

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

## Historical Roots and Significances and Challenges of Shadeye/Ashendeye/Solele Festival: The Case of North Wollo and Waghemera Zones

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### Abstract

*In the 21st century, culture recognition is considered as the pillar of development. This study was focused on the historical roots and significances of Shadeye/Ashendeye/Solele cultural practices in North Wollo and Waghemera Zone, Ethiopia. The study was conducted by using interpretative assumption and qualitative research approach. In-depth key informant, semi-structured interviews; FGD; Observation and document review data collection tools were used for this study to collect data from 36 interviewees. The study found that Shadeye/Ashendeye/Solele festival has religious roots in the Resurrection and Assumption of Virgin St. Mary to Heaven fasting (Filsata in Ethiopia). As it is strongly attached with gender and culture, young females practice Shadeye/Ashendeye/Solele festival by warping a green leaf in their flank/waist in order to express their happiness and to commemorate Angels' delight in the resurrection of St. Mary by using different aesthetically, religiously, folkloric words. The females seek social opportunity; experience the social desires, gain knowledge, social enhancements, and increases communication. These festivities are sources of cultural and societal interaction and are infused with the culture of the society. They are major sources of marriage arrangement, morality issues ("bad" and "good"), and thus stealing and other form of immoral acts and behaviors are strongly discouraged, as equality and equity among the peoples are preached, the ladies orate love in their singing and express the power of love for brotherhood, fraternity and apology. Females learn a leadership and teamwork in the course of the celebration. Even though these values and significances are possessed, this festival is currently facing challenges. The major challenges were; the changing face of the festival in the rural and urban communities, the past and present scenario of the festival celebration in its courses, lack of market-oriented operations to develop the festival as a tourism product and challenges of creating culture led development strategy and cultural regeneration practice.*

**Keywords:** Festivals, Shadeye/Ashendeye/Solele, Gender, Culture

### Introduction

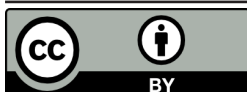
#### Background of the Study

In the 21st century, culture recognition is considered as the pillar of development. The recognition of culture is encouraged in development agenda. It involves basic requirements (Borg and Russo, 2005). First, it requires identification and awareness of the cultural dimensions in all development interventions in the so-called non-cultural sectors. This is also indispensable because sensitivity to cultures enables development projects to fit better into their contexts, energizes stakeholders, and facilitates participation. Second, incorporation requires that socio-cultural knowledge be used in the key processes for

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inducing development, through policy formulation, planning, financing, and institutional mobilization. Meeting these two requirements increases the sustainability of development by grounding it in each country's culture (World Bank, 2001).

Wondering the heritage resources have been acknowledged since the ancient times. In the present time assessing the heritage resources in the world scale is a global phenomenon and the work of the present age generation. Heritages are self-explanatory of our history, culture, identity, tradition and way of life of people, and propose where we will arrive. In short, the significance of conserving the history, culture, identity, nature and way of life of a given society is a crucial for the development of one's society (Chhabra, 2010). Festivals contribute immensely to feelings of social cohesion. Many such celebrations focus on cultural or ethnic topics and seek to inform community members of their traditions. They involve community elders sharing stories and experiences; setting templates for maintaining unity among families (Costa, 2001). Heritage resources are considered as one form of expression of culture in every society, especially the intangible one. Intangible living traditional arts and crafts are also important economically, as a large industry within which millions and millions of people, grouped in medium-size enterprises and micro-workshops, are earning their daily living (World Bank, 2001).

