience about types of marriage and its implication on women status, bride-wealth practices and its relation with women status and marriage ceremony through observation, key informant interview, in-depth interview and focus group discussion that is important to get first hand data.

### **3.4. Source of Data**

In this study the researcher used both primary and secondary data sources to generate appropriate data. Primary data was collected from the local elders, government officials and those who involved in customary marriage and their families by using different technique.

The secondary sources also gathered through document review of prominent scholars, academically published journal articles, books, reports, conference papers and local documents are taken as the relevant source of information to frame the theoretical basis of this study.

The reviewed theoretical frameworks were used to understand key concepts used in the study, whereas reviewing of related empirical studies enabled me to identify the research gap attempted to be filled by this study. The review of locally available documents and statistical information were used to describe the study area and the people.

### **3.5. Data Collection Method**

All ethnographic research uses participant observation (and field notes) as a means of data collection. This can be supplemented with interview data and through document sources in order to build up a detailed picture of a particular culture in the society (Atkinson et al. 2001: Mason 2002 cited by Hogan et al. 2009). In this study various data gathering technique were employed such as key informant interview, observation, in-depth interview and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Each technique is discussed below:

#### **3.5.1. Key Informant Interview**

To achieve the objective the researcher conducted key informant interview with informants. The informants purposely selected based on relatively better knowledge on marriage practices and women status from the member of the community, government officials and experts. Based on this key informant interview conducted with administer and expert of women and children affairs, administer of culture and tourism office, lawyers and local elders. The key informant interview used to know deeply about how marriage arranged among the Bench and by whom, the types of marriage and special values and norms attached to the women by the society. The researcher use key informant interview to better understand the culture of bride-wealth, bride-wealth implication to the society and bride wealth relation with women. In addition to this, the key informants described about customary marriage ceremony. During key informant interview section guiding questions used to get relevant data.

### **3.5.2. Observation**

In qualitative research, participant observation is the ways in which the social phenomena observed in their natural setting. The researcher established continuing social relations with the individuals being studied (Gray et al. 2007). This study was used observation to get firsthand data. Therefore, the selected area of south Bench woreda (*Kob, Omakele* and *Kokinkebele*) were observed to gather tangible and relevant data and to interact with informants.

The observation was done on several occasions that related with marriage and women activities related with marriage in the society; specifically the process of giving and receiving bride-wealth and types of gift in the community. During the observation, of bride-wealth, great consideration was provided on the activities of women and men during bride-wealth and the participation of women in the process of bride-wealth. Additionally, marriage ceremonies such as the cultural food preparation, dance and sings were observed. All scenarios were taken as notes and photographs.

### **3.5.3. In-depth Interview**

In this research in-depth interview was other data collection technique. The in-depth interviews were conducted in the three *kebele*. The in-depth interviews were carried out with both men and women members of local community. During in-depth interview the informants was selected based on their relation with the issue. The informants of in-depth interview were bride, bridegroom and parents of bride and bridegroom of both sexes. The informants described their marriage experiences such as types of marriage they engaged in and bride-wealth, the importance of bride-wealth toward women. The in-depth interview was also conducted with unmarried man and women, their outlooks about bride-wealth and marriage type they want to conduct.

### **3.5.4. Focus Group Discussion**

In this research focus group discussions were employed with the members of the community. The informants are intentionally selected from different sections of the community. During the FGD section, informants with similar background put in the same group based on their sex, age and marital status. Such organization of informants was involved married women and men. The FGD was enabled me to gather data on the view of different social groups about women in

relation to bride-wealth practices and gender relations with customary marriage. The FGD sessions would be conducted by using guiding questions, which translated in to local language or *Benchnon*.

Throughout the FGD sessions, notebook, voice recorder and camera were used based on the consent of informants. In order to run the FGD sessions effectively, the researcher used research assistant.

### **3.6. Informant Selection**

In this study non-probability sampling was employed to select the target population and study site. The *Bench* people are dominantly live in North *Bench*, South *Bench* and *Shey Bench Woreda*. For the purpose of this research South *Bench*, is purposefully selected due to the widely practices of customary marriage. Hence it's important to get the original marriage practices of the *Bench* people. Based on this *Kob*, *Omakel* and *KokinKebele* would be selected by considering, there similar attribute in terms of marriage in the *Woreda*.

Non-probability sampling is appropriate for labor-intensive, in-depth studies of a few cases. In-depth research on sensitive topics requires no probability sampling. When you are collecting cultural data, as contrasted with data about individuals, then expert informants, not randomly selected respondents, are what you really need (Bernard 2011). The researcher used non-probability sampling technique particularly; purposive sampling would be employed. I was selected the informants based on their knowledge about the topic or relation with it.

### **3.7. Data Analysis and Interpretation**

From different types of data analysis this research analyzed the collected data using the thematic analysis approach. The data collected by key informant interview, observation, in-depth interview and FGD was coded in to different parts. As the data collection go on, analysis is also simultaneously till the point of data saturation. To analyze the data the researcher made such activities: listening to the audio-recorded carefully, observing the image and video data to get meaning behind them, reading the transcribed data carefully several times to understand key concepts, underlining and highlighting the key concepts, reducing and categorizing codes and writing notes.

### **3.8. Ethical Considerations**

In this study all ethical standards were applied. The district administrators were informed and obtained letter of collaboration from each office. Hierarchically, *Bench-sheko zone* culture and tourism office, the experts of women and children affairs and other concerned government authorities were also addressed. Great emphasis was given to respect and prevent informants' privacy and consent whenever taking pictures and acquiring data.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the findings of the study from the data obtained through key informant interview, in-depth interviews, FGD and observation.

#### 4.1. Marriage practices among the Bench

Among Bench, marriage valued in relation to its ritual ceremonies and sense of security. Particularly, to bring greater confidence for security and prestige, the society believed that having many children is inevitably important. In order to achieve this, necessity among their family, polygamy marriage has been practiced and tenured longer. As indicated in the following key informant explanation, being small size family makes household vulnerable to challenges outside and hence, look for more wives to bear more children so that can cope up with.

*My family has only four sons. One day, one of my brother fight with a man who has many brothers. My brother injured a man. His brothers threaten my family. After few months, my brother died. One day, I meet with one member of that family and he insulted me. Then we fought each other and I injured him. Irritating by their son's injury, his family came to my house to revenge me. They come at night to searching me and my brothers. Due to the small size of our family, we could not resist their families. This forced me to ask forgiveness and paid compensation for them. Since that event, I decided to marry many wives and having many children. Now, I have two wives and also I am interested to marry other. The children are my supporters, they came to me during discourse even if they live in other far areas [KIIK12: April-3-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].*

In this regard Wood and Jewkes 1998 cited by Mesatywa (2009) indicated that in African communities the ability to have children is central to a woman's status and value in the relationship.

Moreover, someone to have many children in Bench has religious dimension. They believe that to have many children is considered as being strict follower one's religion. Concerning this, in-depth interview indicated

*In our traditional religion (kah) having many children is the sign of blessing by the indigenous cult. Individuals sacrificed cattle to the Bench traditional religious leader to get many children. The religion allows having many children and wife. In our religion having so many children was considered as observing spiritual rule [IIK11: March-28-03-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].*

Also, the FGD participants explained that, having many children and wives among the Bench has economic value. Most of the time the Bench men have large land, it needs higher manpower. So the men married to use wife manpower. The men marry additional wives and allocate land for them. Then his wife and children cultivate the land. The husband uses the resources freely even if he does not help them [FGDK13: April-9-04-2019; 8:30-10:30 Am].

In addition the in-depth interview indicates that, the *Bench* practice polygamy for sex preference of their offspring to establish a new kinship ties and when a wife happens to be infertile. That means when, women born only one sex that is boys or girls, the husband marries other wife to get daughter or son. Besides, he marries to establish a new kinship relation with other family and to substitute his died children. Sterile woman is also another factor that caused the husband to marry other woman [IIK33: April-26-04-2019; 09:30-11:30Am].

The *Bench* men marry the second wife by notifying or hiding to their wives about the new marriage proposal. The husband is allowed to marry the sister of his wife. Concerning this, the key informants explained that:

*The husband's has the right to inform him wife about the interest to marry another girl. That is more suitable for the men to give the bride-wealth. His wives sometimes negotiate her sister to him. She makes this to reduce co-wives conflicts. In addition to this, the wives do this to transfer the resources for their parents. A man also marries another wife without informing his wife. In such case elders negotiate his wife to agree to the new marriage [KIIC31: April-27-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].*

Similarly to *Bench* polygamy is practiced among Oromo (Gemechu and Assefa 2006) and among Gumuz of Ethiopia (Wohabie and Teka 2018). Contrary to this Fjeld (2006) indicate that, polyandry is practiced among Tibet people.

