

Buna Qalaa Ritual and Coffee Ceremony among Ilu Abbabor Oromo in Ethiopia: As Indigenous Media for Making Peace and Knowledge Dissemination

In the socio-economic and cultural spheres of the Oromo communities of Ethiopia indigenous communication channels and ritual systems have played a crucial role in the daily lives of the people since ancient times. The indigenous media have been sharing the knowledge and activities of local individuals, as well as their historical practices, for generations.¹ These local communication methods have been cultivated through the creativity and skills of the community, developed over extensive experience, and have demonstrated sufficient flexibility to adapt to changes.²

Nevertheless, a significant portion of this knowledge has not been systematically recorded, leading to the loss and replacement of some aspects by contemporary technological communication channels. The term "modern" education refers to the formal Western-style educational system, which is heavily influenced by Western ideologies and is often regarded by Western-oriented educators as superior to indigenous systems.³ Furthermore the Indigenous media, knowledge, and various forms of wisdom originating from the Oromo societies are distinguished by a medium of cultural communication that encompasses daily social interactions within communities. These societies employ this medium as a means to convey indigenous knowledge across generations through community gatherings, storytelling, information sharing, and the safeguarding of cultural values. However, they have often been regarded as antiquated and inferior, dismissed as being of lesser significance.⁴ As a result, the importance of valuable local traditions, such as the Oromo buna qalaa ritual and coffee ceremony, in fostering peace and sharing knowledge has been overlooked by researchers for an extended period. Therefore, the primary objective of this study was to examine the significance of the two Oromo indigenous

systems—the buna qalaa ritual and coffee ceremony—in the socio-cultural life of the people, particularly among the Oromo of Ilu Abbabor province

Ilu Abbabor Oromo is a segment of the Mecha Oromo groups that established themselves in the southwestern highlands of Ethiopia in the late eighteenth century. The historical nucleus of the region in the nineteenth century was the Gabba Iluu polity, named after its ruler, Chali Shono, also known as Abbaa Boora.⁵ Illubabor functioned as an independent province until it was integrated into the Ethiopian Empire between 1889 and 1898 under Ras Tessema Nadew. Until the collapse of the military regime, this region was recognized as one of the provincial regions, also known as Tekilaygizat and Kiflehager.⁶ However, with the rise of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) regime in 1991 and a shift in administrative philosophy, it was reorganized into a zone within the Oromia Region, with Mettu designated as its capital.

Culturally, the Gadaa system was prevalent in the region, particularly in locations such as Cooraa, which included significant socio-political sites like Odaa Kumbabe, Odaa Bunnoo, Odaa Humbe, and Odaa Maru in Mattu, along with Odaa Doggii in Yayyuu.⁷ The economy of the Ilu Abbabor Oromo was primarily centered on agriculture, with key activities encompassing beekeeping, honey production, and coffee cultivation.⁸ According to available central statistics, the estimated total population of the region was 1.3 million. Based on demographic estimates from the 1990s, the Oromo population in this area constituted roughly 90 percent of the total demographic.⁹

Theoretical Framework

A modern theory of cognition and communication has sought to elucidate the function of indigenous media and rituals as intricate, informal methods for educating individuals and altering performances.¹⁰ The objectives of indigenous communicative media and ritual systems of the Oromo align with Bandura's social learning (cognitive) theory, which posits that most behaviors

are acquired through demonstration and explanation. This theory suggests that learning from others via social communication serves as a potent instructor of attitudes and behaviors.¹¹ Bandura asserts that individuals can gain knowledge not only in educational settings but also from their communities, peers, by observing role models, and through everyday experiences. In accordance with Bandura's cognitive theory, the indigenous communicative media and ritual systems of indigenous communities are regarded as alternative means for disseminating knowledge and fostering peace within the community through democratic dialogue and role modeling from which future generations learn.¹²

Consequently, Bandura's theory may be the most suitable framework for this study, as the Oromo buna qalaa ritual system and coffee ceremony represent significant indigenous media through which the Oromo societies have historically transmitted knowledge, facilitated democratic discussions, and addressed socio-cultural, economic, health, and security issues to seek solutions and maintain peace among rural inhabitants. The Oromo indigenous media, particularly the Buna Qalaa ritual system and coffee ceremony (along with other traditional forms such as dance, drama, folktales, myths, sculpture, song, music, motifs, symbols, etc.), possess the potential for innovation and knowledge transfer to support indigenous communities as alternative communicative media, in line with Rogers's perspective on the role of indigenous media in communication and knowledge transfer to promote innovation and transformation in societal life.

