

# **Social change: Impact of development interventions in the Gelcha community of the Karrayu Pastoralists of the Upper Awash Valley of Ethiopia.**

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## **1. Introduction**

This study attempts to explain the overall changes in the Gelcha community of the Karrayu pastoralists in Fentalle Woreda of Oromia Region. The first section is an introduction which mainly presents the background of the study, the description of study area and the methodology. The second section follows and outlines changes in the area, focusing mainly on progress of services, infrastructures and livelihood interventions over the last two decades. The third section is devoted to the discussion on the impact of development interventions and the resulting change in the socio-cultural aspects of the community, notably on the women's role, livelihood, eating habits, religion and clan institutions. Lastly, the fourth section summarizes and concludes the main finding of the study.

### *1.1. Background*

The pastoralist area of Ethiopia is assumed to cover about 61% of the land mass of the country (PCDP, 2007). These areas are located at peripheral lowlands which are drought prone and marginally arable and non-arable lands. They are inhabited by diverse ethnic groups including Afar, Somali, Karrayu, Borana, Dassentch, Hamar, Arbore Tsemako, Bume, Nagatom, Mursi, Bodi, and Nure.

Apart from living in an unfriendly environment, the pastoralists have been marginalized from the socio-economic activities of the country and had limited political participation in the central government policies (Frejacques, 2003; WB, 2009). There were no comprehensive policies designed aiming at establishing effective public services and infrastructures to address pastoral communities' priority needs, improve their livelihoods, alleviate poverty and reduce their vulnerability (Ayalew, 2001; Emmanuel, 2006; WB, 2009).

According to research findings, it was since the turn of the last century that the Ethiopian government started to interfere in the lives of the pastoralist community mainly the inhabitants of Awash Valley to expropriate the 'excess' lands of pastoralists in the name of development projects and in favour of sedentary agriculture (Ayalew, 2001,2004; Getachew 2004, Emanuel 2006). During this period, the government and policy planners promoted the slogan of modernization which was assumed to be achieved through mechanization of agriculture (Dessalegn, 2009). With this intension, the then government started to expand sedentary agriculture in the area regarding the pastoralist mode of production as backward and a threat to development. The Karrayu pastoralists also couldn't escape from this reality.

Recognizing the past experiences of the pastoralist area, the EPRDF<sup>3</sup> government redesigned more holistic strategies and programs<sup>4</sup> that targeted not only the livestock and rangeland management but also

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<sup>3</sup> The EPRDF (The Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front) is a coalition of four ethnic-based political parties which came to power in 1991, militarily overthrowing the Derg.

focused on improvement of the social, economic and political condition of the people including the improvement of the meager social services and physical structure of the area (WB, 2009). In line with this, infrastructures such as roads, telephone, schools, and health services have been constructed and the people are better connected with urban area of the country than ever before.

Recent studies (Ayalew, 2001, Getachew, 2004, Emmanuel, 2006) on pastoralist areas in general and the Awash valley in particular have given emphasis on how development projects and investment affect the socio-economic conditions of the community and the consequences of resource deprivation. However, the overall impacts of improvement in services and infrastructures on socio-cultural and economic condition of the community in the current context have not been dealt with adequately. Hence, in light of the forgoing, this paper attempt to examine the significant change taking place in the Gelcha community of Karrayu pastoralists following the government interventions (infrastructures and services) over the last two decades so as to create a better understanding of present conditions.

### *1.2. The study area*

The Karrayu are Oromo-speaking transhumant pastoralists who inhabit in the upper valley of the Awash River basin. The area covers the Fentalle Woreda in the North Eastern part of Eastern Shewa zone of Oromia region. It is located some 200 km southeast of the capital city, Addis Ababa, on the Addis-Dire Dawa-Djibouti road.

According to Ayalew (2001), 'Karrayu land' lies in the Metahara plain and Fentalle mountain area, with the Kesem and the Awash drainage to the North and South of the mountain respectively. The Karrayu are bounded by the Afar in the north, the Arsi-Oromo in the south, the Argoba in the West, the Awash national park in the east and the Amhara in the southwest (Ayalew, 2001,2004).

