

## The Social Implications of Wolaita Proverbs: Functional Analysis

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### Abstract

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The purpose of this study was to collect and analyze some selected Wolaita proverbs for their implications of Wolaita's social realm of life. The subjects used for the current study were 60 theme-relevant proverbs collected by interviewing systematically selected 20 elders and through conducting participant-based observation being part of social interactions taking place in different villages of Wolaita. The descriptive research design was used to conduct this study using the qualitative method of data analysis. The result indicated that Wolaita proverbs embody Wolaita's social facet of life: promoting faithfulness, enhancing cooperation among people, promoting mutual respect among people in the society, encouraging good deeds and discouraging bad behavior, promoting neighborhood and relativity relationships, teaching moral principles to young generation and non-conformity for the acts deviant to the accepted social values. Based on these findings, therefore, deep and series studies that promote the frequent use of Wolaita proverbs in all adequate contexts of interaction, awareness enhancement training for young generations for effective use of Wolaita proverbs in the appropriate interactional situations, making proverbs as part of language curriculum in all levels of education and maintenance of Wolaita proverbs as vehicles of transferring indigenous wisdom to the next generation are recommended to be implemented by the all concerned bodies across the nation.

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**Keywords:** Wolaita proverbs, indigenous wisdom, social realm of life, social interactions

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## **1. Introduction**

Wolaita is one among Southern Nations and Nationalities of Ethiopia. The people of Wolaita lived independent being organized in socio-political and economic realm of life starting from the Stone Age (C.H.Stinger, 1910). Wolaita people have owned indigenous culture (beliefs, traditions, rituals, civilization) and social identities that define them and make them distinct from other people in Ethiopia. These socio-political, economic and cultural realities of Wolaita have been transferred from generation to generation solely through oral tradition (Hailegabriel, 2007).

Among those oral traditions, proverbs remain a veritable tool in depicting the overall values of Wolaita people. For instance, Wolaitas use their proverbs as a form of literary expressions to encourage, admonish, mock, advise, consol and generally to establish the verbal convention that is significant to their social realities, cultural identities and historical circumstances.

Among other facets of life, Wolaita's social realm of life is highly embodied in their proverbs. For instance, using their proverbs, Wolaitas promote faithfulness, enhance cooperation among people, promote mutual respect among people in the society, encourage good deeds and discourage bad behaviors, promote neighborhood and relativity relationships, teach moral principles to young generation and ignore or deny conformity for the acts deviant to the accepted social values of Wolaita. Confirming the idea of proverbs as key tools that reflect the overall social facets of life for a given society, Mieder (1999) argues that proverbs are an accumulated human wisdom that directly or indirectly reflect the overall styles of such the society. That is why the authors of the current study were initiated to collect and analyze some selected proverbs of Wolaita for their social implications and publish them as an article for transferring indigenous wisdom and other social realities of Wolaita to the next generation.

## **2. Methodology of the Study**

### **2.1 Design of the Study**

The descriptive research design was used for this study. This is because; it is suitable to describe the existing social realities of life embodied in Wolaita proverbs.

For the analysis, 60 proverbs were selected as sample based on their thematic relevance to the current study. For collection of those 60 relevant proverbs, two tools of data collection were used: interview and observation. Then the proverbs collected were analyzed using qualitative method of data analysis.

## 2.2 Description of the Research Setting

Wolaita is among thirteen Zones in Southern Nations and Nationalities of Ethiopia commonly known by its oral tradition and population density. According to the regional statistical abstract of 2007, the average population density of Wolaita is 385 per square kilometers. The zone has twelve Woredas and three City Administrations. The major economic activities of Wolaita are mixed agriculture and trade. The Zonal city of Wolaita (Sodo) is located 330kms from Addis Ababa through Hossana and 160kms from the Regional Capital (Hawassa).

## 2.3 Subject of the Study

The major population of this study is all Wolaita proverbs reflecting the social realm of life of Wolaita people. However, for the manageability and thematic relevance, the sample of 60 proverbs were drawn from the sea of many thousands of Wolaita proverbs reflecting the people's social life.

## 2.4 Sampling Procedure

For this study the researchers used purposive sampling procedure to come up with 60 proverbs having thematic reflection of Wolaita cultural realm of life. From the total sample of 60 proverbs, two-third (40) were collected through interviewing systematically selected 20 elders from various villages of Wolaita communities based on their deep knowledge of Wolaita socio-economic and cultural realities of life. For collecting the remained one-third (20) of the entire sample, the researchers went to the remote villages of Wolaita and conducted participant-based observation being part of social occasions taking place in those villages.

## 2.5 Tools of Data Collection

In order to achieve the intended research objectives by gathering valid, relevant and reliable proverbs from the pertinent sample of the target population, the researchers used two tools of data collection: interview and observation.

