Oromo Indigenous Philosophy (Gadaa System): The Case of 74th Gujii Oromo Gadaa Power Transition

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Abstract
The main purpose of this paper is to investigate Gadaa power transfer, which is performed every eight years among the Oromo society in general and Gujii Oromo in particular. In this study the researcher employed both the primary and secondary sources. Secondary data sources were collected by assessing published and unpublished materials. The primary data were collected through observation, discussion and interview. Furthermore, these data were described qualitatively. Finally, all data were analyzed and interpreted carefully according to social science disciplines. As revealed by the study, power (baallii) transfer is a ritual celebration passing through different steps and concluded by sacrificial activities from giving and taking Abbaa Gadaa’s peacefully. The findings of this paper indicated that in Gadaa Democracy power transferred peacefully through fair, free and periodic election. It has real significance in intercommunity peace-building and sustaining social solidarity and integration. Finally, the paper explored how the Oromo nation developed this amazing and exemplary philosophy for self-rule, self-determination and sustainable development. It also illustrates how it had functioning as a socio-political institution by preventing oppression and exploitation and promoting relative peace, security, sustainable development, and political sovereignty.

Keywords: Gadaa, Baallii, Gujii, Abbaa Gadaa, Oromo, Gumii Bokkoo

Introduction
This paper has the product of several studies conducted on the Gadaa System. Among these scholars, Cerulli, Asmarom Legesse, Hunting Ford, Martial De Slavic, Marco Bassi and P. T. W. Baxter and some others are contributed a lot for the study of the indigenous Oromo socio-political philosophies. The 13th c. was the emergence of powerful Christian kingdom and Muslim sultanates in the north central Ethiopia. It also the time of massive political and religious crisis which had affected the socio-political and religious life the Oromo people. However, in 16th c. as a result of the Oromo expansion they regain their lost power and territory. For many scholars, Oromo history began in the 16th c. when the Oromo were actively recapturing their territories and rolling back the Christian and Muslim empires. At that time Oromo people had a form of constitutional government known as Gadaa. During the 16th and 17th c., when various peoples were fighting over economic resources in the Horn of Africa, the Oromo were effectively organized under the Gadaa institution for both offensive and defensive wars [1].

Gadaa system helped the Oromo people both militarily and administratively, enabled them to expand their territories. However, after 19th c. Gadaa had been reduced to ritual system among many Oromo areas. The decline of Gadaa system over Oromia regions were not the same. When in some areas of Oromia region it reduced to ritual system, while in some Oromia regions such as Gujii and Borena areas it was survived. These were as a result of internal and external problems. These are “nonfederal nature of the Gadaa System, lack of Strong Central government, lack of regular meeting of Gadaa official and long distance of Gumii (assembly) from political center made Gadaa system less Competent[2]”.

It is essential to know those internal factors such as class and state formation processes and their articulation with external factors such as European and Ethiopian colonialism, the emergence of an Oromo collaborative class, and the spread of Islam and Christianity undermined the political and military roles of the Gadaa system in the nineteenth century. These changes did not totally displace Oromo values and traditions. There are still some elements of these values and traditions in Oromo society. The Gadaa system still helps in maintaining peace, and transmitting knowledge, and practicing rituals between some moieties and groups in Gujii and Borena Oromia [3]. Under such conditions, it is very difficult for Gadaa officials to meet, discuss and decide developed social and economic problem and power transfer. As a result of these factors the political culture of the Oromo was restricted and Gadaa was reduced to ritual system[4].