Literature Review

Despite the extensive literature on the economic impact of coffee in Ethiopia, its socio-cultural significance has not been adequately addressed in Ethiopian historiography. Most existing studies have concentrated on the economics of coffee, including its production, distribution, and varieties, as well as its environmental importance. However, other aspects, such as its historical

context—particularly its origins and the socio-cultural and ritual importance of coffee—have not received sufficient focus. The lack of adequate sources regarding the socio-cultural role of coffee has undoubtedly restricted our understanding of specific coffee consumption practices, such as buna qalaa (slaughtering coffee) and the coffee ceremony.

Indeed, there are only a few general works that provide a superficial insight into the socio-cultural contributions of coffee, especially concerning the buna qalaa ritual and coffee ceremony. These works typically explore the broader antiquity of the country, often offering only brief mentions of its economic history. This paper does not intend to suggest that none of the existing literature addresses the buna qalaa ritual or the indigenous coffee ceremonial practices of the Oromo; rather, it means to indicate that the available historical sources have not specifically examined the role of coffee rituals as indigenous forms of communication and as a means of fostering peace within the Mecha community. For example, one of the most significant sources on the buna qalaa ritual is Bula Sirika's work, "Buna Qalaa: A Quest for Traditional Uses of Coffee Among Oromo People with Special Emphasis on Wallaga, Ethiopia" (2011), which focuses on a specific community within the Mecha Oromo, namely the Leqa clan, without addressing other Mecha Oromo groups.¹³

Another notable contribution to the buna qalaa ritual is the research conducted by Bartels, L. (1983), entitled "Oromo Religion: Myths and Rites of the Western Oromo of Ethiopia." In this work, Bartels clarifies the indigenous beliefs of the Oromo, with a particular emphasis on the significance of the buna qalaa ritual within the religious context of the Mecha Oromo Communities. However, Bartels did not engage in a thorough exploration of the social values linked to the buna qalaa ritual within the socio-cultural framework of the Mecha people. Nevertheless, his research is regarded as one of the most essential studies on this subject to date.

Additional extensive studies that examine the socio-cultural, economic, political, and religious history of the Oromo include works by Karl Eric Knutson (1967), Ayalew Keno (2005), Negaso Gidada (2001), Eshetu Irena (2009), Yasin Mohammed M (2010), and Geremew H (2015). These publications have sought to address the concept of 'buna qalaa' as part of their wider investigations. However, none have specifically concentrated on the social significance of the slaughtered coffee (buna qalaa) and the coffee beverage (coffee ceremony) in particular

It is also evident that the traditional coffee ceremony of the Oromo has served as a significant means of fostering a secure social environment and has acted as an alternative form of social media for communication in the absence of modern communication methods. Despite its social importance, the native coffee ceremony has received minimal attention from scientific research, indicating a considerable gap in this area as well. The limited existing literature provides only a superficial understanding of the specific coffee ceremony practiced by the indigenous Mecha Oromo. Furthermore, none of these sources have highlighted its importance within the indigenous Oromo communication framework, particularly regarding its function in creating a platform for democratic dialogue through the dissemination of knowledge within the community

For example, Serekebrhan Haran (2010), in his work *Coffee, Culture, and Intellectual Property Rights* attempts to illustrate the position of Ethiopian specialty coffee in the global business landscape to assert property rights, while also providing an overview of the socio-cultural significance of the Ethiopian coffee ritual. Dahay Daniel (2016), whose research focuses specifically on the social function of the Ethiopian coffee ceremony, is the only relevant literature for the current study. Daniel explores how the coffee ceremony aids in alleviating social unrest among community members and its unifying effect against governmental mismanagement during the military regime. Although his primary aim was to honor the role of natural forest coffee in

preserving biodiversity in his introductory session, Tadesse Woldamariam Gole (2015) also sought to shed light on the socio-cultural significance of slaughtered coffee (buna qalaa) and brewed coffee.¹⁴

Despite their unwavering commitment to integrating the social importance of coffee into their work, none were able to succinctly articulate the significance of the indigenous coffee ceremony and the Buna qalaa ritual of the Mecha Oromo in disseminating knowledge and fostering peace specifically. It is possible that the insights found in those works could assist us in advancing the seminar work as a contribution to enhance the study.