## 2.6 Data Analysis

For this study, the researchers used the qualitative method of data analysis. The entire data collected through both interview and observation were analyzed using narration; in a qualitative approach. Then, it was presented in a systematic approach of describing, analyzing and interpreting the proverbs.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### Social Implications of Wolaita Proverbs

People of Wolaita use different kinds of tools as devices of controlling their social lives. Such the tools can be considered as social powers and make various kinds of influences on different interactional situations. These tools may include promoting faithfulness, enhancing culture of cooperation, promoting respectfulness, motivating good deed, and discouraging bad behavior, strengthening neighborhood relationships and emphasizing eventual non-conformity to unaccepted deeds as deviances to their social values in the community. All of these tools of social controlling mechanisms are highly reflected by the Wolaita proverbs. Let's see the interpretation of selected Wolaita proverbs for each of the aforementioned ideas.

### 3.1 Promoting Faithfulness

Social power is defined as the influence exerted through various means of control. For instance, by the means of public, social and religious organizations, to be maintained effectively, the society needs rules and regulations (Giddens, 2005). In everyday life, societies, communities and neighborhoods have bigger issues to solve as social problems. To avoid such social problems, people use trustworthiness as a key element of social controlling mechanism.

To avoid trustless and to develop trustworthy individuals among people, Wolaitas use the proverb "Ammanido mashshay tiriyaan Me'ees," "*A knife highly trusted breaks on just cutting the liver (very soft part of animals' flesh)*". This proverb entails to explain that Wolaita people pressingly use proverbs for social control and, as a hedge against failure of trust among the families, the relatives, friends and the society in general. It is also often used to let the members to keep the secrets of one another as legible social value. The core social implication of this proverb is to maintain one's commitment and trustworthiness as a good social value among the members.

Wolaitas believe that proverbs play great roles in strengthening tribal solidarity and good public relationship to fight against social obstacles. With similar theme of promoting trustworthiness, Wolaita people use the proverb "Assa Machcho Lagettiyaay Hiittan Hirgees," "*He who adulterates another's wife usually feels anxious*". Societies in Wolaita conventionally put the traditional lawfulness in nurturing good deeds and denouncing bad behaviors. As such, this proverb is used to van the bad acts of the members of the society. The underlying social implication is to warn acts like unfaithfulness, theft, adultery, abduction, rape and robbery.

In addition, for a high value given to a wife in Wolaita society, it has been said "**Machchonee keetaa oli ereetena,**" "***A wife and a house not leased***". People who find themselves in such action get in a constant restlessness due to the violation of these long-lived social norms .i.e., "**Garssan Galatissennay bollan gacuwa yerees,**" "***He who does not love heartedly, kisses deeply on cheek***". This proverb is often used by Woalita society to find out and defy the behavior of unfaithfulness and pretention. It is also used to condemn the artistic humanities of the members and help them to comply with the basic social values in all conditions. The underlying social implication of this proverb is promoting good behaviors such as truthfulness, trustworthiness, and honesty at the expense of falsehood personality.

The proverb that carries the same assert to the above one is "**Laffaa maadday yimpuwa ekees,**" "***He who is on behalf of unfaithful man will be hated***". This proverb literally implies that if someone who support the disloyal and integrates with him will encounter with some problems. In other words, this means, helping the one with false behavior and who do not keep a secret end up in making an enmity with the other party.

The social function of this proverb is to advise or to promote the faithful behavior for those individuals who are not loyal to their social group. That is why Wolaitas say **"Ammanettenna laggiyaara pinuwan pinuwan caaqaa," "Fail not to take a proof-check of rapport to a trustless friend"**.

People in a society go through a series of socio-cultural complications which emanate from the very nature of human being, though they are living in the same dominant culture. Being aware of this reality, Wolaita people has so long devised proverbs with an informative purpose for immediate recapitulation of the members to the standard of social values upon some harm occurred by one's friend deceitfully. Thus they say **"Hadara may hyqqees; Magana may manqqees," "He who fails to affect promise dies; who relinquishes an appeal gets poor"**. The underlying social implication of this proverb is to put a sense of regret to the victim to refrain from such partners not worthy of trust in their behavior. The approach of application of the above proverb is in a sense of time-frame of "stick and carrot," and often used when the speaker condemningly essential of the victim.

Wolaita people, in its history of human society, condemn acts of untruthfulness and discrimination of the poor by authority as serious social evils. For this, they use the proverb, **"Dabo giishin dubbushan mootees, shugo giishin baacciray cuulees," "Better an open enemy than a false friend"**. This proverb contextually applied to equate failure of promise with death and failure to complement the petition of the poor equivalently let the violator to grow poor. The social implication of this proverb is in fact encouraging the members of the society to be honest to his/her promises and to listen and react the appeal of the destitute accordingly. It also implies one to be in power as far as he/she serves the public interest without partiality.