The Gujii original homeland is known to be Adola. According to oral tradition the history of Gujii people is traced back to one man called Gujo. As researchers argued “Gujo born and lived in Adola for long period of time and moved northeast ward with his three sons Uraago, Mattoo and Hokkuu. They settled in the area called Girja. After many years his descendants moved to different areas. For instance, Uraago groups are moved to the west, Mattoo groups are moved to the north and Hokkuu groups moved to South. After long period of time the name Gujo changed to Gujii [5].” Gujii society is composed of seven major divisions, Uraaga, Maattii, Hookekkuo, Haloo, Weessituu, Ottuu and Sheelloo. However, “only three of these (Uraaga, Maattii, Hookekkuo) have currently
lived nearby environs to each other, while the others integrated with other ethnic group and settled separate from others”. As a result, only the three stand under common Gadaa democratic system and possess the Haaganaa (political power) of Gujii. This is why the Gujii’s traditional political administration often refers to Haaganaa Sadiin (the three regional states) [6].

The Structure of Gujii Oromo Gadaa System

The study of human history is started to administer themselves before thousands years during ancient time. Their early life was depending on the some arranged ways which determined their life. The Oromo nations have developed different systems of governance in their history. Among such governments, Gadaa System is the most comprehensive system of political, legal, religious and social system of the Oromo society. Gadaa is an indigenous socio-political system “that regulated political stability, economic development, social activities, cultural obligations, moral responsibility, and the philosophy of religious order of the society”. It is controversial among scholars when and how the indigenous Oromo Gadaa system emerged [7]. Among the various descriptions given on the origin of Gadaa, some holds that Gadaa laws are originally derived from ‘Waaqa’ (God). As different scholars described “Ga” represents Seeraa (law), “Da” represents Waaqa(God). Therefore, this view tall as Gadaa was derived from law of God (Seeraa Waaqa). Oromo oral tradition also supports in the early days, Gadaa was purely a religious institution that helped the society as a constitution later it came to bind the Socio-economic, political and religious life of Oromo [8]. The political philosophy of Gadaa has “principles of checks and balances, terms of eight years, balancedopposition between parties, and power sharing” to prevent power from falling into the hands of dictators. Other principles of the system have included balanced representation of all clans, lineages, regions and confederacies [9].

In the Gujii Oromo society, this system of administration used different social settings such as Lubaa’ (socio-political groupings), ‘Baallii’ (political power holder) ‘Yaa a’ (regular session of delegates in the ‘Lubaa’), ‘Gadaa’ (Ruling party headed by ‘Abbaa Gadaa’), ‘Haaganaa’ (members of congress who have political powers and represent three Administrative division of Gujii Gadaa(Uraaga, Maattii and Hookku ), Gumi Bokkoo (the congress of three Gujii Haaganas held each eight years at place called ‘Bokkoo’) which is the highest authority in the Gujii Gadaa system. Thus, political, legal, cultural, social and religious administrative activities in the Gadaa System planned, organized, staffed, directed, coordinated, and reported by these channels of social settings.In the political structure of Gujii Gadaa system there are five miseensaa (parties). These five parts includes Muudaana, Halchiisa,Dhallaana, Harmufa and Roobalee. These five parts(Baallii Shanan) were formed the cycle[10].

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**Fig 1:** The cycle of five parts or BaalliiShananGadaa in Gujii Oromo

Abbaa Gadaa’s of Gujii are ranked in terms of their birth order. By the virtue of his seniority, the Abbaa Gadaa of Uraagaa is taken as the major (President) of the Guji Society. On the other hand, in the Gadaa governance system, the Quallluu institution (religious institution) was significant in the check and balance of power. The primary role of Quallluu’s (religious leaders) was offering religious leadership in the religion of Waaqeffanna [11]. Quallluu used to direct Gadaa initiation ceremonies, handover power and Muudaa ceremony. “Muudaa ceremony is a ceremony performed every eight years when all elected Gada officials paid visit to the...
Qaalluu and get blessing and recognitions for their next leadership.”Mundaa ceremony was conducted to consider Qaalluu as the father of law and the representative of Waaga on the earth. It also regarded as a graduation time for those who entered the Luba[12].