The in-depth interview explains that, the *Bench* practiced exogamous marriage. Thus, a person marries outside of his or her clan. But it is worthy to note that even outside of his or her clans he or she does not intermarry with all clans. Rather there are specified clans to marry each other [IIK13: March-30-03-2019; 8:30-10:30 Am].

The clan specifications in marriage relation are related with the concept of clan stratifications in the community. Some clan are considering themselves as better than other clans. So their marriage relation is limited between few clans.

Regarding this key informant narrates as follow:

*In our society marriage with in the same clan is strongly forbidden. But, intermarry between all clans has not allowed. The members of the Baykes clan (ruling clan) allow to marrying from the members of Merr, Ers, Qef, Gizind and Zanged clans. On the other hand, members of Qurinkes clan marry with the members of Zoykes, Taskes and Bat clans... }* [KIIK12: April-3-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

The key informant also indicates that, now a day the restrictions to create marriage relationship are reducing. All clans are married each other except with the *Bande* clan. The restriction on marriage is decreasing due to different reason including decline the power of ruling clan and expansion of education among the people. These change the power difference between clans and community outlook. Especially, the educated youth of the society are against such restrictions [KIIK23: April-18-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

Moreover the task of identifying and knowing clan is the serious issue for marriage. In the society individuals belonging from the same mother's or father's clan are considered as sister and brother. About this issue the in-depth interview explains that:

*Marriage between the same clan is incest taboo. If there is any attempt to make marriage relationship among them, they advised by his or her relatives and elders*



*to stop their attempt. If they do not stop and continued their relations secretly, the couples will be cursed and marginalized from their family as well as the community. This restriction is because of long established belief. That whenever the couples are from the same clan, they would give birth to abnormal child* [IHK12: March-29-03-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

## **4.2. Types of Marriage**

The *Bench* practices different types of marriage each of them have their own features. The community practiced those marriages due to different reasons. These practices have positive and negative implications on the status of women. Regarding the types of marriage, the key informant interview indicated that, the *Bench* practiced five types of marriage these are arranged (*purn donta*), elope (*garska hame*), widow inheritance (*barz*), abduction (*gocha hame*) and replacement (*goxe*) [KIIK21: April-16-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]. Similarly Augustyniak (2009) indicated that, in Africa marriages the relationships that have been contracted in a traditional way receive the marriage status.

### **4.2.1. Arranged Marriage (*Purn Donta*)**

My key informants explain that, arranged marriage is mainly practiced in the past. However, currently rarely practice by rich persons and *Tyat* families. The arrangement of such marriage is initiated either by the boy himself or by his parents. To arrange the marriage the boy searches a girl and informs to his parent that he is interested to marry that girl. Then his parents accept his idea and continued the process of marriage arrangement [KIIK12: April-3-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

Similarly in-depth interview explains that, if the boy's parents do not accept his choice, they do not play their role on the marriage arrangement. So, the boy sends elders to his parents. The elders try to negotiate them. When the negotiation ends by disagreement, his interest to marry in arranged form of marriage is break. Because the girl's parent do not start anything without the existence of the boy's parent. Yet, he has opportunity to marry the girl with another type of marriage [IHK23: April-14-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

Arranged type of marriage is also initiated by the boy's parents. They search a girl and collect information about her background including her clan, ability to cultivate, behavior, preparation of food and drinks and others. After checking the above criteria, they inform for the son. If he did not know her, they secretly show him. Then they ask his interest. If he agrees to marry her, they secretly send woman to inform and convince the girl to accept the marriage. If her reaction is positive they send elders to the girl's parent. Most of the time the girl's parent do not have information about what the boy's parents do. They inform only when elders come to their house [IIK22: April-13-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]. In contrary to this among the Kung of the Kalahari Desert of South Africa the parents could arrange a son's marriage during infancy (Foley 2001).

The key informant explains that the boy's families and elders come to the place near to the girl parent. They stay in short distance from her parent home. Two or more elders are interring into the girl's parent homestead. But the elders also stay outside of the home near to the door. During their time they exchange greeting with the girl parent. The girl's parent invites the elders to enter into their home. Instead of enter to home they enunciate the aim of their coming. That means they directly asked them to give their daughter to marry the son of the parent who send them. The elders explain the father of the son, his mother and their clans, the place where he located, legality of marriage between their clans, their interest to create relationship with them and so no. The girl's family listens to all the elders' information. But they do not give immediate response. Instead, they appointed them to come back in the third day or one week. The appointment day is increase or decrease depending on the distance between the girl's parent and their relatives. After they agree on the next appointment the elders return to inform to the boy's family [KIIK33: April-29-04-2019; 8:30-10:30 Am].

The in-depth interview explains that, the girl's parent give appointment to the boy's parent in order to inform the close maternal and paternal relatives of the girl. Before the appointment day close relatives of the girl come together and discuss about the boy's clan, behavior, working ability and other issue which seen as criteria in the community. They also check the information about the boy. Lastly, they ask the interest of the girl [IIK33: April-26-04-2019; 09:30-11:30Am].

According to the key informant's explanation, during the appointment day, the girl's relatives come together. The women prepare food and drinks for the guest. From the side of the boy, his

family and other elders are come together and near to the girl's parent house. In this time the two parents carefully discuss the details of the arrangement through mediator. The mediators are two individuals which enunciate message between the two parents. They ask the interest of the girl's family and her willingness on the marriage. If the answer is positive, they discuss on bride-wealth and decide the day when it would be given.

During the third visit, the elders come to the girl's parents with the bride-wealth. After the bride-wealth transferred to the girl family, immediately they decided wedding day. The girl's family appoints the wedding day up to a year. Yet, the boy's parent respectfully asks them to shorten the wedding day. Then the girl's parents reduce the day up to a month. Finally, both families agreed on the wedding day [KIIK33: April-29-04-2019; 8:30-10:30 Am].

After the wedding day is decide the betroth ceremony is celebrate by the age-mate of the couples. Regarding this, the in-depth interview indicates as follow:

*The Bench greatly celebrates arranged marriage. That starts from the final agreement of the bride's family on the wedding day. At night their relatives gather together to dance and sing. The cerebation is held in the houses of both parents. Such celebrations continue until the wedding day. After betrothed, she did not move without her relatives and friends. Always she is escorted by her relatives and friends. Her relatives protect her beauty until the wedding day. Such protection and positive gesture is made for the girl to show her high social status* [IIK21: April-12-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

Nowadays, this marriage is acceptable by the dominate religion of the Bench or protestant and culture of the *Bench*. In this marriage the voice of the parents are respected and powerful. However, the process takes long time so that the young generation mostly does not select arranged marriage.

#### **4.2.2. Elope Marriage (*Garska Hame*)**

Elope marriage is another type of marriage which is practiced by the *Bench*. The key informant described that this marriage is arranged by the consents of spouses. Most of the time, the girl is convinced by negotiator. This marriage is now the common and widely practiced type of

marriage among the Bench. The young generation prefers this type of marriage than other for such marriage arrangement provides them freedom to choice would be husband or wife, to carry out their wedding at any time they want [KIIK32: April-28-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]. Similarly Hawwata marriage in Oromo is arranged by mutual interests of the couples (Seyoum2016). In contrary with Bench the study of Wohabie and Teka (2018) indicate that Gumuz girl is mostly married with a system of sister exchange.

The participants of FGD indicated that, the spouses relationship in elope marriage is started when the boy seen the girl at anywhere and love her. He searches information about the girl including her clan. After this, the boy identifies the specific location of the girl and select broker (*Zuke*) to negotiate them. In most case, the *Zuke* is the girl's aunt. The boy sends the *Zuke* to the girl. She informs the idea of the boy to the girl and also the response of the girl to the boy. This process is known as *Garska*. If the girl accepts the proposed marriage, the *Zuke* let her to meet him. After they meet together, they discuss about the issue. Finally, the boy gives money, buy clothes and other necessary materials for his fiancée. During this time the broker facilitates conditions and enjoy with the couples. The broker is women or men who actively engaged in the conclusion of *Garska* marriage. Often women are actively involved in negotiating the couple [FGDK32: May-2-05-2019; 8:30-10:30 Am].

Regarding Elope marriage the in-depth interview narrates as follow:

*After they started their relationship, the spouses do not waste longtime. Most of the time, they decide to marry in short period of time. To take her, the boy came to town with his friends. The girl also came to the town with her Zuke and other best friends. Both meet at the town where they appointed each other. Then the boy gives 300 or 500 birr for the Zuke. The girlfriends are turned back to their home while the girl has gone with the boy and his friends [IIK33: April-26-04-2019; 09:30-11:30Am].*

During elope marriage the girl's parent does not have information about their daughter relationship until she run away from them. This marriage concludes in secret way, to make the girl free from the family control and to reduce the disturbance of family and friends [IIK33: April-26-04-2019; 09:30-11:30Am].