According to the heritage classification principles of UNESCO (1972 & 2003), intangible heritage consists of the spiritual wealth, social customs, practices representations, expirations, ceremonies of holydays, folk art, tales, proverbs, popular poetry, songs, oral traditions, and other cultural values and traditional performance. Arizpe (2001) stressed that safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage was significant to conserve human creations that may disappear forever, taking into consideration the importance of valuing human creations and enhancing the diversity of human creation, give recognition to certain kind of intangible cultural heritage, and strengthen identity in compliance. When we incorporate the heritage resources to a world heritage list; Arzipe describe the inclusion of life (birth, rites of ages and betrothal, wedding and death), social (kinship, community, settlements, border and nation), biodiversity (botany, zoology, pharmacopoeia, agriculture), land (nature beliefs, names, landscape and property), symbolic (signs, representations, rituals and flags), spiritual (cosmo vision animistic beliefs, sacred books, liturgies), literary (oral literature such as legends and epic stories and printed literature), performing arts (high arts and local arts), and festive (season's calendar, games, religious festivals, school festivals) (UNESCO, 2014).

With its physical attractions, Ethiopia is the home land of intangible cultural heritage resources. Most of the intangible heritage resources of Ethiopia are religious festivals typified in the calendar of the country and attended by a crowd of indigenous pilgrims and foreign tourists. Some of these are the annual holiday of Enkutatash or Ethiopian new year (Sep 11), Meskel or finding of the true cross (Sep 27), Gishen Mariam restoration of the true cross at Gishen (Oct 1) (Bantalem Tadesse, 2010) Ashenda in Tigray (Selam Balehey and Mulubrhan Balehegn, 2019)

Festival often serves to fulfill specific common purposes, especially in regard to commemoration or thanks giving. The celebrations offer a sense of belonging for religious, social or geographical groups, contributing to group cohesiveness (Moscardo, 2007; Quinn, 2005b). They may also provide entertainment, which was practically important to local community before the advent of mass produced entertainment. Festivals that focus on cultural or ethnic issues also seek to inform community members of their traditions (Bridgman, 1902).

### **Statement of the Problem**

In the contemporary world, heritage resources are under threat of destruction and mis-managements (Hobson; 2004). This is also more exacerbated in the case of intangible heritage resources because intangible cultural heritage is property are more difficult to preserve than physical objects, as they cannot be stored in museum but are constantly reinter pretended by the people in particular cultural communities (UNESCO, (Paris, 2003, Articl2)). Additionally, Arantes (2007) explained that cultural heritage preservation has become a much more complex and political question than when its preservation institutions restricted their interest to monuments and artifacts. As explained by UNSECO convention of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in (2003) studies on inventories of intangible cultural heritage is an integral to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage because they can raise awareness about this heritage and its importance for individual and collective identities. The process of inventorying intangible cultural heritage and making those inventories accessible to the public can also encourage creativity and self-respect in the communities and individuals where expressions and practices of intangible cultural heritages originate (Tudorache; 2016). Inventories can also provide a basis for formulating concrete plans to safeguard a given intangible cultural heritage. Even if these significances are listed, in the Ethiopian case, especially in Shaye/Ashendeye/Solele, no such studies have been conducted.

In the economic and commercial sectors, there are commercial enterprises that specialize in heritage goods employ a vast number of people. Unfortunately, sectorial and subsector statistics are lacking, in the determination of the relative weight of all cultural enterprises and the labor force they employ and how much they are valued. Few studies available in some countries indicate that the weight of commercial enterprises that is related to cultural heritage is substantial. There is ample room to enhance their competitiveness; broaden the enterprises' access to national and foreign markets; and increase their productivity, trade volumes and revenue. This, in turn, will expand the cultural sector's contribution to growth, poverty reduction, and development in all dimensions.