### 3.2 Enhancing Cooperation

Wolaita people believe in social cooperative effort for the achievement of a set goal. Hence they have proverbs for the reinforcement of this belief. The proverb with such the implication is **"Deree gooyiyo laytti gooyenaay laafun layttaa barkka Gooyees," "He, who does not cooperate with others, might suffer himself"**. The culture of group work and cooperation in socio-economic activities is one of the well known cultural features of Wolaita society.

Similarly, the group usually cast out non-cooperating members by using such proverbs. There is a customary occasion that encountered a deviant individual in this context;

"It is common to make a house through group work. People all the time come together to bring the main pillar of a house from a bush far apart. There was a man who usually do not take part in bringing the huge pillar, but hanging up a leaf with his hands, he only dance in front of the group laboriously pushing the pillar. When a day comes to him to construct his house, he invited all his neighbors to help him in bringing main pillar. But, all the people started to sing and dance hanging up a leaf and no one put his hand on pushing the pillar as he was usually did."

Thus, the social implication of the above proverb is to socialize people with the culture of social cooperation by informing them with the impositions and social brunt of individualism.

Another proverb that deals with cooperation is "**Coray cuchich baattaa kuntees,**" "***When all cooperates to add their saliva, they can fill a big jar***". This proverb literally indicates that many is important than some or one. The social context in which this proverb applied is to appreciate the activity carried out by cooperation with people. This is equivalent to the English proverb "***Two heads are better than one***" which has been used in another culture. The purpose of using this proverb in Wolaita culture is to encourage social cooperation to undertake certain activities.

Another proverb which shows social cooperation is "**Tuuray coorattidi tuussa gochchees,**" "***The unity of ropes pull the pillar of a house***". This proverb is frequently used to elucidate the significance of cooperation. When there is cooperation, a set goal can be easily achieved. Proverb with the same theme is "**Issi xifii quumma kateenna,**" "***One hand can't carry load to head***". This means that for one hand it is impossible to lift a load to the head. This proverb advises that cooperative effort between the two hands is necessary in order to lift a load to head.

Cooperative life needs adapting ones style of life. That is why Wolaitas say **"Asaa Qulliyawu kuttoy penggiyaa hokkidi gelees,"** ***"A hen imitating to people enters the door bended" or "When you are at Rome do as the Romans do?"*** Human beings are created with the special capability to cope up with various thoughts and ideas with little or no difficulty. Accordingly, the human society is the result of this special human capability. Hence, the social root of this proverb is to imply that people adapt to any changes in a society with firmness and comply to it with essential flexibility particularly when somebody encounters to new social environment is a winning approach to get up into significantly. It symbolically shows also that cultural universality is an acceptable ideology to get up with a particular social situation with stance easiness.

A proverb with similar theme is **"Asaaraa de'aanawu kanay asaa shshiya mees,"** ***"To live together with human being, a dog eats human waste"***. Wolaitas have strong faith in unity. They believe that, no human being, no matter how he/she is strong or weak, can live alone without cooperation of others in the society. Emphasizing this idea, Wolaitas say **"Exxay xayanaappe eray xayo gees buraaree,"** ***"It is better to lack knowledge than an alliance"***. As proverbs are apparently context and situation specific in their application, this proverb is applicable in a condition when the society finds somebody seriously humiliated only because being out of supports of others, though he had an adequate knowledge. Therefore, the social implication of this proverb is promoting the insight of group life and social unity even when one believed to have adequate knowledge and expertise in a certain profession.

### 3.3 Promoting Mutual Respect Among People

**"Bonchchoynne borssay sooppe kiyees,"** ***"Respectfulness and disregard emanate from a family"***. This proverb implies that socializing children with the cultural traits of mutual respect is very important. In other words, it is also used to imply that the sense of mutual respect exist as far as two parties concerned have the same sense of regard to one another. Nevertheless, elders who are found to be disrespectful to even for youngsters are often warned by using proverbs in a certain social contexts of Wolaita. i.e., **"Bonchchidi bonchchettettes,"** ***"One must suffer from or endure the results of his/her actions"***.



The social function of this proverb is to regulate social values such as respecting elders, authority and family members.

Significantly, elders use this proverb to warn their children to not be disrespectful and yet, the culture of Wolaita people is crystal clear to imply the necessity for social curiosity of an individual in every relationship even with his/her relatives and or with close friends.

There also is another proverb having the same implications i.e., "**Bolluwa Bonchuwaaw Booraa shukketees,**" "**As you make your bed, so you must lie on it**". It is a conventional rule of Wolaita people to mutually respect among members of the society. Particularly, the respect of oneself is believed to be the result of respecting others. This proverb is to underline that sincerity, and long lasting respect for people especially for elders, is important. Accordingly, this proverb socially imply what so ever it costs, conforming to the dominant social values such as respect of elders, authority, father or mother-in-laws is the most qualifying social norm for one to achieve social acceptance.