The key informants explain that, in *Garska* marriage the couples do not directly go to the groom home. Instead, they stayed on the house of his friend until negotiation with the girl parents is made. After they come to his friend's house, immediately the bridegroom sends elders to his family to tell the marriage. The boy's parents have obligation to send elders in the first day morning up to the third day. Sending elders in the first day is common and acceptable in the community. When the boy parent does not send elders to the girl's parent within the common time they take actions. The actions are start from punishment of money or cow up to turn back their daughter. If the girl's parent have large family member, they search and get her. After that immediately they give for another person who has previously good relation with them. Yet, this is rarely happening in the *Bench* [KIIK33: April-29-04-2019; 8:30-10:30 Am].

Regarding this one of my key informant explain the issue as follow:

*The boy's parent sent elders to the girl's parents early in the morning before they open their door and searching their daughter. After they reached to the bride's parent house, one of the elder calls them and said that, "yentaga neaya nudaden gezawo, haki koye tuges kecheshnde" (your daughter is with us, you have not to be beaten by obstacle in searching of her)*[KIIK12: April-3-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

After this, the elders, the boy's and the girl's family negotiate and settled bride-wealth. Then the couples went to the groom's house which will be constructed earlier. They enjoy their honeymoon for one month. The couples celebrate their wedding day at the end of honeymoon. Their wedding is celebrated only by the bride-groom's family, in the house of bride-groom mother. The bride's families are invited like other guest because the wedding is celebrated after the couples live together [KIIK12: April-3-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

### **4.2.3. Widow Inheritance Marriage (Barz)**

Widow inheritance marriage is other types of marriage that practiced in *Bench*. In this type of marriage, when the husband die his brother marries his wife. Regarding this key informant explain as follow:

*In this marriage if the husband dies, his brother inherits his wife. The family of her husband meet together to discussed on the issue. The discussion starts early in the morning by elder members of the deceased person. The elder do not raise directly about the inheritance of his brother's wife. Rather, the elder says, I want to go to my house what shall we do the children and the property? Who would look after them?*[KIIK21: April-16-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

Regarding this scholars like Madani 1993 and Sarker 1997 cited by Emaj (2009) indicated that the Santal communities in Kalna village of Bangladesh allow the widow remarriage. Similarly Seyoum (2016) indicate widow inheritance exist in Oromo.

According to in-depth interview, the *Bench* has criteria to select the man who will be marrying the wife of decease brother. These criteria include closeness to the dead husband and the working skills and behavior of the man. By considering this, a man is selected to marry the widow. After the man agreed on the marriage, they call the widow and inform their decision. To confirm the marriage, he gives his belt to the widow and she receives the belt. The belt exchange makes their marriage obvious to the community. After that he started to support her by farming her land, building hut and doing other activates. By doing so, he start living with her [IIK11: March-28-03-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

The key informants also indicated that, culturally a *Bench* man inherits the wife of his brothers. Also the son of sister inherits the wife of deceased uncle. The reasons for encouraging the practice of inheritance marriage in the societies are to ensure stability of marriage and continuity of the deceased's lineage, to protect the prosperity and to provide economic, moral and psychological support for the deceased wife and children and to prevent the entrance of other clan into the decease family [KIIK12: April-3-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

#### **4.2.4. Abduction Marriage (*Gocha Hame*)**

The key informants indicate that, marriage by abduction is one type of marriage among the *Bench*. Such marriage disregards the girl's feeling and widely practiced in the past. Today such marriage is rarely practicing among the *Bench* [KIIK22: April-17-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]. Regarding the abduction marriage scholars like Tshabalala and Msimang 2009 cited by

Wadesango et al. (2011) indicate that bride abduction is practiced among some parts of South Africa. Gemechu and Assefa (2006) also point out among the Gidda Oromo abduction marriage is take place.

According to in-depth interview, the abduction is carried out in various forms. The first and common form of abduction is initiated by her mate. This further divided in to two forms. The first is takes place after the couple and their families agreed on the marriage. The bride-wealth was given to the girl's family. Her family gives appointment for actual marriage ceremony but the boy's think that the appointment day become very long. In this case, the boy and his friends abduct the girl [IIK23: April-14-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

The second sub division of abductions happens in the case when the girl agreed to marry the boy in *Garska* type of marriage. The family of the girl and in some case the boy's family may not have prior information about their relationship. The boy invites the girl at hotel or coffee house and consume something together. Then he secretly prepares and put his relatives near to the place where he appointed her. She come and enjoy with him and when she stand to go to her home as usual, they forced her to go with them [IIK32: April-25-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]. According to in-depth interviews this type of abduction takes place duo to different reason that is when the boy dreads his girlfriend will jilt him. Another reason is the boy gets information us his girlfriend started new relationship with another boy or when she has a lot of lover who have interest to marry her. This information is come from the girl's friend or neighbors. It also takes place when the girl often gives appointment to marry her boyfriend and repeatedly she postpone. The boy decides to use abduction as a solution to conclude the marriage [IIK32: April-25-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

The participants of FGD indicate that, after they take the girl the abductors stay in secret area until the night is coming. At the night they go to his relative's home. In the morning, he sends elder to his father. Then after, his families send elders to the girl's family so as to make negotiation. If the girl's family have information about the previous relationship, their opposition is not that much strong. Because they considered as she received money and other material from the boy and the boy may have evidence on their relation including photograph or the girl love him [FGDK21: April-21-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

According to key informants the second form of abduction or the main abduction, take place when the boy kidnap the girl without any previous relationship between them. This marriage is concluded without the consent and prior knowledge of the girl about the marriage. In some case the girl know the boy but she refuses his marriage proposal. Mostly the boy abducts her when she comes to market. She will be taken away by the boy and his friends. Then the girl forcefully enters into marriage [KIIK21: April-16-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

The reaction of the girl's family to abduction depends on the girl's interest or types of abduction. In this form of abduction the reaction of the girl family is very strong. This clearly indicated in their tale which read like this:

*Garska wankan weafren hamisheno*  
*Gocha wuankane wuafaren anka aybo*

Roughly translated as

When the girl marries by elope don't follow her  
yet, if she is abducted follow her up to your death.

It indicates the idea that the Bench strongly opposed the second form of abduction. In this form of abduction the girl's families gather together and silently arrive around the area where she is found. They fight with the abductors [KIIK21: April-16-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

The key informants also explained that, after the girl's family fight with the abductors, if it possible for them they bring back their daughter. After that the abductor and his families temporary migrate to other area until the girl's family calms down and negotiation made between them. Likewise Seyoum (2016) argued among the Oromo Sometimes abduction become causes of conflict.

The negotiation take place after the abductor's parent sends elders to receive their punishment, by paying compensation for the girl family. Whether he made sexual intercourse with her or not, culturally the boy punished by giving one cow and one ox for the girl's parents. This process is called *Masekei* literally it means washing. The implication of *Masekei* is clean the girl from the past event. In the Bench culture these punishment make the girl free from the abductor. After a month or years the boy sends elders to marry the girl. The elders settled the issue and he pay



bride-wealth. The bride-wealth of abduction marriage is higher than other types of marriage. The way of abduction is also determine the amount of bride-wealth [KIIK33: April-29-04-2019; 8:30-10:30 Am]. Similarly Gemechu and Assefa (2006) stated that in Oromo high bride-wealth is needed during abduction marriage.

#### **4.2.5. Replacement Marriage (*Qoxe*)**

According to key informant's interview, this is other type of marriage practiced among the Bench. Currently, it is declining yet still workable marriage to some extent. This is concluded upon the death of wife, her kin gives the sister of the deceased wife to the husband. Among the Bench, if the woman dies before giving birth, her sister will marry the husband in the form of compensation or payment. If she dies after she gave birth, especially a son, half of bride-wealth is returned to the husband. In addition to that if a wife dies without giving birth and her parents do not have daughter, all bride-wealth will be returned to the husband. But when she dies after the birth of a daughter her parents are free from replacement [KIIK32: April-28-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]. Similarly Wohabie and Teka (2018) indicate that, among Gumuz replacement is take place duo to women infertility.

The in-depth interview also indicates that, after the funeral the families of dead wife are stayed for three up to seven days. Then before they go to their home, they come together and discuss with the families of the husband. During this time, his family asks the deceased family about the issue. Then the deceased's wife family come together and discuss on the replacement. Finally, they promised to give their daughter. In this type of marriage, there is no wedding ceremony and bride-wealth [IIK33: April-26-04-2019; 09:30-11:30Am].

### **4.3. The Status of Women in Marriage Practices**

Concerning the polygamous marriage the FGD and in-depth interview indicated that, the polygamous marriage practice in the Bench affects women economically, socially as well as emotionally.

The participants of FGD explained that economically, women's assets have been sold by their husband in order to pay his bride-wealth for the newly arranged marriage. The remaining

resources, including land, shared with the newly established families of their husband. This highly reduces the economic resources of women [FGDK22: April-21-04-2019; 8:30-10:30 Am].