Objective

The aim of this article is to explore the significance of the indigenous Buna qalaa Ritual and coffee ceremony as alternative forms of communication among the Ilu Abbabor Oromo. The study also sought to evaluate the role of the buna qalaa ritual and coffee ceremony as indigenous media. Furthermore, it was aimed to reveal the current status of coffee rituals within the Oromo communities in the study area and, finally, to propose solutions on how to preserve these Oromo coffee rituals and promote them to enhance additional socio-cultural benefits.

Materials and Methods

To conduct this research effectively, both primary and secondary sources were compiled to enhance the credibility of the current topic, especially in relation to Oromo coffee rituals and related issues. Most primary sources were obtained from knowledgeable Oromo elders through verbal narratives collected via interviews. Conversely, secondary sources were compiled by reviewing pertinent literature to support the primary data of the study. In selecting sample respondents, the researcher employed a purposive sampling technique to minimize information distortion, which also aimed to reduce operational time costs. To ensure fairness and inclusivity in

the study, the researcher endeavored to include sample elders from both the current Ilu Abbabor Zone and Bunno Bedele zones woredas. While developing the research instrument, meticulous attention was paid to standardizing the researcher's questions, ensuring that interviewers asked the same questions consistently.

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on the Mecha Oromo clans situated in the Ilu Abbabor and Buno Bedele zones of southwestern Oromia. It examines the socio-cultural significance of Oromo coffee rituals, highlighting their role as a traditional means of communication and peacekeeping within the community. The research encompasses both indigenous practices and modern influences, providing a comprehensive view of the coffee rituals' evolution and their impact on social interactions among the Oromo people in the specified regions.

Discussion and Results

Concept of Indigenous Knowledge

The literature on indigenous knowledge lacks a unified definition, yet it is characterized by distinct traits that differ across cultures and societies. Indigenous knowledge, as described by Shelema R. (2018) pertains to the culturally diverse societies of Africa shaped by historical immigration and integration. It is defined as local knowledge specific to a culture, contrasting with the international knowledge systems developed by academic institutions.¹⁵

This form of knowledge is closely tied to local contexts and is primarily transmitted orally, making it non-formal and dynamic. It plays a crucial role in the survival and subsistence of many communities, fostering grassroots participation in decision-making across various sectors, including production, healthcare, education, and natural resource management.¹⁶ The adaptability of indigenous knowledge to changing socioeconomic conditions is significant, as it is derived from

long-standing experiences, unlike modern education systems that often do not resonate with students' home knowledge.¹⁷

In developing countries like Ethiopia, where modern technology may be limited, indigenous knowledge serves as a foundational element for managing societal life. Even in technologically advanced regions, it remains a reliable alternative.¹⁸ Indigenous communication channels, rooted in the practices of indigenous peoples, are essential for socio-economic life, reflecting local values, norms, and cultural worldviews.¹⁹ These systems facilitate effective communication within communities and are characterized by continuous information dissemination, entertainment, and education, particularly in societies less influenced by Western culture.²⁰

Indigenous media, primarily consisting of non-electronic mediums, are integral to the cultural fabric of communities, allowing for the transmission of traditions across generations without reliance on modern technology.²¹ The forms of indigenous media vary widely among societies, showcasing unique styles, production methods, and cultural expressions such as music, dance, customs, myths, and proverbs.²² These communication tools are deeply embedded in the beliefs and rituals of the people, serving as enduring alternatives for knowledge transfer and emotional expression. Largely, the indigenous communication channels have historically been vital in processing and disseminating information, acting as a cornerstone of cultural continuity throughout history.