The particular study community, Gelcha, is one of 18 *kebeles* in Fentalle Woreda and located in the eastern part of the *woreda*. It is bordered by the Metahara sugar factory, the Awash National Park, Lake Beseka and the road from the *woreda* capital Metahara towards Dire-Dawa and Djibouti.

Before the commencement of development projects in the area, the Karrayu community in general and the Gelcha people in particular relied predominantly on transhumant pastoralism, based on animal herding. Since the early 1980s, however, they have increasingly become more sedentarized (Ayalew, 2001, 2004). This is mainly because of constrains on patterns of mobility due to development interventions such as the development of sugar plantation, the Awash National Park<sup>5</sup> and conflict with the neighboring Afar and Argoba. Moreover, apart from the livelihood strategies, the social, political and economic situation of the community has changed over time.

### *1.3. Methodology*

The primary data for this study was collected in late 2011 and early 2012 under the Wellbeing Illbeing Dynamics in Ethiopia (WIDE) research projects that studies '*Long Term Perspectives on Development Impacts in Rural Ethiopia*' since the mid 1990. Interviews were carried out with *woreda* officials, *kebele* officials, community leaders and notables, farmers and their wives, adults and young people who have

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<sup>4</sup> Of the programs, the Ethiopian government has started a 15 years, three-phase pastoral community Development Program (PCDP) in 2003 in collaboration with World Bank and the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD). The program is targeted at developing good public services delivery, investment and disaster management in the arid and semi-arid Ethiopian lowlands.

<sup>5</sup> For excellent and detail explanation about the development of sugar estate farm and National park and its consequence impact on Karrayu community see Ayalew, 2001.

various views. Focus group discussions (FGDs) were also conducted with elders and school boys on some of the points that need group consensus.

Moreover, the base-line survey report that was conducted in 2003 by the WIDE project was referred to in order to understand the community situation at that point and to contextualize the progress.

## 2. Change in development interventions

There have been different development interventions and progress in the Karrayu area in general and study *kebele* in particular over the last two decade. Hence, this section is devoted to outlining the changes that resulted from the development interventions during this period under discussion, focusing mainly on the progress of services, infrastructures and livelihoods.

### 2.1. Schooling

The Ethiopian government has been attempting to provide basic education for all in the year 2015, one of the components of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (MoFED<sup>6</sup>, 2004). Following this policy, the number of schools in the *woreda* in general and in the Gelcha *kebele* in particular has increased over time. This, in turn, has created an opportunity for many children to attend education at the nearby area. In 2008, there was door-to-door assessment of school-age children in the *woreda* to make them to join general education.

Some ten years ago, there was no school in Gelcha *kebele* and the first primary school was built in 2001 and commenced in the following year with few students in a limited numbers of class rooms. However, more classrooms have been constructed and are able to accommodate more students. Moreover, one more alternative basic education centre has been constructed and commenced in 2011 so as to accommodate the increasing number of children from the furthest zone of the *kebele*. The school facilities have also gradually improved with the increasing provision of educational materials like books, teaching aids and materials such as chalk, blackboards, different maps, models, and other.

In addition, three kindergartens have been built within the last three years, one at each zone of the *kebele* which avoid the tedious journey to schools in the town. However, the kindergartens do not provide regular class due to lack of teachers.

The establishment of schools in the *kebele* and continuous encouragement of the government have contributed to the gradual increment of student enrollment. There has also been an increase in girls' education.

In 2011/12 academic year, there were a total of 419 students (253 male and 166 female) attending classes in Gelcha primary school (1-8 grade). This is reported to have constituted 95.8% of the school plan. Moreover, there were many more children who are attending both primary and secondary education in nearby *kebeles*, particularly in Metahara and Addis Ketema towns.

According to the information from Gelcha primary school, in 2012 the school has nine teachers (4 females and 5 males) almost all of whom were commuting from the nearby town of Metahara. It has six classrooms. Accordingly, the class-student ratio is 1:70 in contrast to the national standard of 1:64 (large average class size) and the 1:47 teacher-student ratio unlike the national standard of 1:59 (high average class size) based on the raw data.