Festival is an event ordinarily celebrated by community and centering on some aspect of that community (Getz, 2010). Festivals are an expressive way to celebrate glorious heritage, culture and traditions. They play an important role to add structure to our social lives, and connect us with our families and backgrounds (Cudny, 2016). They give us some inspiration to remember the important things and moments in life. Festivals were started to pass the legends, knowledge and traditions on to the next generation, mostly festivals are cultural in one way or another. There are many types of cultural festival such as national, religious and seasonal. They all serve the purpose of bringing happiness to our lives, and strengthen our sense of community. Festivals are connecting us as a people of a nation. National festivals connect citizens to important moments of nation's history such as the founding day of a nation, our independence day or it celebrated throughout the continent, with many nations having a public holiday. They solidify patriotic spirits in the society and to teach principles ethics to our next generations and bring the same message of love, tolerance and understanding. On these occasions we express our gratitude to GOD, for the special thing or event that originated on the festival and also reflect attitude of people towards nature because they are related to food supply (Chang, Wen-Chun. 2009; Wang, Kuo-Yan. 2019). Human beings should adore the nature and acknowledge its benefices before partaking any of its gifts (Williams & Bowdin, 2007). The incorporation of heritage management into development strategies appears just as beneficial on educational grounds as on economic grounds (World Bank, 2001). Based on our preliminary sources regarding the historical roots of the festival; there were no arguments and the history of the festival is still controversial. On the other hand, the significances

and the current challenges of the festival are not adequately studied. The researchers believed that studying the historical roots and the significances of Shadye/Ashendeye/Solele is the crucial step to fulfill the knowledge gaps existed in the festival of Shadye/Ashendeye/Solele. Therefore, the purpose of this exploratory study is to assess the historical roots, the significances and the current challenges of Shadye/Ashendeye/Solele festival in the case of North Wollo and Waghamera zones.

## **Review of Related Literature**

### **Concepts of Festival**

Festivities are not new phenomena in the history of human kind. They are strongly connected with the development of human culture; which dates back to the historical roots of the human creation. Human culture possesses both material culture (physically present, tangible products and non-material culture, which consists of non-physical human achievements, e.g. faith, art, customs, religious and social practices (Robertson, 2000). This cultural process includes the birth and development of festivals. Festivals have been major component of human culture, being connected with religious beliefs, from primitive ones (e.g. animism, shamanism) to the religions currently dominating the world (Christian religious festivals). Festivals are a part of the non-material (intangible cultural heritage) culture, as they present art, customs and cultural symbolism (Cudny, 2016). Festivals are also treated as an event (festivals community celebrations, community entertainment, historical commemorations, multicultural celebrations, seasonal events, religious celebrations) and a variety of events connected with Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (the MICE sector). Festivals can be practically included in every type of events. There are small, local festivals (neighborhood festivals), regional festivals and large-scale events (hallmark or Mega events), attracting audience from the whole country or even abroad. Based on the online Oxford English Dictionary (<http://www.oed.com/view>), the word “festival” derives from “old French festival, -vel, medieval Latin festivalis, and Latin festivus” and is an adjective referring to: A feast, befitting a feast-day; glad, joyful, merry; the time of festive celebration, a festal day; a musical performance or a series of performances at recurring periods. Encyclopedia Britannica describe festival (also feast) as “a day or period of time set aside to commemorate, ritually celebrate or re-enact, or anticipate events or seasons—agricultural, religious, or socio-cultural—that give meaning and cohesiveness to an individual and to the religious, political, or socio-economic community (<http://www.britannica.com>)”. Many researchers tried to define festivals in their own ways in different time (Getz, 2010; Waterman, 1998; Arcodia and Whiteford, 2006). In other way, festivals conducted which celebrate culture, traditions, lifestyle, craft, art, food, music. They featured as cultural attributes aiming at bringing peoples of different cultural experiences together (Esu and Arrey, 2009). Arcodia and Whiteford (2006) define festivals as an emerging and growing as vibrant sector of tourism and leisure industry. Also, has a significant impact on economic, social, cultural and political life of the local community.