Concept of Buna Qalaa Ritual

The term "buna Qalaa" is derived from two words: 'buna,' meaning 'coffee,' and 'qaluu,' which refers to 'slaughtering' but is more accurately associated with the preparation of coffee. Buna Qalaa is a communal meal that emphasizes sharing, particularly with neighbors, and is

traditionally made from washed, dried coffee beans that are cut and cooked with butter. While it is referred to as a meal, it transcends the conventional definition of food.²³

Buna Qalaa is also called as "kumaa," which translates to "thousand." It holds significant cultural value, symbolizing fertility and peace.²⁴ The preparation and sharing of buna Qalaa serve as a means of blessing individuals with prosperity, including wealth in the form of cattle and good harvests. The elders, serving as the abba Gada and abba Mudaas, utilize buna Qalaa during special occasions to bestow blessings upon community members, fostering loyalty and commitment.²⁵ Buna qalaa also prepared as an offering in prayers to Waaqaa (God) for blessings that ensure a fruitful harvest and overall community well-being.²⁶

As Lambert maintains Buna qalaa holds significant cultural importance in the Oromo community, serving as a heartfelt gesture for guests and a special gift during weddings.²⁷ As interview results indicate buna qalaa is also traditionally offered to marrying girls, symbolizing their affection for their new families and their integration into them. The act of sharing buna qalaa reflects the marrying girl's skills in household management, as it is believed that her ability to present this dish indicates her mother's competence in domestic affairs. Conversely, failing to provide buna qalaa may suggest inadequacies in her home management skills and cultural knowledge.²⁸

Moreover, buna qalaa is deeply embedded in the socio-cultural fabric of the Oromo people, equating the preparation of coffee to the act of animal sacrifice for guests.²⁹ This analogy underscores the reverence associated with coffee in their culture, highlighting its role as a vital food source that has been consumed since before the first millennium. Overall, buna qalaa is not merely a meal but a significant cultural marker that reflects social relationships and women's roles within the community.

The socio-cultural history of the Oromo society clearly indicates the significance of buna qalaa, as best traditional food made from coffee, which was prevalent among the Oromo people as early as the ninth century A.D.³⁰ Historical accounts, particularly from James Bruce, indicate that the Oromo utilized coffee beans mixed with butter to create energy-rich balls, which they preferred over bread for sustenance during long journeys.³¹ This practice suggests that the Oromo were using coffee as a meal long before the widespread adoption of coffee as a beverage, which began around the tenth century with Arab Muslims.

Bruce's observations imply that the Oromo relied on coffee for nourishment during extended travels, providing strength and endurance for travelers, soldiers, and merchants.³² However, there is a lack of evidence from existing sources indicating that other Ethiopian communities, including Christian groups, consumed coffee prior to the seventeenth century. It appears that the Oromo were unique in their early adoption of coffee as a food source, while Christian communities only began to embrace coffee drinking after the church relaxed its stance on the practice.³³ This historical context underscores the Oromo's pivotal role in the early use of coffee in Ethiopia

According to the obtainable literature before the seventeenth century, coffee consumption was viewed negatively, particularly among the Orthodox Christian Church and Christian communities in Ethiopia, who considered it an evil act associating it with the non-Christian Oromo communities.³⁴ Scholars such as Smith, Clay, and Pankhurst have documented this perspective, highlighting that coffee drinking and the chewing of Khat were deemed devilish customs by these religious groups.³⁵ Consequently, the Christian population in Ethiopia refrained from consuming coffee during this period.³⁶

In contrast, for the Oromo people, the coffee culture which mainly, referred to as buna qalaa has long been remained an integral part of their cultural food. It has also played a significant role

in various socio-cultural and religious events, including the Gadaa system, Muudaa, and Butta rituals, as well as in Gumaa reconciliations, weddings, and other traditional festivals.³⁷ This highlights the cultural significance of coffee within the Oromo community, contrasting sharply with the views held by the Christian groups of the time.

Procedure of Buna Qalaa Preparation

The Mecha tradition dictates that buna qalaa, preparation, is exclusively performed by married women, with the belief that unmarried girls performing it would imply acceptance of motherhood and premarital sexual relations.³⁸ Of course this cultural view may not be universally held across all Oromo regions and could lack scientific validation.