In other words, Abbaa Bokkuu was a chief executive in the Gadaa assembly. According to G. W. B. Hunting ford “The Abbaa Bokkuu and his two colleagues are chosen from the most distinguished families known as ’Hayyu.’ The principal function of the Abbaa Bokkuu is to preside over the parliament … to proclaim the laws, and to act when necessary as ritual expert in the Gadaa-ceremonies.” Abba Gadaa is another name for Abbaa Bokkuu. The Abbaa Bokkuu was also supported by a council, known as Salgee, and retired Gadaa officials [13]. This might happen among Gadaa parties starting from lower level of Gadaa and through higher active and passive stages. Another character of Gadaa system of governance is it does not depends on property, social classes etc. This implies that political power was not in the hands of the rich class and the system in which the poor were dominated. In the Gadaa system of governance power is not exercised from the center. The nature of Gadaa system of governance is Federal type[14]. In electing leaders “there is a general understanding among the electors and the men competing for offices to be Abbaa Gadaa. These are past military achievements, Oratorical talent, mystical attributes, wisdom for settling dispute, traditional knowledge about the society and his Potential for future leaderships the most important factors to be considered [15].”

Fig 2: Jilo Mandho, the 74th Abba Gadaa of Uraaga

The value system of Oromo society has been influenced by the Gadaa and Siqqee institutions. In pre-colonial Oromo society, women had the Siqqee institution, a parallel institution to the Gadaa system that “functioned hands in hand with Gadaa system as one of its built-in mechanisms of checks and balances.” These two institutions helped to maintain Safuu Oromo society by enabling Oromo women to have control over resources and private matters, social status and respect, and sisterhood and solidarity by preventing men from infringing upon their rights [16]. Gadaa system and the Siqqee institution had influenced the value system of Oromo society. [17].

Gujii Oromo Gadaa Grades

In socio-political aspect male members of Gujii Oromo are grouped into age grade “hiriyaa” (peer) system. To simplify these there are several Gadaa grades. For Example, Dabballees (0-8), Qarree Duuba (9-16), Qarree Durbaa (17-24), Kuusa (25-28), Raaba (29-36), Doorii (37-48), Gadaa (41-48), Baattu (49-56), Yuuba Diqqaa (57-64), Yuuba Gudda (65-72), Jaarsa Guduruu (73-80) and Jaarsa Qulluullaa(81-88). In the luuba cycle Dabballees, Qarree Duruu and Qarree Duubaa are passive Gadaa stage. On the other hand Kuusa, Raaba, Doorii and Gadaa stages are active Political stage. However, Baattu, Yuuba Diqqaa and Yuuba Gudda stage are retirement or departure Gadaa stage. Moreover, Jaarsa stage is called Extinctive stages of Gadaa system [18].

In Oromo society, knowledge and information have been mainly transmitted from generation to generation through the institutions of family, religion, and Gadaa. Dabballees are expected to learn appropriate social behavior from their families, communities and experts. Dabballees is a productive time to study Oromo myth, riddles(Hibboo), stories of different types, geerersa, cultural songs. Qarree Durbaa stage is the most important stage in the Gadaa cycle when the members shoulder family responsibilities and engage in military exercise. In other words, this period was the period of enjoyment and military training. In domestic life, they engaged in how to prepare and use plowing materials in agriculture, utilization of property, family management and social life by
observing culture and seeraa(law) of the society [19].

Kuusaa stage is a matured stage for formal military engagement under the instruction of the Abbaa Duulaa. Horse fighting and horse riding games were the main activity of stage. This stage was attached with dual tasks in the society: military service and training for Gadaa leadership. Raabaa/Doorii are a period when the contenders were planning to take power in the next Gadaa period. Members of this grade were known as senior warrior. It is the remarkable stage at which individuals gain art of leadership and philosophy. The stage was also a period of preparation for leadership to take over Baallii from the exiting Gadaa leaders. Gadaa/Luuba stage is refer to men that accomplished all the five stages and then graduated. “This is the optimum age of having maturity, skill and capacity of carrying and discharging societal responsibilities. It is the most significant stage in the political life of Oromo male’s society, in which they gained full rights and acted as the political leaders[20].”