Festivals are one of the most common forms of cultural celebration -- while many of them are traditional with long histories, the majorities have been created in recent decades. Many of the other major types of event, especially art and entertainment, are frequently found within or as the theme of festivals. Art festivals are common, but have considerable diversity in form and types of art featured. By way of classification, the following categories of art are important: visual (e.g., painting, sculpture, handicraft), performing (e.g., music, dance, drama, cinema, storytelling, poetry; usually involve, performers in front of audiences), participatory (no separation of performer and audience). Most communities

and many organizations host numerous recreational events such as sport games (rather than formal competitions), social outings and not-for-profit amusements. The essential difference related to events is the total orientation of having fun. Games and sports for fun are marked by participation, they are typically non-competitive, or at least winning is downplayed, and might feature skills development or team building (Goldblatt, 2011). Falassi, (1987) has summarized contemporary English-language definitions of “festival”, of which the most pertinent is “a sacred or profane time of celebration, marked by special observances”. While traditional festivals often retain religious or mystical roots, contemporary festivals are primarily “profane”, or secular. And although many traditional festival themes have been retained, including those related to the harvest, countless new themes have been established.

### **Festival and its Values**

In our time festivals are considered as the prime instrument that contributes to channel social and cultural situations and other social issues. Festivals can help to create certain empathies between people and groups, favoring mutual understanding and social rapprochement. Therefore, we can say that festivals are the sources and instruments of social cohesion, creating intellectual dialogue and intergenerational negotiations. In general, festivals create a sustainable society by developing co-existence, integration and respect among its citizens (Gbadagbe and Mensah, 2013). Derret (2003) indicated that festivals are useful tools for community services by enhancing group and place identities. In other ways, cultural festivals create cultural awareness and cultural sharing, which are also reducing the amount of tension within communities. Apart from the ancient and medieval time, significance of festival as the celebration of feast and social gathering, starting from the advancement of industry and its significant for the economy of the country. The advancement of technology especially industrial technology developments like steam engine (invented in 1769) was used as an efficient device in industry as well as in transport and steam ships (Fulton 1807), as well as on steam locomotives (George Stephenson, 1829). Due to these advancements, tourism started to develop. These advancements continued in alarming rate in the 20th century (the advancement of jet transport by the Wrights brothers in 1903) contributed for the development of global tourism. In this way festival can be considered as a magnet for tourists to visit the country or the region or simply the destination. Therefore, festivals are tourist attractors (Allen et al, 2002; Getz, 1991, 2002). Modern industries (high technology, IT), qualifications, creativity and workers’ flexibility started to play a growing economic and social role. The economy entered the post-industrial phase, in which industry played an important role. As a consequence of those processes, the role of festivals started to grow. The 21st century cultural economy (includes products such as films, music, TV programmes, computer games, advertising, fashion, theatre performances, concerts, entertainment events and festivals have developed and their significant toward the economy was also untouched as multi-billion-dollar industries (Urry, 2007).

Festival and event tourism are the fastest growing sector in the world by attracting millions of visitors. Festivals and events used as pushing (Push factors have been described as motivational factors or needs that arise due to a state of disequilibrium or tension in the motivational system like socialization, novelty or uniqueness, escape, and family) and pulling factors (external factors that may consist of features, attractions or attributes of the destination or the event) for the visitors to participate in the tourism activities (Pierre-Andre Viviers and Elmarie Slabbert, 2014). A festival designed to bring together new ways of traveling with the new traveler. Just as the process of performing function (both intended and unintended) ways, festivals provide occasions for transformation of

traditional culture and values from one generation to the other. In this process, they were serving as uniting the people in expressing confidence in themselves and loyalty to their leaders (Gbadagbe and Mensah, 2013). Festivals can be viewed as demonstration of community power (Rinaldo, 2002). For example, political hegemony could be exercised over less powerful ethnic groups by supplying the vast majority with nationalized celebrations to divert attention away from these minority groups and their real issues. Jarvis (1994) strongly affirmed that festivals were produced for political purpose or used as a mechanism of social control (Rydell, 1984). Smith (1995) also showed that festivals used as a platform especially for the minority groups to speak out on issues and challenges the views of established order. Festivals were also sometimes used as a precondition for political engagement through the accumulation of social capital with in 'bridging' (links individuals to wider networks and can enhance civic engagement) and 'bonding' (happens in small groups of family and friends where strong ties of reciprocity emerge) network of the nation (Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti, 1993).