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<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

A greater number of parents send both boys and girls to school than ever before. However, some parents are reluctant to send their male children to schooling, wanting their labour for livestock herding. In most cases, girls are free to learn till they get married. Many parents were happy about the expansion of schooling and are willing to send their children to school though they complain about the negative impact of its consequence on their children such as premarital sex, pregnancy etc. This is because first, the construction of the schools in the *kebele* avoids the hardship of the children that otherwise suffer from long travel and spending the whole day without lunch. Now, school children notably small children get the advantage of getting their lunch from their home and can focus on their education. Second, the absence of school uniforms in the *kebele* encourages the parents as they do not incur additional cost for this. Third, there is no school fee except some contributions that the parents make for the development of the school which is decided by the school committee from the community. Lastly, the parents are happy as their children are able to read and write for them.

## 2.2. Health care services

The provision of health care services in terms of accessibilities and availabilities has been changing in Gelcha *kebele* due to the deployment of health extension workers and the interventions of other volunteer health care promoters to implement the health extension packages. As a result, the community is said to have received frequent awareness training about the importance of preventive and curative health care services from health care services facilitators. In the *kebele*, there are sixteen health care facilitators. This includes two health extension workers (HEWs) employed by the government, eight volunteer community-based nutrition (CBN) workers and six Community Conversation workers (CCWs). The main duties of the facilitators are creating awareness in the community in relation to health issues, particularly teaching about the causes and consequences of communicable diseases and how to prevent and treat affected individuals. The facilitators use public meetings, house-to-house visits, and also arrange coffee ceremonies within the village to provide health-related information to the community.

The HEWs have multiple duties which include giving advice and educating the community about health issues, screening out malnourished child and lactating mother and providing anti-natal and post-natal health care services, vaccinations for children under five, distributing contraceptives, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the health services against their proposed plan. On the other hand, other health care promoters (CBN and CCW) are solely involved in advising and teaching the community about health-related issue. Hence, though it needs more improvement, this brings a significant change in the life of people in the *woreda* communities in general and Gelcha *kebele* in particular. For instance, according to the data from the *woreda* health bureau (2011), 40% of the households in the *woreda* graduated from the health extension package and 47% dug latrines though some did not use it properly. In Gelcha *kebele*, on the other hand, about 90% of the community obtained awareness education on preventive health such as hygiene and environmental sanitation, disease prevention and control, nutrition and harmful traditional practices (HTPs) affecting health.

There is a health post which was constructed in the *kebele* two years ago. However, it is not well received by the inhabitants in part since the extension workers do not reside there and has very limited drugs, as a result of which most people go for their health needs to the health centers and private clinics and pharmacies in the towns or in the compound of the sugar plantation. The community usually visits the health post to obtain pain killers, water treatment, bednets and malaria tablets. A good number of women have also started to use contraceptives and other related advice from the center and towns.

## 2.3. Transport and communications

### 2.3.1. Roads

Thirteen years ago, there was no transportation access or roads that connected the *kebele* with the *woreda* and nearby towns. All routes were unpaved and not convenient for transportation. Hence, the villagers used to travel on foot. However, recently the quality of the roads has improved. Particularly following the establishment of the school, a large road for cars and horse-driven carts has been constructed. The community has good road access that connects with the nearest towns of the *woreda* and other communities. There are all-weather roads that connect the Gelcha community to the *woreda* capital, Metahara, and Addis Ketema. There are good internal roads that link the inhabitants with different villages and sub-*kebeles*. However, an alarming expansion of Lake Beseka has become a threat for easy movement within the village. There are three paved roads that connect the towns and main asphalt roads to the *kebele* centre. Both internal and outside roads have been upgraded frequently by the community, notably through the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) work. The people are also happy with the improvements and continuous maintenance and upgrading of the roads because of the benefits they have obtained. Previously, when a person got sick, they carried him/her to the health centre. But nowadays, they can use transportation. People can use horse-driven cart transport to go either to town or from one village to the other. In particular, women use the carts to go to market, grain mills and some other places. The cars are easily driven within the internal roads. For example, during harvesting season Lorries could easily move in the *kebele* to collect the produce. Moreover, the *woreda* or zonal officials or other NGOs' and private personnel visit the area using vehicles without any difficulty. However, expansion of Lake Beseka split the *kebele* in two parts making it difficult to cross to the other side. This, in turn, forces the inhabitants, to use horse carts and other vehicles to travel long distances to find detours.