The preparation of buna qalaa involves specific materials, including coffee beans, butter, spices like ginger, roasted barley, and a small clay dish known as waciitii.³⁹ The process begins with the performer biting the tips of the coffee beans to open their outer cover without removing it, allowing air and butter to enter. This biting is a ritual act, accompanied by prayers for purification and protection. Each of the four initial bites is accompanied by a specific prayer, invoking divine intervention to eliminate evil, diseases, harmful words, and bad actions.⁴⁰

At first biting” O! Waqaa cut all evil things from us’, at the second biting it saying ‘O! Waqaa cut all total diseases from us’; at the third biting she says ‘O! Waqaa cut all evil words off from us ’, and at final biting says, ‘O! Waqaa cut all bad acts from us!’⁴¹

The cultural significance of the clay pot known as "*kil'a bunaa*" or "*waciitii*" in the Ilu Abbabor Oromo tradition is so great, particularly in the preparation of buna qalaa. This buna qalaa making tool (clay) is meticulously maintained and is believed to hold spiritual power, as it is associated with the Waqaa, a deity that is thought to protect women from evil and disease, promoting fertility and a peaceful life.⁴²

The preparation is a lengthy process, often taking over an hour, during which women engage in continuous prayer. Their prayers reflect a deep connection to their community's well-being, invoking blessings for fertility, health, and prosperity. The prayers emphasize the importance of sustaining life, from children to livestock, and express gratitude for the resources provided by both the earth and the heavens.⁴³

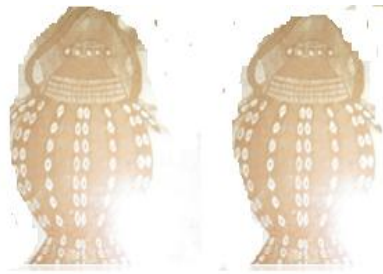
Buna qalaa serves as a vital element in the socio-cultural fabric of the Ilu Abbabor communities, symbolizing peace and gratitude. It acts as a medium for fostering a harmonious relationship between the community and Waqaa, stressing its role as a source of sustenance and a means of spiritual connection.⁴⁴ Overall, this illustrates how buna qalaa is not merely a beverage but a significant cultural practice that embodies the values and beliefs of the Mecha Oromo people in general and the Ilu communities in particular.

The coffee ritual process, the buna qalaa, stresses its cultural significance and the symbolic language used during the process. The moment the first coffee bean bursts open, it is accompanied by a sound described as 'toss,' prompting a woman to invoke peace and protection from evil through her words.⁴⁵ The act of the coffee bursting is metaphorically referred to as the coffee "speaking," indicating the completion of the brewing process,

As the ritual progresses went on the prayer song continues and when, the woman removes the clay pot from the fire, praying for peace and the withdrawal of evil, paralleling her actions with the coffee's preparation. After allowing the coffee to cool, it is mixed with roasted barley or other ingredients for consumption.⁴⁶

Buna qalaa is noted for its longevity, capable of being stored for extended periods without refrigeration, making it a vital food source for warriors, traders, and travelers on long journeys.

Buna qalaa is kept in a special flask called Qabee bunaa, emphasizing its importance in sustaining individuals during their travels.



Locally-made Flak of Buna Qalaa

The Oromo Coffee Ceremony

The origins of the coffee ceremony among the Oromo people is not precisely dated, but it is acknowledged that they were the first to pioneer and consume coffee in the ninth century A.D.⁴⁷ However; the broader tradition of coffee drinking began with Arab Muslims in Yemen around 1450 CE.⁴⁸ The introduction of the knowledge of coffee drinking to Oromo land occurred in the fifteenth century, likely through Arab fortune seekers, suggesting that the coffee beverage ritual system emerged during this period.⁴⁹

Research by Dahay Daniel (2016) supports the notion that the Oromo coffee ceremony may have developed shortly after the onset of coffee drinking practices in the Arab world. Daniel posits that the coffee ceremony is a unique cultural practice of the Oromo, from which it subsequently spread to other communities in Ethiopia.⁵⁰ This indicates that the coffee ceremony has been integral to the daily life of the Oromo for approximately 500 years, continuing to play a significant role in various aspects of their culture and social interactions.

Historically the Maccaa (Mecha) community⁵¹ places significant importance on the morning coffee ceremony, which serves as a vital social occasion, particularly among rural indigenous groups.⁵² This ritual is not only about drinking coffee; it fosters strong social bonds within the

community, as participation is expected from all neighbors, barring exceptional circumstances such as family conflicts, dialoging others communal issues.⁵³ The communal aspect of the coffee ceremony reinforces the interconnectedness of community members, making it a mandatory daily practices in their social life.