“Baatuu, Yuuba Diqqaa and Yuuba Guddaa stages are called as advisors of the Gadaa government. The oldest group is the Yuuba. It is composed of person whose members were in power in previous times. Next is Luuba, the ruling party [21].Baalii-Shanan or five parties system is the operational mechanism of the Gadaa cycle that regularly at even intervals, assumes political powers. Haganaa means the Luuba authority (political power) contained by the council who represents the entire population among Gujii. It is the Luuba administrative authority from the members of Gadaa, Doorii and Raabaa parties of Uraaga, Maattii and Hookkuu [22].

The Role of Oromo Women in Gadaa System

Historically, Scholars are argued as Oromo women have no powers during the period of Gadaa rule. In Gadaa democracy women cannot be Abbaa Gadaa or hayyuu in the clan leadership structure. However, this scholar validates this view as the wife of elected Abbaa Gadaa is equally treated like the Abbaa Gadaa himself. The question for why women marginalized from Gadaa System is still controversial among scholars. For some scholars, the reasons are rooted in cultural, socio-economic and biological factors[23],[24]. Other scholar also argued as “Under Gadaa system, women do not belong to the Gadaa grade of the clan in which they were born and to which they are married. Unmarried women are viewed as keessummaa (guest) and Alogaa (non-relative) in the clan to which they are married” [25]. Though, even if, the issue is still debatable it doesn’t mean that women didn’t have role in the Gadaa Democracy. Basically, Gadaa system is not the issue of being Abbaa Gadaa or not being Abbaa Gadaa. Gadaa Democracy is the issue of Oromo socio-political philosophies that required equal participation of both male and female.

Furthermore, others also argued as age-grading Gadaa system by itself is obstacle to women participation. This idea confirm that “naturally women need to give birth to children and to look after their home and children which affect them to pass through all Gadaa grades like the men”[26]. But as a mechanism of check and balance and to counter the male domination they developed their own parallel institution known as Siiqgee institution [27], [28]. However, under Gadaa umbrella the role of women as part of Oromo community is fundamental and very vital. Women are half part of Oromo society and equally considered with men under Gadaa system. It is believed that Gadaa system is not complete without role and participation of women. According to Debela, “women are pillar of the Gadaa system and in all cases without the women’s participation there is no Gadaa System.”He also argued as the role of women in Gadaa system to promote moral and ethical order of Oromo community is large. In the Gadaa system,”if Abbaa Gadaa dies by chance, it is his wife who takes the position and run Gadaa leadership until the next Gadaa leader elected.”[29]. Thus, Gadaa system is a system in which the rights of women are respected. Therefore, that is why Oromo women formed a parallel institution of their own under the protection of Gadaa system and it stands for women’s ritual, political and social power in the society. Therefore, for me Gadaa system and Siiqgee institution are a coin of opposite sides [30].
During the Gadaa power transfer, it is the women with the Siiqgee that blesses and decorates the ceremonies for the person who gives and takes over the Gadaa offices. Again, Ragatu quotes as "The newly elected officials walk under the Siiqgee sticks raised up by women standing in two rows and touching the other tips of their Siiqgee together" [31]. Thus, both Gadaa and Siiqgee institutions helped to maintain Safuu (Oromo moral codes) of Oromo society. It functions hand in hand with Gadaa system and it has given big opportunity for Oromo women to articulate their views and address issues of concerning to women [32]. Generally, in the Gadaa leadership, women are actively engaged through Siiqgee institution and they deal with all aspects of their life [33], [34].