Moreover the polygamous marriage has social impact towards co-wife. Because most of the time their husbands did not treat all their wives equally. About this in-depth interview explain as follows;

*The husband often favors one his wife. The rest women faced economic and emotional discriminations. For this reason, some women are unwilling to become co-wife, but their culture influenced them to accept the practice of the polygamy marriage* [IHK12: March-29-03-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

According to the participants of FGD, married women did not visit their family without the consent of husband. During the visit of their parent, women were considered as guest. Most women go to their parent during conflict with husband, illness and death of the family. In addition to this women denied her right to use family planning, divorce and exposed to over load due to farm and household activity [FGDK31: May-1-05-2019; 8:30-10:30 Am].

Moreover, the key informant interview explains that, among the Bench property inheritance is culturally transfer to men. The customary law of inheritance dose not considered the right of women. Alienation from property inheritance is happening during the husband and father death. During the time of husbands dead the brother of the deceased husband has the right to control the property including the wife and children. The communities think that women do not properly protect the prosperity and her children when her husband died. In addition to this women do not considered as the owner of those property. In any means the right of the widow to inherit property is restricted. During father's died the daughter do not inherit any property. Only the sons are inherit the land, cattle and other property. After mourning married woman turn back to her home. Then the sons are distributing the assets according to seniority [KIIK11: April-1-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]. Regarding this Mohapatra (2015) indicate that, in India important decisions of the family are on the hand of male. Similar the theoretical framework of this research, liberal theory argue that oppression is viewed as the consequence of rigid gender role conditioning as well as irrational beliefs that women are less capable than men (Enns and Sinacore 2005).

### **4.3.1. The Status of Women in Arranged Marriage**

In the Bench custom, arranged marriage has greater value. Women married through arranged marriage has get superior social status. The boy's family and relatives respect the bride. The key informants explain that in this form of marriage, the girl selected not only by the interest of the boy but his family also has interest to create relationship with the girl as well as her family. So they are happy by the bond created between the two families. Hence, such marriage arrangement relatively offers better freedom and social recognition to the bride than the other brides that are married by the other types of marriage [KIIK23: April-18-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

In addition to this, the participants of FGD explain that the high social status of the girl in arranged marriage is due to positive attitude of the community toward the arranged marriage. The community connects this marriage with the idea of the girl came from respected family. Also the girl parents think that their daughter is respecting them [FGDK33: May-3-05-2019; 09:30-11:30 AM].

### **4.3.2. The Status of Women in Elope Marriage (*Garska Hame*)**

In the Elope marriage, women have full right to choose their spouse. They have the right to agree or disagree on the request. This shows that in *Garska* marriage, both partners have equal consideration and love each other [KIIK13: April-4-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

Regarding to this, the women who participated in FGD explained as followed:

*Garska* marriage is only based on couple's interest and negotiation. In this type of marriage a girl marries a boy she likes. This type of marriage gives chance to the girl to choice own husband. They also indicate that among the Bench the bride resides with her husband's parents, in most case, on the land of bridegroom father. Sometimes, the boy's families dislike the girl when they believe that her clan or personality mismatch with them and she would be a challenge to the bridegroom. The major things are thus, they try to overstate discourse and stand only on the side of the boy in discourse and motivate him to marry additional wife. Sometimes such acts of the bridegroom parent disturb the bride [FGDK32: May-2-05-2019; 8:30-10:30 Am].

### **4.3.3. The Status of Women in Widow Inheritance Marriage**

This type of marriage is fixed by the family of death husband without considering the interest of the widow. She has the duty to marry a man selected by the relatives of her husband. Regarding this in-depth interview indicate that, the deceased husband family restricts the widow not to marry another clan on the land and house of died husband. The widow uses and protects the property when she does not marry any one or her husband brother. If she is unwilling to marry her husband's brother, she become out of the property or will not marry up to the end of her life. So if she decides to marry out of her husband's brother, his families especially brothers bereave the children, land and other properties. The widow marries without taking anything from her properties. Also she will live far from them on the land of her new husband [IIK23: April-14-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

My key informants indicate that, the action of the dead husband families affects the widow economically as well as socially. Economically, she loses her previous properties including her house, land and cattle. Socially, she will be separated from her children, her neighbors and environment. Due to such consequences, she often accepts the decision of her died husband's relatives [KIHK13: April-4-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]. Concerning this Mesatyawa (2009) indicate that, in African male domination is prevalent due to traditional practices that abuse women. Similarly liberal feminist theory argued that women's unequal position is a result of artificial barriers to women's full participation in the public sphere (Abbott et al. 2006).

### **4.3.4. The Status of Women in Abduction Marriage**

According to FGD nowadays, the abducted girl does not report about abduction to the government body and her parents, instead they responded as they are married based on their willingness and she love him. Even if the girl's parent knows that their daughter is abducted, they have no choice rather than simply accepting her response. So, they turned back to home and prepare for negotiation with the boy and his parents [FGDK11: April-7-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

Also the in-depth interview indicates that moreover among the Bench after abduction take place most of the girls accept the marriage because they lost their virginity and community reduced

their status. The girls also marginalized from their friends when they returns from abduction to their families. The community considered the girl who returned from abduction as the wife of the abductor. Even, they returned to their families without making sexual intercourse with the abductor, most boys does not have interest to marry an abducted girl[IIK32: April-25-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

The participants of FGD explains that the abductors think that they punished and defalcate money and time due to the girl, so nobody marry her without him. He will marry her after he is legally punished by the government or through the customary law of the community. This provides opportunity to the abductor to marry the girl he abducted even after a long time. This forced the abducted girl to accept than refuse the marriage. Abduction marriage is concluded only for the interest of men. But the women marry due to fear of cultural influence. Likewise Wadesangoet al. (2011) attested that the abduction marriage is violating the rights of the girl [FGDK12: April-8-04-2019; 8:30-10:30 Am].

#### **4.3.5. The Status of Women in Replacement Marriage**

The key informants explain that in this type of marriage the deceased wife's parent, the husband and his parents make decision on the girl to marry the deceased sister's husband. They did not consider the interest of the girl which has a negative impact on her because of the reason which mention below. The girl may not love him, she did not marry as her age mates with the wedding ceremony and honeymoon. Also she loses other cultural practices that are undertaken during marriage conclusion [KIHK11: April-1-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]. In addition to that mostly there is great age difference between the husband and replaced girl. Commonly, this marriage is practiced to continue the wife kinship and to preserve the previous relationship between the families [KIHK31: April-27-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]. Similarly Paulina 2001 cited by Seyoum (2016) indicates that commonly African households are open to kinship networks and importance of lineage continuation. In contrary the finding of Cott (2000) indicates that in United States marriage is formed by the mutual consent of couple.

#### 4.4. The Practice of Bride-wealth (*Wore Geak*)

This section concerned with the practice of bride-wealth, bride-wealth relation to the status of women and current condition of bride-wealth.

The Bench practices bride-wealth during their marriage. The key informants explain that traditionally, bride-wealth can be given from the male parents to the women parent in the form of cattle or money [KIIK21: April-16-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]. Similarly a scholar such as Mamitu (2002) among the Konso and Seyoum (2016) in Oromo bride-wealth is practiced. In contrary to this in Amhara, both parents provide gifts for the couples (Wodajo1953; Ambatchew 1956 and Hoben 1973 cited by Alula et al.2016). Also the study of Shack 1974 and Bauer 1977 cited by Alula et al. (2016) indicate that in Tigray, dowry is practiced. The practices of bride-wealth are not unique to the *Bench* it is practiced in most parts of Ethiopia. However, the amount of bride-wealth and the way it practiced is varied from each other.

The key informant described that,

*The Bench used cattle for the gift of bride-wealth. Historically the Bench has great value for cattle. A traditional religion of the Bench dominantly used cow and ox for ritual purpose. The followers are advised to use cow and ox than other animals* [KIIK13: April-4-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

Regarding to this scholars like Kenyatta 1978 cited by Nganga (2010) stated that, the Agikuyu people used sheep and goats as bride-wealth, because sheep and goats played an important role in the economic, religious and social life of the people.

In the past, the amount of bride-wealth ranges is seven cattle and it may be increased based on the economy of the boy's family. Bride-wealth increase or decrease based on the boy's and the girl's clans. The men who marry daughter from ruling class give higher bride-wealth than another. In this case the number of the cattle rises up to thirty and above. The cattle give to the bride-wealth have own special name that are *Danze-dore*, *Karshin*, *Tishekre-toret*, *Wogine* and *Yenche-dobe* [KIIK21: April-16-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

Among the Bench bride-wealth is practiced before or after the marriage conclusion, that is done based on the types of marriage. In the arranged type of marriages, the bride-wealth is given

before the conclusion of marriage. When the marriage is based on the consent of couples and in the case of marriage by abduction the bride-wealth is given after the conclusion of marriage [KIIK21: April-16-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

My field observation shows that the bride-wealth is decided after great debate between the families. The participants in the event of bride-wealth are the girl's families, neighbors of the girl's parent, boy and his families, neighbors of the boy's parent and elders. Yet the girl's family is taking a major role to set the amount of bride-wealth. The elders try to make the communication smooth and fairness of the gift concerning the economy of the boy and his parent. Any problems between the boy and girl family negotiate and solved by the elders.