### 3.4 Motivating Good Deed and Discouraging Bad Behavior

For motivating good deed and discouraging the reverse, Wolaitas proverbially say "**Eeyyay balin eray zuuqqees,**" "**Wise plants a seedling uprooted by a foolish**". The special characteristics of human society are having the discourses of knowledge and wisdom. Similarly, people vary in scale of thought understanding and views to external social world. Apparently, people with good humor towards others often make things right when they find it is done wrongly by his/her fellow. The social implication of the aforementioned proverb is to socialize children to grow the behavior of acknowledging the views of others and when find them wrong correct in the manner based on the standard norm. Thus, the proverb provides an advisory function for the society in Wolaita.

On the other hand, Wolaitas also say "**Eraa qaraa zorettena; ezggeettes,**" "**A wise not advised rather carefully listened**" as part of promoting good deeds or behaviors from wise people. Individuals in a particular society are endowed with different experiences and social expertise.

Accordingly, some are more blessed with the social wisdom which they adopted from their society than others. Considering this reality, Wolaita people give due weight for the necessity of wisdom and the social status of wise individuals.

The social implication of this proverb is to pinpoint the need for approaching wise people to learn than to repute is a good social behavior to be promoted throughout the generation.

In contrary to promoting good deed and behavior, Wolaitas discourage overconfidence which is not accompanied by a good deed and proverbially say **"Gammuwaw yayikke giyaagee gawarappe shakkuwaa kiyees" "A picture better reads than a page of words"**. Self identity and appropriate personality is an indispensable social value in Wolaita society. As such elders often use this proverb to capitalize the need for firm self identity which is advised to be developed from one's childhood. This proverb is also used to neglect persons with deformed self identity and help children to grow concrete self understanding. The social implication of this proverb is to acquaint people to nurture sense of true self in the society and condemn behavior of pretending personality which is manifested by falsehood heroic display of oneself. In place of this proverb, Wolaitas also use another proverb with similar message. i.e., **"Giddoppe kiyida dulle utettaa digees," "A civilian wicked salute on a soldier"**.

Using their proverbial wisdom, Wolaitas also discourage one's bad deeds against others in the society and encourage a positive relationship of individuals in the community. Thus they say **"Giigay bayinna mattay tamma dukkees," "A bee in adversity, crunch into on a fire"**. The social significance of this proverb is that it eventually is used to express the deep hatred or sense of deceit after it is committed by socially unexpected way or means. This proverb is usually uttered by a victim or by his party against the one who did bad action to show the opposition to the wicked thing happened upon one's wisdom to the standard norm. The social implication of this proverb is to inform somebody usually found to be conforming to a society may indulge in a bad deed because of the eventual condition forcing him/her to act in a certain order.

In line with a bad deed by a certain individual and trying to make it secret, Wolaitas proverbially mock **"Giyay be'ana parssuwa gillan kameetees," "A secret to be public, gets redressed with intensive vow"**. The conventional social values of Wolaita people promote the sense of keeping one's secret as a good social value among its society. Apparently, the context of this proverb explicates the fact that the secrets which are made against the public interest by the secret ballot of a few, particularly by official, would never be left hidden. As such the social implication of this proverb is inculcating the fact of secret in minds of children and encourages them to take part only in a secret which is maintained to the welfare of the public in Wolaita.

It has been also said proverbially in Wolaita **"Gomiyaara yiida xiillee tambbuwaaraa uukketees," "A maize powder brought by robbery gets baked with tobacco"** to discourage bad habits. Other than curse and traditional belief systems, Wolaita people have long known the dangers of socially impure and culturally unacceptable means of one's development in a society. When they find something happened in this regard, for example, death of a horse bought with low price from a thief, the people knowingly of this background reality out speak one another banning the act of the victim. The social implication of this proverb is to encourage the people to get power or wealth only through a socially acceptable mechanisms and failure to do so can end up in destruction.

Discouraging bad-behavior, Wolaitas also promote the core social values maintained by the standard norm of the society. In this regard, Wolaitas proverbially say **"Harggidaagaa matan hyqqobaa lemissoppa," "Exemplify-not about death in front of a sick" or "Bird's flue is not spoken in front of a hen"**. This proverb is a situation-specific and comply with the social occurrence, which is essentially used to acculturate members of the society with the behavior of understanding their social setting and conform to their micro-environments and real situations. The social implication of this proverb is to enable the individual members of the society to cope up with their social environment and adopt a behavior convenient to comforting of their fellow people encountering a social problem with special regard.

As core element of good deeds, the dominant cultural values of Wolaita built up on the spiritual wisdom and promotes fairness of social justice. That is why Wolaitas say "**Hiyyeessaa naaqqiyaa uri xoossaa ayfiyaan xinqquwaa yeddees,**" "**He who borrows to a poor does it for God**". As such, the context at which this proverb applied is when an authority or a wealthy found discriminating socially wicked and economically inadequate members of a society at courts or at social gatherings and arbitrations on properties. It is used to encourage fairness and justice among the members of the society.