**The Assessment of 74th Gumii Bokkoo Assembly**

Gumii Bokkoo is the congress of the Gujii confederacy (Uraagaa, Maattii and Hookkuu) held once every eight years at a place Me’ee Bokkoo. It composed of nine authoritative organs called HaaganaaSaglan comprising of Haaganaa Sadiin(Gadaa, Doorii and Raaba) and Yuuba Sadiin( Baatuu,Yuuba and Yuuba Guddaa) from each three tribes of Gujii as a law making body. Me’ee Bokkoo is currently located in the East Gujii zone, Anna Sorra District between Bore and Adooladistricts. Gumii Bokkoo is central authority, legislative organ, and Supreme Court for all political administrations, power transition, law-rehearsing, law-makings, and highest judiciary of the Gujii people[35]. According to the Gadaa system of government, power is in the hand of the people. The members of Caffee or Gumii used to work as a representative of the clan. The Gumii Bokkoo assembly has the highest degree of authority than the Gadaa and other assemblies, and what Gumii decides cannot be reversed by any other assembly [36]. The main task of this parliament was to enact reform and proclaim laws. The assembly was held in the Caffee which under the shade of Me’ee tree. The Shade of Me’ee tree was assumed “the source of peace, the office of the government, the meeting ground for the elders and the sacred place of the religious duties”. When the Gumii members met under the Me’ee tree the Abbaa Gadaa sat on the right and other notables on the left, by seniority of their tribes or clan and the age of the participants [37].

According to Gujii Gadaa structure Gumii is the general assembly that the previous laws are revised and new legislations were introduced by the Gadaa council every eight years. Accordingly, a well-known community leaders, key informants and prominent Gadaa leaders of Gujii communities were fully interviewed primarily on procedures and practice the transition of Gadaa power (Baallii)[38]. The 74th Gumii Bokkoo Assembly is held in the East Gujii Zone, Anna Sorra district at place called Me’ee Bokko. According to Bule Hora University indigenous Knowledge team report it estimated to be “more than half of million people were attended the events”. During this Gumii assembly, different indigenous laws proclaimed, amended and rehearsed, cases entertained, different individuals and social rites of passage were performed, customary and traditional values updated [39].
As Gujii elders narrate, the assembly takes five consecutive days before power transition. Each day, members of different Gadaa classes such as Gadaa, Doorii and Raabaa members of Uraagaa, Maattii and Hookkuu confederacy move in line to the center of meeting or ‘Agaalla’[40]. There are two travelling roots. The first leading segment belongs to the line of Gadaa members of the three confederacies orderly keeping their own line. The second segment is ‘Doorii’ members of all three confederacies respectively and the third segment is ‘Raabaa’ members of the three confederacies. During this Gumii traveling to the center of assembly various announcements are made, including travelling norms and other laws by the Yuubas. This speech continues up to the arrival of ‘Gumii’ members to the ‘Agaalla’ and formal discussion officially opened [41].

On their way to ‘Agaalla’, the walking approaches, wearing styles, spear holding sides and forms, walking speeds, passing norms, and other relevant issues are popularly announced to all to be respected. These announcements made by responsible ‘Yubaa’, who moving forth and back in passing Gumii expedition, being in each travelling roots. Throughout the stay of ‘Gumii’ assembly, these procedures, orders and norms are always kept and followed. If one misses it, the peace keeping ‘Jaldhaba’ or Police will order him to correct it. In fact, these announcements always used to notify every travelling member up to the end day of general convention as ‘Gumii’ moves in same pattern [42].

When Gumii expedition arrived to the center of the assembly the setting arrangement is done according to their ‘Rigaa’ (teeth brush) stick prepared from ‘Me’ee’ tree. Start from first day of Gumii assembly this ‘rigaa’ is put in specific place by each member to identify their previous seat. Thus, ‘Hayyu’ order the members to have a sit only on their previous place. They proclaimed and rehearsed laws on different social matters. These laws can be categorized as family law, administrative law, criminal law, personal law, environmental law, succession law, property law and some others. [43].