In general overall improvement of the roads brings two contradicting effects, i.e., positive and negative. The positive effect is that, in earlier times, the community took grain and other commodities from the market on their shoulder or by donkey which was very challenging particularly for the women. But now, they easily transport the necessary commodities to and from town, carry patients to health centre using horse-driven carts and other means of transportation. Hence, the improvement of roads facilitates and makes transportation to the towns and *woreda* capital easier, and consequently facilitates the linkage with the larger economy.

On the other hand, the improvement of roads and accessibility of transportation increases their frequent contact with the urban centers which affects the traditions of the community. For instance, in previous times, the Karrayu were not allowed to stay overnight in town. When an individual violates the rule and spend the night in town, he was beaten and punished by his clan members. But now-a-days, with the frequent contact with urban dwellers, the community is becoming more urbanized and many Karrayu individuals started to spend the night in town and disrespect the customary rules and values of the society. Hence, for many Karrayu individuals particularly for the youngsters, this has become normal.

### 2.3.2. *Mobile network*

The people have also been affected by the new technologies like the mobile network and wireless phones. However, the wireless is currently no longer used. Many people in the *kebele* use this new technology for communication. This helps the community to have updated information and motivates them for new things and ideas.

Since 2009, the mobile satellite was established at Banti *Kebele* (one of the adjacent *kebeles*) which also enables the *Kebele* to access mobile network coverage. As a result, the inhabitants can easily communicate with the outside world through mobile phones. Many households have a member with a mobile phone. There are also many individuals, youngsters and elders, who currently have mobile phones and use them to communicate in their day to day activities and easily exchange information with urban dwellers.

## 2.4. Government-community relations

### 2.4.1. Learning about government policies and programs

A few households have radios which help them to receive information and enjoy some programs in Afan Oromo. It is also used to obtain information about development programs of the government. Many of the male youngsters visit nearby towns specially Addis Ketema which are found at a distance of about 5-6 km to watch TV and enjoy with their peers. Hence, these new technologies help the community to have frequent interaction and they facilitate information exchanges that enable people to gain new knowledge and understand the external world. Consequently, it paves the way for great change in their lives.

Apart from mass media, the Gelcha community can easily learn about government policies and programs through the 1-5 network system. 1-5 network is the new governmental structure whereby six adjacent households with a leader are used to address the government policy and programs to the people and vice-versa. It is through this structure that the community receives updated information and learns different agricultural technologies on sedentary agriculture, health interventions, and political situations. Moreover, it serves as a means of mobilizing the community for labor and developmental activities in the area. The proximity of the *kebele* to the capital town of the *woreda* also creates an opportunity for the community to have better cooperation and continuous information exchange with the *woreda* officials as compared to some remote *kebeles* in the area.

### 2.4.2. Political and livelihood interventions

Political developments are all tied up with economic ones since all issues come from the *woreda* in the name of development, and the new structures<sup>7</sup> are implemented to facilitate development. There are women and youth leagues which are seen as empowering them economically rather than politically. However, they were not effective to address key issues confronting the youth. There were government plans and the people were urged to take actions but little follow-up and concern over whether there is failure or success.

The government has been trying to get the pastoralists to move more to agriculture, and the development agents (DAs) provide training about improved seeds, use of fertilizer, improved breeds and pesticides. However, there were not inputs to go along with this except recent provision of fertilizer which was at a higher price than in the *woreda*, and was therefore unpopular and resented. The DAs have also been involved in organizing women and youth into groups/cooperatives, but these have become weak, making a loss and most have been disbanded.

The *woreda* has been encouraging cooperative associations for farmers, youths and women. Accordingly, several cooperatives have been organized in Gelcha *kebele*, including cooperatives for irrigated agricultural production, fattening livestock for women, stone extraction/quarrying for youth, women's shop cooperative, and a women's grinding mill. Most of these have not been successful and have therefore been disbanded except for the quarrying.

Credit has been provided to women for fattening sheep and goats by NGOs and for youths' cooperatives by government though the service had stopped as many of the youth cooperatives went bankrupt and failed to repay their debts.