Wolaita people less credit drunkards, drug abuse, intoxication and alcoholism in general as core elements of their social values. With this theme of discouraging bad-behavior, Wolaitas say "**Iraa sussay ay qachchoo gees; ushshaa doonay ay odo gees,**" "**A rain lubricated rope is strong to tie; tongues of an alcoholic strive to speak**". This proverb explicates the disadvantage of alcoholic personality that often drags a person into unwise and futile speeches, both of which are invalid by the listening parties. The social implication of this proverb is giving less attention to alcoholic personalities when you find them speaking shallow and unworthy issues, and inform others not to drink as it defies one's social acceptance. Another proverb which deals with the same issue is "**Dichchoy dillan tuucees,**" "**Beware of evil from whom you have done a favor**". People quote this proverb when they find someone whom they helped or did favor and hurts them in return.

### 3.5 Promoting Neighborhood and Relativity Relationships

Some Wolaita proverbs view neighborhood relationships as more important than blood relationships and the others do the reverse. Both religion and cultural values encourage people to establish good relationships with neighbors and even to think about the type of neighbor before you build or buy a house. It is common in Wolaita that a neighbor might look after his neighbor's children and property when needed, shares pains and gains with neighbors, who borrow and lend from each other and exchange advice. In this regard, Wolaita people use their proverbial wisdom saying "**Hahuwaanni de'iyaa dabbuwaappe matan de'iyaa allagay keha,**" "**An enemy neighbor is worthier than a family far apart**". This proverb reflects that Wolaita society has long adopted social value of cooperation and peaceful existence with the people living in the neighborhood, be it relative or with those who are from other groups; ethnically.

This is attached to the social fact that the one at proximity is the first to help his/her neighbor at time of hardships and situations when immediate support is summoned.

On the contrary, the proverb that condemn bad behavior of neighbor is "**Laattenna shooroy bitidi worees,**" "**A neighbor ineligible to inheritance, kills (a victim) by witch**". The human thought is full of social values and cultural rules apart from which the individuals can never be understood as out or in group. The main purpose of this proverb is that it is used to condemn bad or socially unacceptable acts on one's fellow.

Wolaita people denounce the acts of witchcraft, magic, and excommunication of evil spirits; all of which usually done to hurt the other part of the society. The social implication of this proverb is to express the need for goodness, kindness, humbleness and friendliness to others in the community as far as an act does not have any benefit to both parties, particularly to the one who commit it for no value.

Another proverb that implies the importance of having relatives in proximity is "**Dabboy baynna asinne sargay baynna keettay issuway,**" "**The one who have no relative and a house with no fence are the same**". Literally, this proverb is used to indicate the social value attached to unity to relatives, kinship, and family is significantly valued by Wolaita people. There existed an age-proven social relationship in communal life particularly along with one's relative for bad fates or good festivities are all with relatives. Thus, the social implication of this proverb entails to explicate the need for strong social bond considering as a means of one's social security and a hedge for one's economic wellbeing. It promotes unity within groups or among individuals by teaching children exemplifying loneliness as a house with no fence. It is also to show how much one is exposed to danger and the need for firm identification of oneself with his/her relatives accepted as a good social behavior.

In line with the importance having relatives in a nearby vicinity, Wolaitas say "**Ishay baynna uraa oonne wadhdees,**" "**Everyone bits the one who has no own brother**". Kinship relationship and family identity is one of the dominant social values of Wolaita people. Accordingly, it is often believed that the one with no close relatives is exposed to social dangers and lack the social safety net. Such a personality is helpless and in fact none is a friend to his sake.

The social implication of this proverb is to advise persons who do not approach towards their relatives, families or brothers only because of a certain offense made on him/her; but he/she can face a series of harm resulting from loneliness and social disintegration. Most of the time this proverb is uttered by elders to advise a victim to be close to his/her families and elucidate the benefits of one's social integration compared to dangers of detached flamboyant living style.

As a further argument to the importance of relativity as one means of social bondage, Wolaitas say "**Dabboy dabbuwaakko woxxees,**" "***The same birds fly together***". Socially, Wolaita people are endowed with the wisdom of strong social bondage and, relying on a culture of firm relationship which has existed among the relatives based on their consanguine and affiliate kinship more than other social systems. The advisory value of this proverb is that it informs the members of a certain group to maintain their trusted intimacy within their kinship than exposing to others. The underlying social implication of this proverb is to indoctrinate the members to align with their in-family members and more ensures their social welfare than taking part with the outsiders.