The bride-wealth is discussed during the first or second elders' visit. It is facilitated by the traditionally recognized individuals known as *wosnase* (mediators). The mediator is men selected by the boy's parents due to his communication skill. Their function is transfer information between the girl's and boy's family. Their number is two the reason for their number are to control the miscommunication. I observe that *wosnase* repute the first message before saying the response of another. They actively engaged even during the wedding day. The *wosnase* is it has the only legitimate person who enters into compound of girl's families. Even if they interred in to the compound, they are not allowed entering in the house of girl's parents.



Photo1: April-14-04-2019: The mediators during message transmission. Photo by researcher

During the appointment, the boy's parents and elders came with mediators. But they do not enter into the girl's parent compound. Few message exchanges through mediator, then her family show temporal house to his families. Traditionally the boy's parent and the girl's parent do not see face to face before the payment of bride-wealth. However, they started the dialogue about the cattle and money given. The dialog is continued until the cattle numbers reached to seven and above. During this time the bridegroom's families specify the sex and colour of cattle or the amount of money. They give some of the bride-wealth and agree on the next appointment. Mostly the appointment is not greater than one month.





Photo2: April-14-04-2019: The Bride's families and Bridegroom's families sitting in different house to discuss bride-wealth. Photo by researcher

In the next appointment, the boy and his family are came to the bride's parent by obtaining the promised cattle or money. If the boy's families came without fulfill the promised amount of cattle or money and try to change the color of cow or when they become late culturally they would be punished (*Eram*) to the girl families. Most of the time they punished by cow called *Karshin*. However, the boy parents give five hundred *birr* as fine in place of cow.

After the girl families receive bride-wealth directly the male members of the girl relatives sit outside home. Then the Groom relatives came to them and exchange greeting. At this moment their relation is started. Similarly the gift theory argues that exchange of gift creates strong bond between the giver and the receiver (Mauss 1966).

After the girl's parent receives the bride-wealth they return up to five thousands of money and above to the boy. But when the husband repeat conflict with his wife and she travel to her partner house they ask the money. So the bride-groom well protects the Bride. By doing so the girl parents attempt to minimize abuse on their daughter and protect the institution.

According to key informant interview, the bride-wealth process in arranged type of marriage is different from the other. In these case, the issue of bride-wealth discuss at the second appointment or after the girl parent allowed the marriage. In the appointed day the mediator enter

into compound to inform about their coming. After the mediators inform their arrival, the boy's parents sent greeting to the girl's parents then the girl's parent replied greeting. After greeting her parents show temporal house for his parents. Then the boy's families enter and seat in the house. After that they send thank her parents. Then his families answer to the girl families questions one by one [KIHK12: April-3-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

The key informant indicates the detail of bride-wealth conversation on the arranged types of marriage in the following narration:

*The boy's families said please tell us what you say. Then the father and mother of the girl say by what word we will speak? The boy's parents give the amount of money or cow to initiate the girl's parent to speak. Then they said how we talk and know her interest? Then his parents also give the amount of money or cow to the girl, to express her interest, either she is willing or unwilling on the marriage arrangement. After cow or money promised, the girl come and explain her interest, in addition to that she add list of ornaments that would be bought for her. After hearing her agreement her father said wherein I will seat to answer your questions? Then the boy's families say, I would give chair named as karshin. Her father also says by what shade you protect me from the sun, his families respond, I would give shade called as ox (Tishekre-toret). At the end they also give ox called as Yench-dobe. The remaining cattle are given to complete the bride-wealth. Generally the boy's parents give seven cattle to the girl families [KIHK33: April-29-04-2019; 8:30-10:30 Am].*

After they agree on the amount, the boy parent has the right to ask appointment to fulfill the gift. I observe that the bride-wealth process on Elope marriage is start in the first travel of the boy parent and elders. A group of individuals came to the Bride's parent house. They express the reason of their coming.

The participants of FGD indicate that, the Bridegroom families will tolerate the Bride parent feeling, even the Bride parent unwilling to speak with them and feel discomfort on the marriage. Once the Bridegroom relatives came to the Bride parent they do not have right to go to back without the consent of the Bride family. If they turn back due to disagreement they will punish

when they come back. So the boy families are waiting them until they call their relatives. After a time the Bride parent invite numerous individuals to speak about their daughter bride-wealth [FGDK32: May-2-05-2019; 8:30-10:30 Am].



Photo3: April-12-04-2019; 09: The boy parent waiting message from the girl family. Photo by researcher

As the participants of FGD explain that, starting the bride-wealth discussion without gather relative and neighbors is culturally unacceptable. It creates displeasure between relatives. So the Bride parent sends message to their family and neighbors [FGDK31: May-1-05-2019; 8:30-10:30 Am].

I observe that, after a time relatives and neighbors of bride's parent are come and sit in the house of bride parent. Similar with arranged marriage the dialog of bride-wealth is start by greeting Bride family. After exchange greeting the Bride families ask the mediators to bring the broker (*Zuqenas*), before start bride-wealth discussion. The boy families bring the *Zuqe* to the Bride families.

According to in-depth interview *Zuqenas* is a person who was negotiated the couple during *Garska* marriage. Ultimately the men his wife negotiated the couples. Dominantly women are

Played a role of negotiating the couples. But in the process of bride-wealth women do not bring to the bride family. The people disregarded the women from such status is due to the challenging behavior of that status [IHK22: April-13-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

From my observation after *Zuqenas* sit near to the bride family the discussion started. Like arranged marriage the bride-groom family give money or cow to the father and mother of the Bride. This is given to start the dialog (*Nonne fireke*). The amount of *none fireke* is change from time to time now father and mother are receiving four thousand *birr*. It increase based on the economic status of the bridegroom parent.

After receive *Nonne fireke* the bride's parent were start speaking with the bride-groom families. Then his families provide punishment called breakdown the house (*Ket basse*). The *Ket basse* is given to the bride parent because he took their daughter without their permission. The amount of the punishment is depends on the interest of her family. After they receive both *Nonne fireke* and *Ket basse* they show temporal house to bridegroom family. The boy family and the girl family sit in different houses, then discussion continue through mediators.

I observed that the next practice of bride-wealth in these types of marriage is *Wochi-ate*. It is practice before the bride-wealth is decided. The *Wochi-ate* is paid by the boy's parents, it including the amount of money invested at time of searching their daughter and the money she took from her father's pocket. According to in-depth interview, the pocket money is a false statement arranged from her families. The *Wochi-ate* payment is above ten thousand *birr*. The girl's family asks and receives *Nonne fireke*, *Ket basse* and *Wochi-ate* separately. In most case at this stage the amount of money reached up to thirty thousand *birr* and above. The other issue is that during the time of their conversation both families did not include the above payment in the amount of bride-wealth. In addition to that they never speak each another on the total amount of the money. This finding is similar with the gift theory which argued that, gift is not the same as a market where a man takes a thing objectively for a price (Mauss 1966).

From my observation after the girl's parent received their *wochi*, the next step is asking the main bride-wealth. This is the amount of bride-wealth decide by the government (five thousand five hundred *birr*). The *Bench-maji* zone administration decides five thousand five hundred *birr* as the legal amount of bride-wealth within the zone. Yet, the society improves this law as possible.

Similar with the previous gift the bridegroom's families ask politely to reduce the bride-wealth decided by the government. Based on their agreement the bride-wealth decided by the government is reduced up to three thousand birr and below. Mostly the bride-wealth becomes more than thirty thousand birr. The girl parent received the entire gift step by step. Unlike the *Bench* the amount of the gift in Konso is not much than 15 to 85 *birr* (Mamitu2002). My finding is comparable with the gift theory which argued that during the gift there is propriety at every step. Nothing is casual here. Contracts, alliances, transmission of goods, bonds created by these transfers each stage in the process is regulated morally and economically (Mauss 1966).

After the bride-groom provides the bride's parent with several amounts of money, the bride's parents received the obligation to visit the couples in return. The obligation of the bride's parent involved respect their daughter husband, provide necessary materials for the couple including clothes, shoes, *sondera*, *kanta*, pots, glass, box, bed, lotion and other household materials. Also the bride's parent have obligation to visit their daughter and her husband's family during birth, death, marriage and sickness. In addition to the household materials the Bride parents come with cultural food and drink during their visit. The money receive from bride-groom are returned in the form of materials.