Moreover, there have been interventions to promote equity for women that are mainly related to HTPs. *Woreda* officials and NGOs have been providing trainings, but there is not that much change regarding

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<sup>7</sup> The *kebele* is divided into three zones, and within each zone there are a number of 'gares' that have about 30 households; within these there are a number of 1-5 networks of 6 households with a leader.

female circumcision since communities are reluctant to accept the government position, some claiming it opposes religious doctrine.

#### 2.4.3. Police and justice institution

At *woreda* level, there has been a serious and frequent conflict on grazing land at the borders of Afar and Minjar (with Argoba). This problem could not be solved, in spite of the fact that community policing has been launched in eight targeted *kebeles* which are the sites of frequent conflicts. This did not include Gelcha, which only shares a small boundary with Afar towards the east adjacent to Awash National Park where the two community groups clash over pasture and water. In that case, the Gelcha community faces less insecurity in this regard compared to other *kebeles* of the *woreda*. However, there have been clashes with the Awash National Park officials over pasture particularly during the height of the drought period of the year, and an increasing problem of theft of sheep and goats which is usually committed by the jobless youngsters of the community.

To minimize the tension and conflict between the communities, the Fenetalle *Woreda* police are working in collaboration with the police of adjacent *woredas*. Moreover, the *woreda* police work hand in hand with the people and militia of the *kebeles* so as to maintain peace and security of the community.

In Gelcha *Kebele*, there are 20 militias who are recruited from the community and work in collaboration with the *woreda* police to manage the problem of the *kebele* related with peace and security.

Moreover, the *woreda* Justice Office closely works with religious leaders, the peace committee of the community, community elders, police and courts at grass-roots level. It participates in awareness creation for the community about how they can minimize crime and harmful traditional practices (HTP). It also creates strong chain with police officials, prosecutors, women and children affairs and other concerned officials of the *woreda* so as to improve the justice system and minimize illegal acts in the *woreda* in all aspects.

### 3. Impact of development intervention and its resulting change

As with other internal and external factors, government interventions over time have significant impact on the communities and result in socio-cultural, political and economic changes. Hence, this part discuss the impact of interventions and the resulting changes notably on women's role, livelihood, eating habits, religion and traditional institution.

#### 3.1. Gender role and women's participation

NGOs were working with local communities and government officials to create awareness about women's issues to help to eradicate poverty and hunger, reduce harmful traditional practices, and empower women. These and other women-related activities have brought a little improvement in the lives of Gelcha women in all aspects: social, economic and political.

Almost all activities in the village including the construction of traditional houses, herding of cattle and shoats, household chores and child rearing were carried out by women. But now some households have started to use hired skilled labor for constructing houses.

However, all the domestic chores are still carried out by women and girls, with some assistance by boys who commonly bring drinking water from town by bicycles. However, with children going to school notably girls, mothers are having more work burden including looking after the livestock that were done by children. The children had limited time to help as they go to school.

In the past women were seen as men's property and thus had no right to access, control and manage the household resources. But currently a considerable number of women are organized in different associations to improve their livelihoods and income generating activities which helps them to gain awareness about their legal rights. Many women are participating in fattening and trading of sheep, petty trading of items such as shop products, coffee husks, tobacco, *chat*<sup>8</sup> and other non-farm activities. Some women have started engaging in daily labour. Five women were observed working on building construction sites carrying cement, sand, and water, and watering buildings. One poor woman respondent was substituting for her husband who was employed as a school guard and also participated in wage labour digging a water canal. Similarly a divorced woman had previously substituted for her husband employed to guard the plantation and was working on seedlings at the time of the research. The growing participation of women in income-generating activities has required reflective changes in the minds of men and led some to understand the importance of the equality of women. Some husbands have started to give responsibility to their wives to sell shoats and manage household expenditure.

Interventions in health have led to some changes in sanitation, contraception, and the use of curative and preventive health services, although anemia is still a problem. Some respondents compared the situation of sanitation and said, in the past we used cow's urine as detergent but now everybody uses soap and young females are using hair oil rather than using butter. Women's participation has also increased in *kebele* and *woreda* structures, even if it is less functional at *kebele* level.