Another proverb that deals with similar theme of the above discussion is "**Shooruwaassi keehiddi keehaa,**" "***If your neighbor is safe, you are safe***". This proverb implies that if your neighbor is in danger, you do not think that you are safe because both failure and peace are common within a community; it is better to share whatever the neighbor face. This proverb is mainly used to encourage people to work to the best of their ability to establish good relationships with neighbors. Confirming this implication, with another proverb Wolaitas say "**Cariya ulluwua yedhdhin shodhdhiya zokkoy duuxxees,**" "***When one faces a problem, the other at a nearby vicinity shares it***". This proverb implies that people in the neighborhood share all matters equally.

### 3.6 Teaching Moral Principles to the Young Generation

Truth and advice are considered difficult for people to accept. Proverbs that reflect such the realities teach an individual in the society that will lead him/her to the right way even the words may be painful. When you advise, those who disagree with you in such the reality might laugh on you today but in future they may regret for not listening your advice.

For instance, in Wolaita elders are respected whether they are relatives or not. They are considered as stores of wisdom and it is a social duty for everyone to respect them. It is unacceptable to argue with the elderly or talk to them in a loud voice. Therefore, Wolaitas use their proverbs as a means to educate and discipline children in such a regard.

In Wolaita, parents consider educating and disciplining children as the most difficult duty among family activities that they face. They express their worries about the difficulties of bringing up children in their proverbs saying "**Naata yeelliyoogee meetennashin dichchciyoogee metto,**" "***It is not difficult to give birth to a baby, but it is difficult to raise or discipline him/her***". The nature of Wolaita social structure makes the disciplining of children as a general responsibility for all members of the society. A neighbor, a friend, or a close or far relative can discipline a child or even punish him/her without consulting his/her parents.

Although children's disciplining is a collective responsibility in Wolaita, sometimes parents might be blamed if their children misbehave. People may use the above proverb to comment that parents failed to discipline their children, or a parent may even use it for social control, to blame his/her child if he/she does not appreciate his parents' effort to train him/her. The proverb that have the same implication in child raising is "**Mishshiraan wadh''enna maachchiyaanne guuttan seerenna naati issuwa,**" "***Learning at young age is like sculpturing a stone***".

There is a common agreement in all cultures that accept learning at a young age as very important element of child rearing because a child will not forget what he/she acquires when he/she is young as the proverbial comments that what you learn when you were young will remain in your memory like inscriptions on a stone, which last forever. If a child does not behave in an acceptable manner, his/her parents may say the child is too young to understand right and wrong to justify the child's mistake through proverbs and wait for the appropriate age.

In line with the above explanation, to nurture their children in a good behavior, Wolaita people use the proverbial saying of "**Yelletdo gaallassa amaalee hayqqido gaalaassan attees.**" "***He who grows with a bad manner, grows old with it***". People use this proverb for commentary or social control, to encourage parents to teach their children good manners.

They might also use it sarcastically to accuse a person that he/she grew up with bad habits. This proverb displays that what one learns when he is young will not be forgotten when he/she becomes old. Another proverbial saying which deals with the same issue in child care is "**Maagee baagaa xonnees,**" "**Feed your son properly and discipline him**". This proverb advises that you have to look after your son by supporting him with good food and accommodation, but the most important thing is to teach him good morals and to discipline him.

If a parent lets his child behave badly especially when some guest visitors are around, a relative may use this proverb to encourage the parents to discipline their children and to teach them good behavior at an early stage in their life.

Another proverb with the same concern of disciplining children is "**Naatu laggettay mela shiyan cadisseees,**" "**Punish a child if he/she lies and teach him/her good manners**". People use this proverb to encourage physical punishment in disciplining children. A proverbial saying which teaches the same moral lesson is "**Xilloy qanxxin acces,**" "**By any calculation, a truth can never be spoiled**". This judgmental proverb means that it is better to tell the truth even if you will be punished; for telling lies will not save you anyway. When a child may do something wrong or make some trouble at school or with his friends, his/her parents may investigate the matter to understand why he/she behaved in such a manner and advise their child not to do it again. However, If the child hesitates to tell the truth, his/her parents may use this proverb to encourage their child to tell the truth. This proverb reflects that lying will not save a person from the consequences of trouble. It also encourages that one should be honest in all cases. The social context in which this proverb is used is to appreciate good deeds and value the consequences linked with it.

In line with teaching children to be truthful, Wolaitas say "**Tumaawunne cuuwawunne kiyooosi xayeenaa,**" "**There is always a gateway for truth and smoke**". This proverb is used to warn those who lie and people will know the truth in a very short time. Thus, if one has the habit of lying, eventually, people will know it for no one can hide the truth for a long time. The proverbial saying that encourages truth in similar manner is "**Tummawaay tuusaa laattees,**" "**Truth is light**".