Coffee is deeply intertwined with the socio-cultural framework of the Ilu Abbabor Oromo community, signifying that no social event is complete without it. The coffee ceremony plays a crucial role in various aspects of life, including socio-economic, political, cultural, and religious dimensions.⁵⁴ It is a central element that enhances community cohesion and reflects the values and traditions of the Mecha people.

Procedure of the Boiling Coffee

The Ilu communities have fully embraced the coffee-making process, which begins a week prior to the coffee ceremony. Households are required to purchase or collect a kilo of coffee beans from the weekly market in advance. Sometimes the practice rooted in historical challenges when access to markets was limited mainly in cereal crop farming dependent districts. The Coffee boiling reflects a cultural norm where women are primarily responsible for securing coffee beans for rituals, while men typically do not engage in this aspect, reinforcing the perception of coffee-making as a feminine duty.⁵⁵

Once the coffee beans are secured, the coffee maker initiates the ritual by washing and roasting the beans. During the roasting process, water is boiled in a clay pot known as *Jabanaa*, which varies in size according to the number of participants. As my informants told me the coffee ceremony is predominantly performed by younger women, with minimal male boys' involvement. The quality of the coffee is heavily reliant on the skill of the coffee maker, who must carefully manage the amount of coffee beans, water, and roasting quality to ensure a successful ceremony.⁵⁶

One of the informants like *aadde (miss)* Obse Jala and Lelo Doyo dictate that roasting is a critical step in the coffee preparation, as the quality of the coffee is significantly influenced by the roasting process, which is characterized by its aroma. After roasting, the beans are ground into a powder using a mortar and pestle, and then mixed with hot water in the *Jabanaa*. During this time, young boys may call neighbors to join the ceremony, while the coffee maker tidies the ritual space in anticipation of their arrival.⁵⁷ This intricate process highlights the cultural significance of coffee in Mecha communities, emphasizing the roles and responsibilities associated with its preparation.

The smoke produced by incense is customarily utilized in coffee ceremonies, as it is thought to repel malevolent spirits. The process involves the performer removing the coffee pot, or *jabanaa*, from the fire and allowing the dregs to settle before serving the coffee. The initial brew, known as *waannaa bunaa* also called *abol* in *Amharic*, is of high quality, while the subsequent brew, derived from the dregs, is referred to as *barakaa* and is of lesser quality.⁵⁸

In rural communities the coffee ceremony is organized based on an agreed-upon rotation among households, allowing all families to participate regardless of their socioeconomic, religious, or political backgrounds. This inclusivity fosters a communal atmosphere where residents can gather to enjoy coffee and engage in discussions about various socio-economic, political, and cultural issues. The ceremony serves as a platform for democratic dialogue and the sharing of ideas and information, promoting unity within the community without any financial burden.

The Concept of Ollaa (Coffee Sharing Resident)

The concept of *ollaa*, or coffee sharing residents, plays a significant role in the social structure of the Oromo community. *Ollaa* refers to households that share morning coffee, typically within homesteads enclosed by fences, which may consist of multiple houses. These homesteads often comprise extended families from the same lineage, fostering a strong sense of community.

Coffee sharing among ollaa is not only a social activity; but it also serves as a means of sharing both joys and burdens, reinforcing social bonds.

In the Ilu Abbabor Oromo tradition, ollaa is regarded as a social assurance, offering vital assistance during challenging times.⁵⁹ The saying "*a close alien is better than a distant relative*" emphasizes the significance of neighbors within the Oromo social structure. Families lacking ollaa, known as *kopha galoo*, frequently face social disgrace and are perceived as incomplete.⁶⁰ The necessity of neighborly connections among the Ilu Oromo Community also encapsulated in the expression "*ollaafi dugdaaf lafaa ka'u*," which underscores the importance of communal support.⁶¹ It implies that individuals, akin to the spinal cord, need a robust foundation to flourish, indicating that no Oromo family can exist without the protection and aid of their neighbors. This shows the essential role of community organization in the social framework of the Oromo people, suggesting that a well-structured neighborhood is crucial for a stable and carefree existence. Therefore, the notion of neighborliness is fundamental and central within Ilu Abbabor Oromo society. The presence of ollaa is deemed crucial for the well-being and safety of families, as highlighted by the saying that emphasizes the role of neighbors in sustaining family life. In general, ollaa is integral to the communal life of the Ilu Abbabor Oromo, reflecting deep-rooted values of trust, support, and interconnectedness.