Girls have equal access to education, and both men and women have good attitudes towards female education, and they send girls to school equally with boys. This, in turn, enhances decision making capacity of girls notably on the issue of mate selection. Many girls have started to refuse arranged marriage and, when it occurs, report to the police for appropriate measures. They started to defend their rights and report to the police when the clan forces them into marriages and to do other activity that violate their rights.

### 3.2. Livelihoods

#### 3.2.1. Changes in balance of livelihoods

Since earlier times, the community in the area exclusively relied on animal rearing. They were nomadic pastoralists who moved seasonally in search for water and pasture for their animals. But now-a-days, particularly following with the shrinking of the grazing land people have started limiting the size of their cattle holdings and engage in diversified livelihood activities. As a result, seasonal migration for grass and water and heavy dependence on the traditional animal husbandry is gradually declining. The importance of rain-fed and irrigated agriculture, wage labour in the sugar estate farms and petty trading have been increasing since the last five years.

Increasing numbers of people have started practicing rain-fed farming and producing maize. Some people who have access to irrigation water also produce cash crops such as onions, tomatoes, cabbages, water melons, peppers and in rare cases banana. Following the expansion and development of Metahara sugar estate, many of the people in the area (more than 80 HH head) have worked as wage laborers in the estate. As a result, wage labor in the estate has become an alternative means of livelihood for a great number of Karrayu particularly in Gelcha community.

There are also people particularly women, who engage in petty trading including selling of consumable shop products, *chat*, coffee husks, tobacco, fattening and selling of sheep, goats and cattle for profit. Moreover, the PSNP is another means of livelihood from which many of the people particularly the poor in the community eke out their living.

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<sup>8</sup> *Catha edulis*, a narcotic plant chewed as a stimulant.



### 3.2.2. Changes in source of cash from agriculture

In earlier times, selling of animals such as goats, sheep, cattle and camels were the sole means of earning cash used to cover the family needs. Milk, meat and butter were not sold for cash. However, since 2005 some people have started to sell hides and skins as well as animals for cash in the market. For some groups<sup>9</sup> of the community, mainly for some Somali, the selling of milk is becoming a means of earning cash. Moreover, sale of onions and other horticultural crops such as cabbage and tomatoes has become a means of obtaining cash particularly for the people who have access to irrigation water.

### 3.2.3. Change in irrigation use and its importance

Following the government intervention, irrigation agriculture that has started to be practiced during the Derg period with only few migrant workers who moved to the area as wage laborers is now being practiced by a greater number of people in the Gelcha *kebele* using the waters discharged from the Metahara sugar estate canals. Now-a- days, the number of irrigation users has increased and over 60 households are using the same water to produce different horticultural crops not only for home consumption as previously but also for the market. Moreover, there is also sporadic irrigation farming on the furthest side of the *kebele* using the Awash River.

The Development Agents (DAs) promote the process of sedenterization and enclosure of private pasture plots which further initiated a greater number of people to engage in cultivation. Some irrigation users not only improve their livelihood through integrated farming practice along with their main livelihood strategies, i.e., animal rearing, but they also obtain leftovers from the crops that they feed their cattle during the dry period of the year. This, in turn, creates wealth differentiation within the community between irrigation users and non-users. Moreover, the increase in irrigation-users encourages the linkage of the community to the market, as they produce for market and creates job opportunity for some youngsters especially during harvesting, loading and unloading of the produce.

However, strict control and limited supply of canal water for irrigation by the sugar estate creates conflict between irrigation users and the sugar estate and hinder the increase of irrigation users.

### 3.3. Eating habits

Following the reduction of grazing land and concurrent drought, which led to reduction of milk and its by-products, community members have gradually changed their eating habits. They have changed what they eat and the way they eat. Some have begun to prepare '*injera*' instead of the traditional porridges which usually varies based on season. They frequently eat porridge with butter and drink milk during the rainy season when pasture is good and milk is available; while during the dry season they eat '*injera*' with '*wot*' when milk supply becomes inadequate. Only children and herders have access to milk during this period as goats' milk is enough for children and camels' milk for herders.