In the Gujii Gadaa system, ‘Gumii Bokkoo’ is a legislative organ of Gujii Gadaa administration. To realize and discharge legislative roles, it held once within eight years [44]. During proclaiming laws, there is no formal procedure to proclaim and review laws as a means of managing session. Instead, the session is coordinated by
Abbaa Gadaa is a prominent one. This ceremony is done by slaughtering of cattle in front of their Baallii. Drought, etc. In Gujii, change unless the country faces natural or manmade problems such as dislocation of people, war, famine, refusal to hand over power was considered as the violation of the law. The transfer of power was carried out when the outgoing leader transferred his office to the candidate of the incoming Gadaa. Abbaa Gadaa of Uragaa order policy (Jaldhaaba) transferred the turn to others. After rehearsing and proclaiming of laws is done, Abba Gadaa of Uragaa order policy (Jaldhaaba) to let the participants of Gumii session to back to their Qachaa or temporarily resident. Then ‘Jaldhaaba of Boroo’ let the participants of session to back to their resident[45].

Aftermath of Gumii Session and the Process of Baallii (power) Transfer

After Gumii assembly takes five consecutive days before Baallii ransfer, there are different ritual performances as a precondition for Baallii transfer. The handover ceremony began one year before the actual transfer of the power. Among such ritual performances Maqbaasa (naming), Qarre buufata, Hayyoma, etc. are the most prominent one. This ceremony is done by slaughtering of cattle in front of their Gumii temporally resident. The members of Hagana Saglan enjoy different cultural practices such as weeddu and sirbaa (song). Both female and male members enjoyed by playing songs of cattle, consolidate of their members, criticism each other and perform cultural value Gadaa system[46].

As it discussed above the term office of the elected Gadaa leaders was limited to eight years and ending with a formal power transfer ceremony called Baallii. According to Gujii elders, Baallii transfer may not be change unless the country faces natural or manmade problems such as dislocation of people, war, famine, drought etc. In Gujii Gadaa history due to above factors there are several periods that Gadaa power transfer is overlapped and one Abbaa Gadaa alone stayed for more than fifteen and above years. In Gadaa democracy the refusal to hand over power was considered as the violation of the Seeraa Waaqa and it disturbed the regular cycle of the Gadaa system. Even in Gujii Gadaa democracy there is a person called as Yaya Dale who refused to give power to the next Abbaa Gadaa[47],[48].

Baallii ceremony was a transitional ceremony that involved large feasting and extensive ritual activities. It was a period when the strength of the incoming Gadaa members (Luba) was tested. It was also a time when incoming Gadaa class took the socio-political and religious power from the outgoing Gadaa class. On the date, at early morning, groups of Doorii from each three Gujii congress or Yaa’aa of Uragaa, Maattii and Hookuu come to Qachaa of ruling Abbaa Gadaa to take the power. In the meantime, all Abbaa Murtii, the new Abbaa Gadaa comes to their respective clans from each seven Gujii clans. Soon after arriving at door of Qachaa of Abbaa Gadaa he calls them saying ‘Yaa Worra kana’- roughly speaking hello of this home. Then Abba Gadaa keeps silent until he repeatedly calls three times[49].

However, later on, at the fourth call he replays ‘Yaa’. Greeting them they enter ‘Qachaa’ of ruling Abbaa Gadaa. The transfer of power was carried out when Abbaa Murtii (Hayyuu) transferred the Baallii Guchii (ostrich feather) from the outgoing Abbaa Gadaa to the incoming one. To transfer Baallii means to transfer authority or Power. The two parties exchanged milk and blessings. Then the one who takes power accepted the ‘Eebbaa’ (blessing) through handing over seven ‘Daraara’ from outgoing Abbaa Gadaa. These ‘Eebbaa’ confirm the existence of abundances, peace, and respect during the passing Abbaa Gadaa and ambition of the same by taking Abbaa Gadaa in his Gadaa reign. During the ceremony the incoming and outgoing Gadaa class slaughtered bulls and the ceremony accomplished by the legal experts (Hayyuu). Finally, Gadaa Power transferred from leaders of ‘Dhallana Baallii,’ who were ruled for last eight years, to the candidates of ‘Harmuuja Baallii,’ who is going to rule for coming eight years[50].