Practicing art and culture is the fundamental qualities of being human. These qualities are creativity, sociality and communication. These aspects are important to build peace to promote human right and democratic development. The ability to solve problems, exercise one's voice, engage in public debate and build social capital are capabilities and assets that are essential to the process of empowerment through festivals art practice. Festivals are the drivers of political mobilization. By practicing festivals and other cultural events, marginalized groups such as women, youth and ethnic minorities can enhance their standing in their community, challenging prevailing power structures (Christian Friis Bach, 2013).

Traditional festivals are mostly basic as the representative part of world culture. Cultural exchange is frequently done with different societies to creates cross-cultural communication (Davis, 2001). The Western and Non-Western cultural exchange were conducted. In this process festivals are globalized and affected by globalization (Rui Xu, 2014). As Luis indicated, the 21st century generation is going to be enjoy yourself, going to holy day, celebrate and develop their own framework of celebration to make the world they live in. In this process festivals are the major phenomena in the decade of modernity and globalized world (Richards, 2007).

## **Research Methodology**

### **Approach of the Study**

Corresponding to the nature of research topic, the research paradigm for this study is interpretivism. Consequently, by mere necessity according to Creswell & et al, (2003) the interpretivism paradigm is prescriptive of the following important points: First, in its ontology (what is reality), this paradigm pays heed to anchoring multiple realities and relativism as a subject of inquiry. Second, in its epistemological assumption (how we know what we know?), it pays attention to subjective realities. Third, as a methodology (how we study), it is entwined to qualitative approaches (such as hermeneutics, phenomenology etc.). Fourth, as a data collection tools, it uses interview, FGD, observation & photograph, etc.

Qualitative methods were adopted in the sense that meaning is multiple, that people can perceive and interpret things differently. This is mainly because people's values, backgrounds, and lived experiences vary, as they inhabit dynamic social, economic and political territories (Babbie and Mouton, 2002). Using qualitative study approach for this study is rationales based on that it is very important to describe the festivals and the roles of the

participants in the festival. Therefore, this study was used the following qualitative data collection techniques: Interviews (semi-structured interview); FGD; Observation (both observer as a participant and participant observation). Moreover, observation of the performance and other natures of the festival were made on the induced setting.

### **Data Sources**

Since this was a qualitative study, the researchers anticipate a multiple method of data collection tools were used. To garner the relevant information on the road to generate the required data for realizing the stated objectives, the study was used both primary and secondary sources.

### **Secondary Data**

In this regard, attempts were made to briefly review and examine various kinds of written materials like books, proceedings, articles, papers, periodicals, policy documents, electronic media dispatches, archival documents and in addition reliable internet sources for gathering pertinent background information about the festival and other relevant points of the study. All these materials were critically scrutinized for the detail research analysis and cross checking the primary data and the media outlets concerning the study under investigation.

### **Primary Data**

Interview based personal narrations of individuals; field observation of the festival will be used to collect data. These tools are described one by one in the following way.

**Semi Structured Interview:** The interviews provide ways of collecting information and finding out about the things that the researchers cannot observe. For this study, the interview was greatly utilized because the study by its nature is based on human affairs and interpretative assumption. The interviews are reported through the point of views to provide important insight on the situations. Therefore, the researchers conducted a detailed individual interview with interviewees in order to contextualize and understand their views on the issues. The participants were from old aged elders (both male and female), young male and female who have currently engaged in the festival practices, religious leaders involved in order to understand the historical and religious background of the festival and what changed and what has continuously persisted in the festival and culture in the Amhara Regional State. The young females and male participants were also asked on the current practices, the challenges they faced while they practice, the values and significances of the festival and many other necessary issues were incorporated in the interview process. We contacted 36 participants in all the study areas from all concerned stakeholders.

**Observation:** Personal observation was conducted in the study area. We conduct personal observation during the celebration of the festival on the natural setting (from August 15-August 19). The observation method was very important for us in order to take videos, notes and photographic information about the festival. The researchers observed festival in Lalibela, Kobo and Sekota as a single observer and got the necessary information. The observation was backed with photos and videos; which were necessary part of this study.