Unanimous sources also maintain that coffee ceremony serves as a crucial social institution that fosters strong communal ties and meaningful social bonds within indigenous society, highlighting the importance of hospitality in the Macca communities.⁶² In fact this tradition has been integral to daily life for an extended period. Moreover, personal relationships within extended families significantly contribute to the development of village-type settlements. Also, the size of these homesteads varies based on the economic status of the owner, particularly when personal

servants are employed for agricultural activities. In such cases, these servants typically reside in close proximity to their employer's home.⁶³

Results

The buna qalaa ritual has played a crucial role in the social dynamics of the Oromo society, particularly among the Ilu Abbabor community. The coffee rituals have been an integral part of various socio-cultural and religious practices, with no significant event occurring without the inclusion of coffee rituals. Some of the major ceremonies such as Butta, Muudaa, wedding and indigenous peace-making processes like Jarsummaa and Gumaa all necessitate the presence of buna qalaa, as important tool of maintaining social cohesion.⁶⁴

Informants from the study area emphasize that buna qalaa serves as a unique symbol of peace within the Oromo community, reinforcing the idea that it is a communal provisions meant to be shared.⁶⁵ The deliberate shows that the culture of sharing buna qalaa signifies not only the establishment of peaceful relations but also the sharing of burdens and opportunities among community members. Elders also assert that consuming buna qalaa together with neighbors or guests indicates harmonious relationships and fosters a sense of friendship and social security.⁶⁶

This clearly indicate that the concept of buna rituals is more than just meal and beverage; it is a powerful facilitator of peaceful social interactions and a promoter of friendly relations within the indigenous communities, underscoring its deep-rooted cultural significance.

The study result highlights the significant role of buna qalaa, a traditional coffee ritual, in the Ilu Oromo culture, particularly among the indigenous communities. It is viewed as a vital element in receiving blessings from Waaqaa (God), with the act of sharing buna qalaa being essential for communal prosperity. Guests who partake in this ritual bless the host family, which is believed to

lead to abundance, such as increased livestock. This underscores the socio-cultural power of buna qalaa in fostering unity and respect among individuals during social events.

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Also, the coffee ceremony serves as a crucial aspect of daily life and social networking within rural communities in Ilu Abbabor. Historically, the Oromo of Ilu relied on oral communication due to the absence of modern communication systems as others African communities. However, the coffee ceremony has evolved as one of the significant medium for information exchange, facilitating discussions on various social issues, including cultural, political, and health matters.

Of course beyond the coffee ceremony, the people have utilized various forms of indigenous folk Medias, such as poem, songs, myths, folktales, and traditional dances, to transmit cultural knowledge and address social issues across generations.⁶⁸ These non-electronic communication channels have also remain vital for the whole Oromo community, reinforcing their cultural identity and fostering intergenerational dialogue.

Among the Ilu Oromo Communities the coffee ceremonial system serves as a vital indigenous medium of communication deeply embedded in the daily lives of the communities. Since the time immemorial it facilitates access to updated information and fosters open discussions, allowing participants to assess the credibility of the information shared. Such

participatory approach of communication has also helped for mitigating distortions and false narratives that may arise in other communicative channels, which can be occasional and biased

As the study result highlights the coffee ceremony was inclusively welcoming all social classes without regard to differences in skills, knowledge, ethnicity, religion, age, or gender. Every community member participates and gain information presented during the ceremony. In fact, the discussions were guided by social norms (safuu), which dictate that interactions occur within age groups (hiriya), with elders receiving particular respect and privilege in discussions.

The elders play a crucial role in the coffee ceremony, engaging in extensive dialogue and discussions on societal issues such as work ethics, village peace, health, and education. The stage also used as special platform to transmit cultural and historical knowledge to younger generations. The younger age groups may not actively participate in discussions, they benefit from listening and learning from the dialogue. In general, the coffee ceremony was a significant platform for social interaction, knowledge sharing, and cultural preservation within the Oromo community.

The study also emphasized the critical role of the coffee rituals in the democratic discussion in societal development, where active participation from community members was essential for the success of socio-economic developments. Obviously, lack of engagement from target groups can lead to any program failures. In this regard the Oromo coffee ceremony can be presented as a significant cultural practice that fosters community participation in various aspects of development, including planning, implementation, and resource sharing. It also creates an environment conducive to open communication, allowing community members to build relationships, develop a sense of belonging, and collaboratively address challenges.