four communicative phrases. These phrases are ‘Toggise’, ‘Qophise’, ‘Qoxise’ and ‘Waabese. Accordingly, these formal phrases help to avoid interruption. In other words, when one Hayyuu orally proclaimed and rehearsed laws he memorized once and concluded it by saying ‘Toggise’ which literally mean now I have this much and if I remember another I will continue. Then the one who made himself ready to proclaim and rehearse, take turns by pronouncing ‘Qophise’ which literally mean I have something forward for you. If two ‘Hayyuu’ once saying ‘Qophise’ then the one who want to be first said ‘Qoxise’ which mean I object to be first. Thus, when maybe there is ‘Hayyuu’ who go beyond the specified laws, the other ‘Hayyuu’ interrupted him to stop by saying ‘Waabese’ which literally mean he is exceeding, and transferred turn to others. After rehearsing and proclaiming of laws is done, Abba Gadaa of Uragaa order policy (Jaldhaaba) to let the participants of Gumii session to back to their Qachaa or temporarily resident. Then ‘Jaldhaaba of Boroo’ let the participants of session to back to their resident[45].

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Methodology
Many scholars have made an incredible effort to reconstruct the history and culture of Oromo society. In this study the researcher employed both the primary and secondary sources and different data gathering instruments. Secondary data sources were collected by brief review of related literatures by assessing published and unpublished materials. The primary data were collected through observation, discussion and interview. Moreover, these data were described, expressed and articulated qualitatively. Oral tradition is resourceful historical source that refers to human actions reported through speech and handed down from generation to generation. A critical use of Oral traditions helps the researcher to reconstruct history of Gujii society. This was followed by conducting field research among the Guji Oromo, which preserved Gadaa democracy for long period of time. This method provided me indispensable data to study Gadaa system. The data were gathered through interview and discussion with Abbaa Gadaa, Hayyuu or other Oromo elders during Gadaa power transfer. Finally, all data were analyzed and interpreted carefully in the standardized rules of the social science disciplines.

Conclusion
Gadaa is an indigenous socio-political system that regulated Political stability, Economic development, Social activities, Cultural obligations, Moral responsibility, and the philosophy of religious order of the Oromo society. In Gujii Gadaa system there are Muudaana, Halchiisa, Dhallaana, Harmuufa and Roobalee parties. These five party systems are the operational mechanism of the Gadaa cycle. Gumii Bokkoo is Gujii social assembly of the Guji confederacy (Uraagaa, Maattii and Hookkuu) held every eight years at a place Me’ee Bokkoo. It composed of Haaganaa Saglan comprising Gadaa, Doorii and Raaba from Uraagaa, Maattii and Hookkuu. During this Gumii assembly, different indigenous laws proclaimed, amended and rehearsed. As Gujii Oromo elders narrate, Baallii transfer may not change unless the country faces natural or manmade problems such as dislocation of people, war, famine, drought etc. The term office of the elected Gadaa leaders was limited to eight years and ending with a formal power transfer ceremony called Baallii. Power was transferred from one party to other party peacefully through fair and free and periodic election. Baallii Ceremony was a transitional ceremony that involved large feasting and extensive ritual activities. It was a period when the strength of the incoming Gadaa members (Luba) was tested and it was a time when incoming Gadaa class took the socio-political and religious power from the outgoing Gadaa class. The transfer of power was carried out when the legal expert transferred the Baallii Guchii (ostrich feather) from the outgoing Abbaa Gadaa to the incoming one. The two parties exchanged milk and blessings. Then the one who takes power accepted the ‘Eebbaa’ (blessing) through handing over seven ‘Daraara’. It confirms the existence of peace, and respect between giving and taking power of Gadaa and ambition of the same by taking Abbaa Gadaa in his Gadaa reign. Finally, 74th Gujii Gadaa Power transferred from leaders of ‘Dhallana Baallii’ who were ruled for last eight years from (2009 to 2016) to the candidates of ‘Harmuufa Baallii,’ who is going to rule for coming eight years from (2016 to 2023).

Reference
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