### 3.4. Religion

There have been some changes in practices relating to religion. There are more sheikh preachers who have become more influential and are against traditional practice and advocate strict following of religious rules. There have been more emphases on Islamic education and children learn the Quran in the three zones of the *kebele*. Women and school girls have started to cover their hair with scarf, and some

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<sup>9</sup> There are there groups of community living in the *kebele* i.e, Karrayu Oromo, Harrar Oromo and Somali.

people are involved in regular daily prayers. The religious festivity such as Maulid<sup>10</sup> and Eid ul-Fitr<sup>11</sup> are celebrated.

### 3.5. Traditional institution: the clan

The clan is organized patrilineally and descent is traced through the fathers' line. A husband and wife are considered as the clan members of their respective fathers. If a child is born she/he will be considered as a member of his/her father's clan not his mother's. In Karrayu society, there are two moieties, Basso and Dullacha. Each moiety has their respective clans. Each clan has clan leader who is appointed by the clan members.

The clan assists its members during problems such as dispute resolution and economic crises, and punishes the offending members of the clan. It also serves as a social protection mechanism for its members.

The clan assists and supports its members in the following three broad ways: first when a given member loses his livestock/cattle to enemies such as Afar and Argoba which is called '*Kan dinni dessee*'. It is common to drive and take opponents cattle from fields among the Karrayu, Afar and Argoba who usually clash over pasture and water. Second, when a given member becomes poor and is unable to feed his family properly and when he marries which is called '*Kan okooteen dessee*'. Third, when a given members becomes involved in a dispute and kills someone, and is jailed which is called '*bitti*' the clan assist him to pay blood price and supports him and his family during imprisonment.

Regarding the social protection of the clan, some elders and clan leaders compare it and point out as it is better than the governmental institution called the disaster prevention and preparedness office in its service provision.

Moreover, the clan is also involved in punishing the violating member of the community upon referral from the families. It is mainly first when a member does not respect, assist and listen to his mother's and father's advice; second, when a member treats his wife unfairly; third when a given member refuses to contribute or assist a clan member facing a problem; fourth when a member enters a dispute with his clan members or other clan members without concrete reasons; and fifth when a given member become extravagant and does not properly manage and use his property.

The punishments include advice called '*gorosa*', beating locally called '*dire*' and slaughtering one of the offender's livestock called '*mala*'. However, it varies based on the seriousness of the offences and involves all or some of the punishment accordingly.

However, since recent years, some members of the community particularly the adult persons who have frequent contact with officials and the urban community are refusing to abide by the rules and regulation of the clan. Moreover, many community members are reluctant to contribute livestock as in earlier times to assist clan members who are in difficult circumstances. Hence, the extent of assistance and support through clan members during different social problems and other circumstances is decreasing over time.

Moreover, some community members claim that some of the clan leaders do not treat clan members equally. They favor people in their networks and rich individuals who are able to influence them, while a poor individual who has less contact and relations with the clan leaders gets less focus when facing difficulty.

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<sup>10</sup> The Muslim festival which is celebrated in commemoration of the birthday of the prophet Mohammed.

<sup>11</sup> The Muslim festival which is celebrated at the end of Ramadan.

Different interventions in the area are the factors that have negatively affected the role of the clan in the community. Interventions such as the school, implementation of formal laws, investment firms and urbanization have had negative impact on the role of clan.

The government officials (the police and court) usually warn the clan leaders not to punish their members who deviate from the norms of the community with the assumption that the punishment enforced by the clan violates individual human rights. As a result, some individuals refuse to be punished and report to the police when the clan leader tries to punish them for their wrong deeds. The number of cases brought to the attention of the police against clan leaders is increasing overtime. Previously, people did not complain about the mistreatment by their clan but since recently, the cases reported to the police have increased. However, still there are many individuals who are afraid to report to the police when they are mistreated by the clan members for fear of exclusion from their clan members.

Moreover, due to the expansion of education many school girls enter relationships with boys at school and practice premarital sex which increases pregnancy among school girls against the rule of the clan. In earlier times, clans used to forbid premarital sex and getting pregnant before marriage. However, currently many school girls are violating the rule of the clan and involve in premarital sex and get pregnant before marriage. Hence, now the clan is almost unable to control such activities as many youth no longer obey the rules of the clan.