Telling truth is described in this proverb as light; one of the main values in disciplining children in Wolaita. Parents and grandparents may draw a fearful image about the consequences of lying telling the above kinds of proverbs. The child should understand his/her parents that a liar is a person hated by God and by people; hence becomes a faithful person at the end.

Wolaitas relate lying to one's tribal background saying "**Suttaa laafa goossey xeeraan buuliyaa wodh'ees,**" "**Your origin in certain context is your behavior**". In most cases Wolaitas have great loyalty to their tribes and are proud to mention that they belong to a certain tribe or another.

If a person behaves in an unacceptable way, this proverb may be used to remind him/her that his/her origin is a minor one that shaped him/her character like this. Reversely, If a person has a good behavior, people who do not know much about him/her, people will probably use this proverb to remind the greatness of his/her tribal origin. The proverb comments that your behavior shows whether you are from a good family origin that brought you up with good manners or not. Another proverb that strengthens the same theme is "**Guyiya guuttawu sinttaykka guutta,**" "**For whom the fore-ancestor is minority, his future is also minor**".

Emphatically, Wolaitas promote truth using their proverbial wisdom. For instance, they say "**Giiddogaa maanaappe yello naa'a maanaa,**" "**Make your words true to your actions**". This proverb as it has been used for social control might be cited in a situation in which a person promised to do something many times, but did not fulfill his/her promises. For example, a politician promised his people that he would build a school before the beginning of the new year but could not realize his/her promise. Some of the people might have used this proverb to remind him/her that he/she should have done what he promised to do. This proverb, in general, is used to encourage people to turn their words into actions.

Thinking that rumor distracts truth and spoils one's personality, Wolaitas discourage one who runs rumor saying "**Zigsayne duulee guuyeera de'eess,**" "**A rumor is a back bite which always occurs in a hidden manner**". Wolaitas give a childish quality for those who run rumor assuming that it is kidding which lacks maturity. i.e., "**Naa'i yoho eeheessi kani meqqetta eeheessi,**" "**He who tells you about others will tell others about you**".

Most of the time, this proverb is used for those who are negatively concerned about other people. The proverb is used to warn those people against interfering in others' affairs and it condemns those who interfere in others' affairs without being asked to do so.

### 3.7 Non-conformity for Acts Deviant to Accepted Social Values

Naturally when one lives in a given society having interaction with different individuals, there commonly exists some deviant acts which nullify standard social values of the people. When such kinds of situation happens, Wolaitas proverbially regret saying "**Gaammuwaa qantan zeerusay yelettees, "There might occasionally be found unusual within usual"**".

In social world what is accepted as a standard value is not perpetual as to the natural being does due to flux of changes resulting from the changing features of culture and other binding social forces. The underlying social implication of this proverb is to regret the unexpectedly happened occasion which is deviant to the usual social norm.

With similar theme of speaking, if there practically exists unusual behavior of a person within one's family, for instance, a boy who is too silent from a family known to be orator, Wolaitas express that they are unhappy saying "**Ayyee ulloy gaazzaa yeelees, "Planting tomato may result in potato"**". Most frequently, this proverb is used when one is not happy with the personal qualities of his/her son/daughter. The social implication of this proverb is to regret the occasionally gifted but not expected personal qualities of a person within one's family which is unusual and totally different from the accepted 'normal behaviors' of others in the family.

In Wolaita, occasionally, people often speculate their advantages in advance and ahead of time and less rely on the outcome of the past action. For such kind of events, Wolaitas proverbially say "**Gaanaagaa erenay gayttosaaraa miiccees, "He who hesitates is saved"**". The proverb, in this context, conventionally used by Wolaitas to capitalize the dangers of ignorance and foolish behavior towards certain situation or action. It is also important to aware one to predict the long term effects of something based only on just what is at hand.

The underlying social implication of this proverb is to keep one in fostering a regular curiosity in all occasions and therefore firmly act in every event in a sense of wisdom.

Wolaita people has traditional wisdom that helps them to cope up with the non-confirmed- challenging and disadvantageous choices. Proverbially they explicate this kind of occasion saying "**Geleshshoppe qaaree cuchcha mal'o,**" "**Half a loaf is better than no bread**". In everyday life, human society come across a series of choices be it fully daunt, concerned or encounter a non-compliant situations with its all uncertainty. It is quite common to see people are found to be choosing the offerings among little or no alternatives given as far as all are doubted. Eventually, the social implication of this proverb is to show that all alternatives are doubtful and to accept one with low risk is a better means in a certain social environment.

Wolaita also use their proverbs to express the non-confirmed changing features of social situations and the dynamics of human social life from worse to bad or bad to good and vice versa. They say "**Gonggee goobidi woxxa xoqarssees,**" "**A chopping board having strengthened hits up a grinding stone**". Conventionally, it is common to speak out humanistic issues using non-human creations in the form of proverbs and folktales. This proverb is used by Wolaitas to highlight the unimportance of despising/judging one only in terms of his/her current stand and social hierarchies. The social implication of this proverb is to create an insight into the need of social respect to all and developing a sense of human equality as well as justice for all without any condition emancipated by the society. It is used to disregard a behavior of partiality and discrimination of groups based on class, wealth, gender and age in a society.