**Focus Group Discussion (FGD):** We conducted a focus group discussion in order to discuss on the change and continuities of the festival, the challenges and the roles of the

festival for the local community and the nation at large. We conduct three FGDs which comprise 6 participants in each group. One FGD was conducted in Lalibela town, One FGD in Seqota and the remaining one was held in Kobo.

### **Sampling Techniques**

In qualitative study; non-probability sampling techniques were utilized. For this study, we selected the interviewees by using purposive and snowball sampling technique. We assumed that purposive and snowball sampling techniques is relevant in order to understand the rich sources of data collection to ensure the quality of the data. The researchers used different selection criteria for the interview purpose. The first criterion was the age of the interviewees. This means that in order to understand the religious and historical roots of the festivals, we selected the participants based on their age above 40 years. The second criterion was that the sex matter. For this reason, we contact females for the practices, activities of the festivals, the ways of the performance, artistic expression and many other features of the festival. For FGD the participants were also selected by considering purposive selection method. The composition of the FGD discussants was both male and female. The age range of the performers in the festivals range from 21 to 39.

### **Data Management and Analyses Methods**

In qualitative research, the research gives an emphasis to a primacy of data, not to the pre-existing and pre-defined variables or hypothesis developed. In this study we have a large amount of data in the form of videos, photographs, memos, and notes. Therefore, in order to study the multidimensional utilities of festival, by its nature, is prescriptive of inter-disciplinary theoretical triangulation, employing comprehensive model of analyses flexible enough to encompass numerous natures of the festival. The data gathered through different qualitative collection tools were later triangulated and analyzed. The researchers recorded and managed the collected data in the safe mode by coping, duplicating from its sources immediately after its collection because all the collected data were stored in the electronic materials. CDs were copied and managed in their appropriate form for the quality of this study.

### **Method of Testing the Credibility and Reliability of the Study**

This research mainly focused on interpretative paradigm. Therefore, the researchers engaged in detail interview and observation. This in turn increased the validity of the study. On the other side, to increase the validity and reliability of this study, the researchers triangulated the interview data with the observed and FGD as methodological issues. This means that the researchers used data triangulation, investigators triangulation (different specialization and research interest of the researchers), and methodological triangulation, theory triangulation (individuals from different disciplines or positions bring different perspectives) to establish the validity of this study. Alternatively, the researchers were increase the validity of the finding and reduce bias information by using the following method. First, the researchers try to assure the interview is ethical and no harm to the interviewees. Second, the researchers did not write the name and other personal identification in the paper. Third, the interview was conducted in a private setting between the interviewers and interviewee and the researchers create a good rapport and relation with the participants of this study. All these methods increase the validity of the study and decrease the bias.

### **Ethical Considerations**



First and foremost, the researchers have an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values, and desires of the informant(s). Therefore, the research objectives were articulated verbally and in writing so that they are clearly understood by the informant (including a description of how data will be used); oral permission to proceed with the study as articulated was received from the informant and the informant's rights, interests and wishes was considered first when choices are made regarding reporting the data, and the final decision regarding informant anonymity will rest with the informant. The participants in the one-to-one interview and focus group discussions were introduced to the purpose of the study and were asked to give their written or verbal informed consent before answering any question. If the research participants are not interested to proceed they could leave from the interview and focus group discussion processes at any time. The participants were also be informed that if they are not interested, they could remove the tape recorder and photo cameras or delete any information recorded. The participants were also be told that information obtained from them remain confidential. Anonymity of study participants was maintained. Besides this, ethical clearance was received from organization, Wollo University.