This shows that, culturally the bride-groom has obligation to give bride-wealth, similarly the receiver of bride-wealth has the obligation to return back. This is similar with the gift theory, which argued that the system of gift exchange is included gifts voluntarily and obligatorily given, received and repaid. To receive it is actually to commit one to return the desirable gift (Mauss 1966).



Photo 4: April-26-04-2019: Materials given from the bride parents to the couple. Photo by researcher

The bride parent travel by taking the materials and foods. The materials are carries by the relatives of the bride. The time of visiting the Bride is a time for women. They sing song and dance during their visit. Male dose not participate the event. The community knows the kinship relation with the Bride by seeing the materials the women carries on their back. After they reach in the bridegroom mother hut they give the materials. After that calf is given to the Bride mother. Then they exchange greeting and food is provide for them. After they eat they turned back with sing song. After that the Groom mother and relatives women open the food received from the bride's family which is bread prepared from maze and cheese (*Kege*).

The in-depth interview explains that, the bridegroom parents distribute the food by cutting the bread to small parts and put in the leaf of false banana. The distribution is done at the night. First the food sent to all the relatives of the bride-groom. Then they sent to their neighbors. This is important to strength the relation between them [IIK23: April-14-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

The couples get greater respect by their friends after the bride's parent visited them with the considerable material. If the bride's parent did not visit the couples, the Bride and Bride-groom are insulted by the neighbors. Especially the bride feels inferiority from other women. The bridegroom also not respects the bride as their friends respected their wife [IIK23: April-14-04-

2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]. Similarly the gift theory argues that gift is subject to numerous prescriptions. The gifts are still obligatory and have special features and form (Mauss 1966).

#### **4.4.1. The Current Condition of Bride-wealth**

According to FGD participant's nowadays the community outlook towards bride-wealth has controversial issues. The first one is that, the bride-wealth is very important to the community. They explain that, bride-wealth is importance to maintain social connections between families, clans and neighbors. Also bride-wealth is important means of giving respect for women and their families. In addition giving bride-wealth to the girl's parent is also the way in which the men and their parents show their love to the Bride and respect to the culture. Similarly, in the past the society maintain the cultural practice of bride-wealth by prohibiting recognition to the marriage without the gift of bride-wealth[FGDK31: May -1-05-2019; 8:30-10:30 Am].Likewise, the gift theory concluded that exchange of gift have good moral transaction, bringing and maintaining human, personal, relationships between individuals and groups(Mauss1966).

The FGD participants explain that in the past the bride-wealth was given in the form of cattle, especially cow and ox. However, currently almost all bride-wealth is given in the form of money. The society accepted the change of the bride-wealth in the form of cash.

This change was happened because of two main reasons: the first reason is the cost of cow and ox is rapidly increased. This decreased the ability of the bridegroom and their parents to bought cattle. The second reason is that the bride families do not have interest to receive the bride-wealth in the form of cattle. For the reason, that the groom's families are replaced large cow and ox by calf. So the girl's families rejected the calf as their daughter's bride-wealth. If the girl's family received the bride-wealth in the form of calf it is difficult to purchase necessary materials for the bride and bridegroom [FGDK32: May-2-05-2019; 8:30-10:30 Am].

The key informant indicated that currently the amount of money given in the form of bride-wealth is rapidly rising from day to day. Even the gift increases, the *Bench* culture has no negative attitude towards receiving high amount of money or cattle during bride-wealth [KIIK13: April-4-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]. This result is contrary to Mamitu (2002) in Konso accepting large amount of bride-wealth is considered as selling one's daughter.

In contrary to the above explanation on which bride-wealth have considerable advantage towards the community, from the participants of FGD few of the young men are against the bride-wealth because of its impacts on their economy. According to them during the bride-wealth payment the bridegroom and his parent lost their previous property such as land, cow and money. As agriculture is major sources of income in *bench*, becoming landless weakens their economy for years [FGDK12: April-8-04-2019; 8:30-10:30 Am].

Also one of my key informants indicates that, high bride-wealth has negatively influence on the economic wellbeing of the couples. Sometimes high bride-wealth becomes cause of poverty and disagreement between bride and bridegroom [KI11: April-1-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

#### **4.4.2. Bride-wealth and the Status of Women in Bench**

Regarding the practices of bride-wealth in-depth interview indicated that, bride-wealth is greatly associated with the status and protection of women, consistency of relationship and respecting the girl's family [I13: March-30-03-2019; 8:30-10:30 Am].

Similarly the key informant indicated that, culturally bride-wealth is practiced to legitimate the marriage. Marriage without giving bride-wealth is more challenging for women, she detached from her families. Even when disorder happened between them, she did not go to her parents [KI12: April-3-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]. Likewise the gift theory indicate that some gifts are expressing the legal implications of their acceptance, in which case the affair is considered to be settled (Mauss 1966).

Also the key informants interview indicate the women marry by bride-wealth has higher status than another. Means the perception that bride-wealth increases the power and prestige of women. When the man gives bride-wealth he respect, believe, treat properly and not undermine his wife. This result is similar with Leakey 1977 cited by Nganga (2010) stated that bride-wealth is positive relation with women status and value in rural Agikuyu.



In-depth interview indicated that the bride-wealth is started by asking the idea of the Bride or girl. Their idea is decide either their family will accept the bride-wealth or not. Most women decide that, their father will accept their bride-wealth. Their parents are expecting positive response from their daughter. Yet, few brides say the bride-wealth does not give for their parent. This decision is happen when the girl does not have strong father, mother, brother, uncle, or she was feud with them. In some case if the bride thinks that their parents will not visits them after they received the bride-wealth due to alcohol addiction and health problem. In this case the bride agree with their husbands to promise in front of elders to protect and respect her and her parents even he do not give bride-wealth [IIK11: March-28-03-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

I observe that the major contribution of women in the bride-wealth process is preparing food and drinks for the attendants. All women in the neighborhood come to the girl's family by bringing own food and drink. The food and drink are like *zoung*, *sam*, *bud*, *gonege*, *chemo* and *zing* respectively.



Photo 5: April-24-04-2019: Women provide food to the participants of bride-wealth discussion.  
Photo by researcher

However, few women attended the discussion similarly with the men members of the family. Yet, the women involved only from the side of girl's family. Even though women are attends the conversation of bride-wealth there, contribution in the amount of bride-wealth decision is very low. Means they only give some suggestion on the issue. In contrary to the bride's family, women from the side of bridegroom do not participate in the bride-wealth.

Similarly, the in-depth interview indicates that in the *Bench* culture, the bride-wealth is decided by the men. Once the bride or girl allowed their parents to receive the bride-wealth, she cannot participate on the remaining decision. Even if the bride-wealth is give because of the girl, the bride dose not attends and reflects their idea on the amount of bride-wealth. The society thinks that when bride stands on the side of the bridegroom in the process of bride-wealth decision her parents are feeling anger. This cause misfortune on the future life of the Bride [IIK22: April-13-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

#### **4.5. Marriage Ceremony among the Bench**

According to in-depth interview the *Bench* marriage ceremony is one of the greatest event that colorfully celebrate. During the event, large numbers of individuals are invited. The preparation of wedding ceremony is done with the support of their neighbors. All people around the ceremonial house are necessary for the successful completion of the wedding. The neighbors are involved regardless of sex and age. The Women support the bride mother start from early in the collection of firewood, bought maize and other necessary materials. They also grinding maize and roasting *dangla-bud*.



Photo 6: March-30-2019: Women grinding maize to prepare *dangla bud*. Photo by researcher

All women in the neighborhood came to support who are bringing their food and drinks. The cultural food preparing during wedding day are *dangla-bud*, *Zhong*, *dichi*, *gonge* and local drinks like *borde*, *areke*, *geor chimqe* [IIK11: March-28-03-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].



Photo 7: March-30-2019: Roasting of *dangla-bud*. Photo by researcher

The children on their part help by fetching water, which are necessary for the feast. The men are involved by building temporary staying rooms for the attendants and decorating the compound. During the wedding day, invited individuals who are located in similar area are come in the group and reach at the same time. Each group came with music instrument and musician. They sing and dance during their coming. After they reached to the ceremonial house they interact with other groups for dance. Then they invited to sit on the prepared area to eat and drink.

From my observation the place where the guest sit is prepare from the leaf of banana and false banana. They did not use chair for this purpose. The in-depth interview explains that, preparing the chair for the bride's families is lead to punishment (*Iram*). Because they consider that, preparing fresh leaf for the guest as giving great respects for them [IIK33: April-26-04-2019; 09:30-11:30Am].