Urbanization has also had an impact on the behavior of the community and influenced the role of the clan. For instance, the clan strictly forbids its members not to stay overnight in urban centre and waste their money drinking and getting involved in other deviant behavior. However, with the urbanization and the closeness of Gelcha to the towns (Metahara and Addis Ketema), many youngsters and adult have started to waste their money drinking and staying overnight in the urban centers. Moreover, due to the introduction of new technologies such as TV, different playing games (pool and etc), and other entertainments in urban centre, many youths devote much of their time in urban centers violating the rule of the clan.

The investment firms, particularly the sugar factory have also an undermining effect on the role of the clan, as many of the clan leaders are busy handling the factory work and do not have time for clan issues. Many of the clan leaders are employed in the factory and do not have time to engage in clan activities. As a result, many of the clan leaders do not properly manage and deal with clan issues.

#### **4. Summary and Conclusion**

Over the last decade, there has been an attempt to improve the socio-economic conditions of the Gelcha community through improving physical structures and service provisions. Infrastructures such as roads, schools, health post, and telephone lines have been built. The *kebele* officials and DAs have promoted the community to practice farming (rain-fed and irrigation) and enclosure of pasture land. Youths and women have been encouraged to be organized into cooperatives and leagues (youth league and women's league) so as to improve their livelihood and defend their rights. However, the cooperatives have become weak and most have been disbanded due to little follow-up.

Following the development and improvement of infrastructures, the community has become much more interconnected with the nearby towns and urban centers than ever before. They are able to exchange information and new ideas with the government and urban areas, which is playing a significant role in integrating the community with the larger economy. The pastoralist means of livelihood strategies have come under question and are changing due to the diminishing of pasture, and government investment ventures namely the Awash National Park and the Sugar plantation. Many members of the community have started to experiment with farming practices for their livelihood. Some have started irrigation

farming using the limited amount of water released from the sugar factory and others engage in rain-fed farming more than before.

With the expansion of health services and schooling, the community can easily access health care services in nearby areas and many children (boys and girls) are able to join schooling at an early age as many parents are becoming more aware about education and are willing to send their children for schooling. Moreover, the expansion of schools is not only creating education opportunities for children notably for girls but it has also raised awareness of female students to defend their rights including the right to choose their partners, participation in societal affairs, and claiming their right to represent themselves in the formal justice system.

However, the development interventions have created pressures on customary organizations notably the clan institution and result in gradual change of eating habits and religious practice of the community. The clan institution has customarily played an important role in the socioeconomic life of the community including social protection, socialization, punishment of deviant members, and dispute resolution. These roles are undergoing significant changes. Particularly, following the expansion of the formal justice system, schooling, investment, and urbanization, certain segments of the community including many adults and youngsters are resisting being governed by the rules and regulation of their respective clans. This is reflected through accusing clan leaders in front of the formal justice systems, acting against rules of the clan (for example, premarital sex and pregnancy of school boys and girls, drunkenness and spending nights in urban centers), and unwillingness to contribute livestock and money to assist clan members facing problems. Moreover, the clan leaders themselves have become either unwilling to serve as clan leaders or reluctant to pass decisions in some cases (for example, punishment of wrongdoers, marriage issues) for fear of the formal justice system and disputes that result due to refusal of some members to abide by the leaders' decisions.

To wind up, there has been improvement in physical structures and many buildings have been constructed in the area. However, many of the buildings have not been providing the services they intended for due to lack of facilities and continuous supervision. Health post and Farmers Training Center (FTC) are the cases in point; where the health post is not often opened and FTC building has been served for political meeting and election and the community are not familiar with them. Moreover, there were government plans regarding livelihood interventions and HTPs and the people were urged to take actions but little concern was given to follow-up over whether there is success or failure.

Hence, the officials should take time to follow-up of development interventions and equipping the buildings to insure the provision of the intended services and to evaluate the failure or success of a given intervention. Moreover, the elders and notable people such as clan leaders and religious leaders should be encouraged to participate not only in dispute resolution but also in the wider intervention programs in the *kebele* so as to solve the discrepancy between the formal and informal institutions and strengthen development.

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