The social values embedded in the Oromo coffee ceremony can also aligns with modern theories of participatory dialogue, as articulated by Ajay Kumar. Continuous dialogue equips

communities with problem-solving strategies, encourages innovation, and strengthens social bonds, countering individualism.⁶⁹ The coffee ceremony serves as a platform for grassroots participation, enabling members to discuss societal issues openly and engage in decision-making processes.

The concept of the Oromo open dialogue at grassroots can also be compared with Julius Nyerere's perspective on the importance of grassroots communication, asserting that growth should stem from local roots rather than external influences.⁷⁰ The coffee ceremony exemplifies an effective model for grassroots social structures, allowing indigenous people to share and verify information without reliance on modern communication systems. Information exchanged in this setting is often deemed more credible than that from contemporary media, as it undergoes thorough discussion and scrutiny.

Despite the significance of such indigenous participatory communicative and dialoging stages, contemporary leaders and governments have opted for modern media methods, overlooking the value of traditional practices. This oversight could hinder the potential for generating new ideas and facilitating meaningful discourse on societal issues. Thus, the researcher argues that recognizing and integrating the indigenous communicative medias like the Oromo Coffee Rituals' communicative role into policy-making and administrative practices is crucial for fostering participatory initiatives in contemporary societies.

Conclusion

This study finds out the crucial role of the buna qalaa ritual and coffee ceremony within the socio-cultural framework of the indigenous Oromo societies of Ilu Abbabor province. The study result shows that historically the two coffee ritual practices were essential instruments to the whole significant cultural, social, or religious events. Historically, they have functioned as vital

communication tools, allowing the communities to exchange information and address societal issues at a grassroots level. The findings also indicate that the buna qalaa ritual has considerable potential for promoting peace, while the coffee ceremony not only fosters peace but also encourages democratic dialogue and the sharing of knowledge.

Furthermore, the study finds out the cultural and social significance of traditional coffee (buna qalaa) among the Oromo community in Iluu Abbabor, portraying it as a symbol of peace, unity, and love. The communal act of sharing coffee strengthens bonds among families and neighbors, transcending mere consumption to include the sharing of challenges and conflicts, thereby promoting reconciliation and forgiveness. Buna qalaa also serves as a marker of prosperity, reflecting a collective aspiration for well-being and reinforcing social ties through its long-standing tradition.

Despite their importance, these indigenous wisdoms face the threat of extinction not only due to modern influences but also due to the overlooking of these medium of communication as an archaic and worthless. In fact they are so vital to address any grassroots participatory programs specially where the administrative philosophies focusing the local communities. The study advocates for the revival of these cultural practices to preserve their values, which are vital for community cohesion and problem-solving. The investigator also recommends the importance of establishing collaboration among Oromo culture and tourism offices and academic scholars to incorporate these indigenous wisdoms into educational curricula. In the contemporary context where challenges related to peace, security, pluralism, and participatory governance are remained the echo sound, these indigenous practices are positioned as effective alternatives for addressing societal issues.

List of Interviewees

S.No	Name	Residence	Age	Gender	Remark
1	Eliyas Mohammed	Becho	64	male	Knowledgeable in the cultural history of the indigenous Oromo people.
2	Zerihun Merga,	Alle	68	Male	
3	Asfaw Gemachu	Mettu	86	male	Knowledgeable elders provide valuable insights into the socio-cultural significance of coffee within the Oromo community, emphasizing their understanding of Oromo history and indigenous rituals. They specifically narrate Mecha traditions and offer reliable information on coffee rituals and their cultural influences.
4	Eshetu Efa	Metu	71	male	
5	Nuradin Aliyyi Kumsa	Yayo	59	male	
6	Bedilu Gezhagn	Bedeled	67	male	
7	Firrisa Ugga	J/Arjo	110	Male	
8	Lijalem Befkadu	Bedeled	45	Male	
9	Kebede Daba	Hurumu	84	Male	
10	Mokonnen Wldasanbat	Nopha	87	Male	
11	Lelo Doyo	J/Arjo	62	Female	
12	Kedir Abba Lencha	Yayo	65	Male	
13	Obse Jala	J/Arjo	65	Female	

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