Photo8: April-29-04-2019: The leaf of false banana prepare to the guest sit. Photo by researcher



Photo9: April-29-04-2019: Cultural food preparing for wedding. Photo by researcher

The in-depth interview indicates that the marriage ceremony for arranged marriage (*purn donta*) is different from the remaining wedding ceremony. It is broadly celebrated wedding festival. In

this type of marriage preparation for ceremony start at the moment when the bride-wealth given to the girl's parent and the wedding day decided. After that both parents prepare necessary materials for the wedding and invite guests [IIK32: April-25-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

The participants of FGD explain that, during the wedding ceremony the bride-groom dressed any new clothes to go to the bride's parent home. The bride-groom sits on the male horse and takes female horse to the bride. Then the groom together with his best man and escorts goes to take the bride from her parents' home. After the bride-groom near to the bride's family home they sent message about their coming. If they become late from the appointment time they punished to the bride parents. The escorts of the bridegroom dancing and singing out of the bride's parent compound for minutes. The bride relatives and guests are singing and dance inside the bride parent compound. Then they join together, the bridegroom greeting with the bride's families. After greeting, bridegroom and bride sit together in the temporary house. They stayed for short minutes during their stay people put money in front of them. After that the bridegroom takes the bride, his best man carry and put the bride on female horse. Finally they came back to the groom families by singing and dancing. The bride relatives send them at the half of the road and turn back [FGDK32: May-2-05-2019; 8:30-10:30 Am].

Also the key informants indicate that during the past the bridegroom does not enter into the bride's parent compound. Yet, the bridegroom waits in the place near to her parent. The bride comes with the dance and sing of her maid of honor, parents and escorts. After joining together his best man take and put her on the female horse.

The key informants explain that, the actual wedding for the *Garska* and abduction marriage would be celebrated after the marriage conclusion. The ends of honeymoon program are celebrated as a wedding day. Similar to the arranged marriage, food and drinks are prepared for the wedding. Unlike arranged marriage the wedding was prepared only by the family of the bride groom. The bride families invited like other guests [KIIK21: April-16-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]. Like arranged marriage peoples came with music instrument including her families. They come by singing and dancing then they invited to eat and drink. The bride clothes new dress and sit on the side of the bridegroom. Both the bride and bridegroom attach 50 and 100 *birr* on their face then sit in temporal house. The guests become close to the couples and greeting them. Finally, they put money in front of them [KIIK32: April-28-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am].

The wedding ceremonies strengthen the interaction of the people. It is importance to collect friends, families and clan members found in other area. The wedding day is greater value for bride, the bride-groom and their relatives. Even if it is more important for the couples, the surrounded peoples are also enjoyed for three or more day.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5. CONCLUSION

This study was conducted on marriage practices and the status of women among the *Bench*, southwest Ethiopia. In order to address the research objectives, the researcher used both primary and secondary sources of data.

In South *Bench* word *polygamy* is widely practiced. In the polygamy, men and women have not equal right. The culture allowed the men to marry number of wives as they want. This type of marriage keeps the advantage of men and negative influences on the economic, emotional and social status of the women.

In study area, varieties of marriage are practiced in customary way, such marriages are Arranged, Elope, and Widow Inheritance, Abduction and Replacement marriages. Most marriage conclusions have negative impact on women. For instance, Widow Inheritance, Abduction and Replacement marriages are against the women's status. These marriages are concluded without considering the interests and choices of women. In addition in these types of marriages women do not have freedom to make their personal decision rather they receive the decision of their parent and the husband's relatives. The cultural restriction is enforcing the women to accept the action, which violate their right. The other thing that can be drive from this paper as conclusion is that the reduction of customary practices that affect women in different types of marriage has positive implication towards women.

All types of marriages practiced by the *Bench* are approved by the custom of the society. As the customary marriage bride-wealth is important instrument to legalize and approve the marriage. It also serves as a method to keep and preserve the marriage institution in study area. In addition to that it shows the value of the people towards women and marriage. The bride-wealth creates strong connection between the Bride and bride-groom family. That mean it keeps the harmony of newly created marriage relationship. Among the *Bench* wedding ceremony has great social value.



## 6. References

- Adam, Dagne. (2018). Marital Rights of Women: Assessing the Culture of Bride Price among Bench People; the Case of Semen Bench Woreda. Addis Ababa University. MA Thesis.
- Alan, Bryman. (2012). Social Research Methods. United States, Oxford University Press, Inc. New York.
- Alula, Pankhurst. Agazi, Tiumelissan. And Nardos, Chuta. (2016). The Interplay between Community, Household and Child Level Influences on Trajectories to Early Marriage in Ethiopia: Evidence from Young Lives. Young Lives, University of Oxford.
- Annabel, Erulkar. (2013). "Early Marriage, Marital Relations and Intimate Partner Violence in Ethiopia". International Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health, 39(1).
- A short history of the Bench People. 2012. Cultural and tourism office.
- Catherine Wangu, Nganga. (2010). Perceptions of Bride-wealth in the 21st Century among The Urban Agikuyu in Nairobi. University of Nairobi, MA Thesis.
- Charles, Hirschman. (2016). "Gender, the Status of Women, and Family Structure in Malaysia". Malaysian Journal of Economic Studies, 53 (1).
- Carolyn Zerbe, Enns. and Ada, L., Sinacore. (2005). Teaching and Social Justice: Integrating Multicultural and Feminist Theories in the Classroom. American Psychological Association, Washington, DC.
- Dare, Arowolo. (2010). "The Effects of Western Civilization and Culture on Africa". Afro Asian Journal of Social Sciences, 1(1): 2229 –5313.
- Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the revised family code proclamation of 2000.

- Gabriel, E. Idang. (2015). "Africa Culture and Value." *UNISA, Phronimon*, 16(2):97-111.
- Gebregziyaber, Tesifa-selasie.(2018) history of Bench People. Addis Ababa University, MA Thesis.
- Gemechu, Beyene. and Assefa, Tolera. (2006). "Marriage Practices Among the Gidda Oromo, Northern Wollega, Ethiopia". *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 15(3): 240–255.
- Haregewoin, Cherinet. And Emebet, Mulugeta.(2003). A Profile on Gender Relations: Towards Gender Equality in Ethiopia. Sida, 2138en.
- Harapriya, Mohapatra. (2015). "Status of Women in Indian Society". *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science*, 3 (6):33-36.
- H. Russell, Bernard. (2006). *Research methods in anthropology: qualitative and quantitative Approaches*. New York, Toronto, Oxford. Altamira press.
- Indongo, N. & Pazvakawambwa, L. (2015). "Perceptions of Women on Marriage in Namibia". *Psychology*, 6, 1413-1420. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/psych.2015.611137>
- International Center for Research on Women. (2016). *Property Ownership and Inheritance Rights of Women for Social Protection in the South Asia Experience*.
- Johannes, Jütting. and Christian, Morrisson.(2005). *Changing Social Institutions to Improve the Status of Women in Developing Countries*. Development Centre Policy Brief No. 27.
- John Boulard, Forkuor. Vincent de Paul, Kanwetuu. Eugene Muobom, Ganee. and IgnatusKpobi, Ndemole. ( 2018). "Bride Price and the State of Marriage in North-West Ghana". *International Journal of Social Science Studies*, 6 (9).
- Jones, Caroline. (2011). "Women's Worth: A Western Misconception". University of Nebraska

Lincoln.162.<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/nebanthro/162>.

John D, Brewer. (2000). *Ethnography*. Open University Press Buckingham, Philadelphia.

John Hogan, Paddy Dolan. and Paul, Donnelly. (2009). *Approaches to Qualitative Research: Theory and Its Practical Application*. Oak Tree Press 19 Rutland Street, Cork, Ireland.

John W, Creswell. (2009). *Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. SAGE, London, United Kingdom.

Julian, M. Murchison. (2010). *Ethnography Essentials: Designing, Conducting, and Presenting Your Research*. Jossey-Bass A Wiley Imprint 989 Market Street, San Francisco, CA941031741-[www.josseybass.com](http://www.josseybass.com).

Marcel, Mauss. (1966). *The Gift Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*. Cohen & West LTD, London.

Mamitu, Yilma.(2002). *Some Aspects of the Status of Women among the Konso of Southern Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa University, MA Thesis.

Michelle Fram, Cohen. (2006). "The Condition of Women in Developing and Developed Countries. *The Independent Review*, (1086–1653): 261– 274.

Ministry of agriculture. (2014). *Social Assessment reports for RPLRP in four regions of Ethiopia, SNNPR, Afar, Somlil and Oromia Regions. Pastoral Draught Resistance and Sustainable Livelihoods Program*.

Nava, Ashraf. Natalie, Bau. Nathan, Nunn. and Alessandra, Voena. (2015). "Bride Price and Female Education". Harvard University.