With regard to rejecting non-confirmed unusual behaviors of certain individuals, in Wolaita almost all members of the society often are aware of those peoples who counteract against the dominant cultural values and deviate from the standard social norms. In this regard, when one acts deviant to the accepted social norms of the society, Wolaita people explain the likelihood of such the person saying "**Hariyaa wozanan suray de'ees,**" "**A donkey's heart keeps on grass all the time**". In more social terms, the people give a symbol to particular individuals based on their social behavior.

More specifically, the social implication of this proverb is to inform such the parties in the society about the cruelty and dangerousness of an official deviance of the accepted social norm. It is also used to pre-inform the conforming members to keep them out of reach of a deviant who is a technocrat of bad acts.

Wolaitas often understand the inner motive of an individual and predict what is going to be acted out by a person. In such the situations, they proverbially warn a person with non-confirmed inner motive saying "**Haanna maata buuchchaa gidukku leehee koshsha,**" "***Intended action of somebody seldom fits to expectation of others***". The social implication of this proverb is, therefore, to guess out what is going to be done by a person, though a guy is presumably doing another. It is also used in the context to warn one not to act on what he/she intrinsically thought to do so as a bad intention and abstain him/her from an intended bad deed. This shows that proverbs powerful to explicate thoughts, ideas, views and outward expressions of members in a certain culture are easily identified by their in-members.

Again, for maintaining their accepted social norms in eventual social events, people of Wolaita disregard the behaviors of hatred and malicious acts. More pragmatically, wickedness of somebody as a tool of expression, and the resulting bad deed to show it in all against the dominant social values. Wolaitas discourage those bad deeds saying "**Hemettannawu xibiyaa gedee xoqarssanawu denddees,**" "***A leg weary to walk, splints to kick***". The social implication of this proverb is to condemn the acts done unexpectedly because of emotional feelings and to inform the actor not to act in this manner for the next time.

When a socially known person unexpectedly commits a silly action or mistake on others, particularly on his minors, Wolaitas proverbially express non-conformity saying "**Laafana haattay kanaa mees,**" "***The one happen to die next year sits on the shed of tomb this year***". The eventual application of this proverb is as a tool to express the underlying normative values given to a certain individual in society. The social implication of this proverb is to orient a person found in charge of such act to maintain his social status and act in compliance to the standard social values of Wolaita people. It also implies the hopelessness of a person can be directly traced from the type of act a person imposes, particularly in the manner against the standard rules of the society.

Alternatively, Wolaitas use "**Laaytii qooqqanagee ha laayti guuyeegutta hemettees,**" "***The one happen to be blind next year runs back this year***" to reflect the same theme of warning the one who is losing his/her positive quality.

For those who are not listening advises and ideas of elders thinking that they are traditional, Wolaitas proverbially mock these people giving them childish quality saying "**Na'ii woxxespeatin kanttenaa,**" "***Hast makes waste***". This proverb most particularly used by elders to emphasize the underlying dangers of laziness and weakness both of which result in one's failure. This proverb is often used when one is find to fail to be successful in a certain responsibility not accepting advises of elders and only going through his intuitions. The social implication of this proverb is to emphasize the need to accept the advice of elders which promotes one's success.

#### 4. Concluions and Recommendations

##### 4.1 Conclusions

Based on the analysis and discussions of Wolaita proverbs, the following conclusions have been reached:

- Wolaita proverbs embody different domains of social realm of life as a form of indigenous wisdom of Wolaita people.
- The social realm of life embodied in Wolaita proverbs include promoting faithfulness, enhancing cooperation among people, promoting mutual respect among people in the society, encouraging good deeds and discouraging bad behavior, promoting neighborhood and relativity relationships, teaching moral principles to young generation and non-conformity for the acts deviant to accepted social values.
- There also realized that Wolaita people frequently use proverbs reflecting their social facets of life in their appropriate contexts of interaction.
- It has been found that there is a clear gap between old people and the younger ones in the frequent use of Wolaita proverbs.

#### ➤ 4.2 Recommendations

Based on the analysis and interpretation of Wolaita proverbs and conclusions made above, the following recommendations are forwarded:

- There should be deep studies that promote the frequent use of Wolaita proverbs in all adequate contexts of interaction.
- Awareness enhancement training should be given for the younger generations of Wolaita for effective use of proverbs reflecting aboriginal social realities of Wolaita in the proper interactional situations.
- Proverbs should be made as part of language curriculum in all levels of education.
- Wolaita proverbs should be maintained to serve the society as vehicles of transferring indigenous social values and wisdom to the next generations.

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