- Nancy E, Cott. (2002). *Public Vows; A History of Marriage and the Nation*. Harvard University press Cambridge, Massachusetts London, England.
- Nasrin, Khan. and Selma, Hyati.(2012). "Bride-Price and Domestic Violence in Timor-Leste: A Comparative Study of Marriage -In and Marriage -Out Cultures in four Distinct".
- Newman, Wadesango. Symphorosa, Rembe. And Owence, Chabaya. (2011). "Violation of Women's Rights by Harmful Traditional Practices." *Walter Sisulu University*, 13(2):121-129.
- Nontando, Jennifer, Mesatywa. (2009). *The Perceptions and Experiences of African Women in Violent Partner Relationships: an Exploratory Study*. University of Stellenbosch, PhD dissertation.
- N. A. Wimalasena. (2016). "An Analytical Study of Definitions of the Term Marriage". *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 6(1).
- Nigatu, Regassa.and Gete, Tsegaye. (2016). "Women's Status among Households in Southern Ethiopia: Survey of Autonomy and Power". *10.1515 (1): 30-50*.
- Paul S. Gray, John B. Williamson, David A. Karp, and John, R. Dalphin. (2007). *The Research Imagination an Introduction to Qualitative and Quantitative Methods*. United States of America, Cambridge University Press, New York.
- Paul, Kyalo. (2012). "a Reflection on the African Traditional Values of Marriage and Sexuality. " *International journal of academic Research in progressive Education and development* 1(2):211 119.
- Pamela, Abbott. Claire, Wallace. and Melissa, Tyler. (1990). *An Introduction to Sociology Feminist Perspectives*. Rutledge, British Library Cataloguing.

- Robert, Jensen. and Rebecca, Thornton. (2003). "Early Female Marriage in the Developing World". *Gender and Development*, vol, 11(2): 9-19.
- Sambe, Ngutor. Avanger, Moses Yandev, and Agba, Solomon Arumun. (2013). " The Effects of High Bride-Price on Marital Stability ". *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science*, 17 (5):65-70.
- Seyoum, Worku, Telila. (2016). "IrraDhaaba": a Customary Marriage among the Gelan Oromo of CaaffeeTumaa in Adaa. District, East Shewa, Ethiopia. Addis Ababa University, MA Thesis.
- Uddin, Md. Emaj. (2009). "Cross-Cultural Comparison of Marriage Relationship between Muslim and Santal Communities in Rural Bangladesh." *World Cultures Journal*, 17(1).
- UN (2014). Preliminary Gender profile of Ethiopia. Addis Ababa.
- Birhan, Wohabie. and Zewdi, Teka. (2018). "Marriage practices and gender role socialization among the Gumuz of Ethiopia." *African Journal of History and Culture* 10(4):51-56.
- Wura-natasha, Ogunji. (2013). *Perspectives, Political analysis and commentary from Africa: Women and Land Rights: Questions of access, of Ownership and control*. Heinrich Böll Foundation southern Africa, Cape Town.
- Zuzanna, Augustyniak. (2009). " Marriages in Ethiopia". *Studies of the Department of African Languages and Cultures*, 43, (0860-4649).

## Appendix One

Guidelines for key informants and focus group discussion interview of *Bench-seko Zone* and South Bench *Woreda* women and men.

Dear informant

This research questions designed for key informant interview and focus group discussions to conduct a research on marriage practices and the status of women among Bench, southwest Ethiopia. This is for the partial fulfillment of MA degree in social Anthropology. So, in order to accomplish this study your information is necessary. Therefore, the genuine opinions and idea are very important for the following questions. Beside this, your information would be keep confidentially as the study merely for academic purpose.

### Informants' background

Name.....Age..... Sex.....religion.....  
Education background.....Occupation.....Marital status.....  
Place of interview.....Date of interview.....

### Guide Questions for key informant interview with Women and children affairs, community elders, extension workers and lawyers in *Bench-sheko Zone, South Bench Woreda*.

1. Would you tell me how many type of marriage are practiced in the community?
2. What are the challenges and opportunity of each types of marriage for women?
3. What are the different socio-cultural justifications of the Bench for practicing different types of marriage?
4. Is your marriage arranged by partner or with your consent?
5. Would you tell me the status of women in marriage arrangement of the community? If yes in which types of arrangement women have higher or lower status?
6. Do women have equal right with men within marriage such the right to choose marriage partner, get divorce, possess and inherit property?

7. Do you accept the idea that women have equal with men in relation to marriage?
8. Would you briefly tell me about the practice of bride wealth in your community?
9. Who is the principal actors and decision makers in your community for the overall issues of bride wealth?
10. How do you see the importance of bride wealth for the women?

**Guide questions for focus group discussion, which conducted with married and unmarried men as well as women.**

1. Why you practiced bride wealth for marriage?
2. Are there aspects of change in magnitude of the bride-wealth practice?
3. How the practice of pride wealth is going on?
4. What type of gift or materials is given for the practice?
5. What do you do if women refuse marriage in accordance with bride wealth cultural practices?
6. Do you think the practice of bride wealth affect the status of women?

## Background of key informants

No	Sex	Age	Positions	Religion Affiliation	Academic status	Date of interview
1	M	48	Expert of women and Children affairs	Orthodox	Degree	1-04-2019
2	M	69	Elder	Traditional religion	Illiterate	3-04-2019
3	F	30	Extension worker	Protestant	Certificate	4-04-2019
4	M	65	Elder	Traditional religion	First cycle	16-04-2019
5	M	40	Lawyer	Protestant	Degree	17-04-2019
6	F	38	Extension worker	Protestant	Diploma	18-04-2019
7	F	40	Expert in keble	Protestant	Primary education	27-04-2019
8	M	55	Keble manager	Protestant	Secondary education	28-04-2019
9	M	68	Elder	Orthodox	Illiterate	29-04-2019
Male 6Female 3			Total 9			



### In-depth interview informant's background

<b>N o</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Academic status</b>	<b>Religion affiliation</b>	<b>Place of Interview</b>	<b>Date of Interview</b>
1	M	65	Farmer	Married	Illiterate	Traditional religion	At His Home	28-03-2019
2	F	60	Farmer	Married	Illiterate	Traditional religion	At Her Home	29-03-2019
3	M	30	Civil servant	Single	Diploma	Protestant	At his Home	30-03-2019
4	F	17	Student	Married	Secondary education	Protestant	At Her Home	12-04-2019
5	M	51	Farmer	Married	Illiterate	Protestant	At his Home	13-04-2019
6	F	61	Farmer	Married	Illiterate	Traditional religion	At Her Home	14-04-2019
7	M	54	Business man	Married	First cycle	Protestant	At His Home	24-4-2019
8	F	16	Farmer	Married	First cycle	Protestant	At Her Home	25-4-2019
9	F	40	Farmer	Married	Illiterate	Protestant	At Her Home	26-4-2019
Male 5men 4					Total 9			

## Participants of Focus Group Discussion

<b>Keble</b>						
Kob		Amokel		Kokin		Total
Men	6	Men	8	Men	12	Men 26
Women	12	Women	12	Women	6	Women 30
						56

## **Appendix Two**

### **Study Informants Code Name**

#### **KEBELE I (CODE-01)**

##### **In-depth Interview in Kob (Kebele 1) Code Name (1-3)**

[IIK11: March-28-03-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]

[IIK12: March-29-03-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]

[IIK13: March-30-03-2019; 8:30-10:30 Am]

##### **Key Informant in Kob (Kebele 1) Code Name (1-3)**

[KIIK11: April-1-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]

[KIIK12: April-3-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]

[KIIK13: April-4-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]

##### **FGD Code in Kob (Kebele 1) Code Name (1-3)**

[FGDK11: April-7-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]

[FGDK12: April-8-04-2019; 8:30-10:30 Am]

[FGDK13: April-9-04-2019; 8:30-10:30 Am]

#### **KEBELE II (CODE-O2)**

##### **In-depth Interview in Omokel (Kebele 2) Code Name (1-3)**

[IIK21: April-12-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]

[IIK22: April-13-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]

[IIK23: April-14-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]

##### **Key Informant in Omokel (Kebele 2) Code Name (1-3)**

[KIIK21: April-16-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]

[KIIK22: April-17-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]

[KIIK23: April-18-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]

**FGD in Omokel (Kebele 2) Code Name (1-3)**

[FGDK21: April-21-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]

[FGDK22: April-21-04-2019; 8:30-10:30 Am]

[FGDK23: April-22-04-2019; 8:30-10:30 Am]

**KEBELE III (CODE-03)**

**In-depth Interview in Kokin (Kebele3) Code Name (1-3)**

[IIK31: April-24-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]

[IIK32: April-25-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]

[IIK33: April-26-04-2019; 09:30-11:30Am]

**Key informant in Kokin (kebele 3) Code Name (1-3)**

[KIIK31: April-27-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]

[KIIK32: April-28-04-2019; 09:30-11:30 Am]

[KIIK33: April-29-04-2019; 8:30-10:30 Am]

**FGD in Kokin (Kebele 3) Code Name (1-3)**

[FGDK31: May -1-05-2019;8:30-10:30Am]

[FGDK32: May-2-05-2019; 8:30-10:30 Am]

[FGDK33: May-3-05-2019; 09:30-11:30 AM]