**Results and Discussion**

**The Historical Roots of Shadeye/ Ashendiye/ Solele Festival**

According to the religious fathers there are two boldly known assumptions that are told regarding the historical background of the festival of Shadeye/Ashendiye/Solele. Our informants clearly indicated both assumptions have religious root. These assumptions are the following one. The first postulation is that this festival is related to the legendary views of the scarification of Jehphtah's (ንጉሰ ዮፍታሔ) daughter by her own father as cited in the Book of Judges, the Old Testament. The statement in the book of judges under article 11 and number from 29-40 wrote in Amharic as;

ጌፀየእግዚአብሔር መንፈስ በዮፍታሔ ላይ መጣ፤ እርሱም የምናሴ እጣ ከምትሆን ከገለጻድ ምድርና ከገለጻድ መሴፍ ወደ አሞን ልጆች ተሻገረ። ፴ ዮፍታሔም ፡ “በእውነት የአሞንን ልጆች በእጅ አሳልፈህ ብትሰጠኝ፤ ጧጭአሞን ልጆች ዘንድ በደጎና በተመለስሁ ጊዜ፤ ከቤቴ ደጅ ወጥቶ የሚቀበሉኝን ለእግዚአብሔር መሥዋዕት አደርገዋለሁ” ብሎ ለእግዚአብሔር ስእለት ተሳለ። ፴፪ዮፍታሔም ሊዋጋቸው ወደ አሞን ልጆች ተሻገረ፤ እግዚአብሔርም በእጁ አሳልፎ ሰጣቸው። ፴፫ክአሮዔርም እስከ ሚኒትና እስከ አቤልካራሚም ድረስ ሃያ ከተሞችን በታላቅ ሰልፍ አጠፋቸው። የአሞንም ልጆች በእስራኤል ልጆች ፊት ተዋረዱ።

(29) The spirit of the Lord came up on Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead, and Manasseh, and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over unto the children of Ammon. (30) and Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, if thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon in to mine hands, (31) then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnet offering. (32) so, Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them; and the Lord delivered them in to his hands. (33) and he smote them from Aroer, even till thou come to Minnith, even twenty cities, and unto the plain of the vineyards, with a very great slaughter. Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel. Based on this word in the Holy Bible under the above statement Jephthah's (ንጉሰ ዮፍታሔ) defeat his enemies and return back to his home and found his only daughter; she receives her father in outside by chanting. The word written as in Amharic I the Holy Bible ፴፬ዮፍታሔም ወደ መሴፍ ወደ ቤቴ ተመለሰ፤ እነሆም፤ ልጁ ከበሮ ይዛ እየዘፈነች ልትቀበው ወጣች፤ ለእርሱም የሚወድዳት አንድት ብቻ ነበረች። ከእርስዋም በቀር ወንድ ወይም ሴት ሌላ ልጅ አልነበረውም። ፴፭እርስዋንም ባየ

ጊዜ ልብሱን ቀድዶ፤ “ወዮልኝ ልጄ ሆይ! ወደ እግዚአብሔር አፊን ከፍቻለሁና፤ ከዚያም እመለስ ዘንድ አልችልምና አሰናከልሽኝ፤ አስጨነቅሽኝም” አላት። ሙሉእርስዎም፤ “አባቴ ሆይ አፍህን ወደ እግዚአብሔር ከከፈትህ፤ እግዚአብሔር በጠላቶችህ በአጥን ልጆች ላይ ተበቅሎልሃልና በአፍህ እንደተናገርክ አድርግብግኝ” አለችው። ሙሉአባታንም፤ “ይህ ነገር ይደረግልኝ ፤ ከዚህ ሄጀ በተራሮች ላይ እንድወጣ እና እንድወርድ፤ ከባልጀሮቹ ጋር ለድንግልናዬ እንዳለቅስ ሁለት ወር አሰናብተኝ” አለችው። ሙሉእርሱም “ሂጂ” አለ። ሁለት ወርም አሰናብታት፤ ከባልጀሮችዎም ጋር ሄደች፤ በተራሮችም ላይ ለድንግልናዋ አለቀሰች። ሙሉ ሁለት ወርም ከተፈጸመ በኋላ ወደ አባቷ ተመለሰች፤ ዮፍታሔም የተሳለውን ስእለት አደረገ፤ እርስዎም ወንድ አላወቀችም ነበር። ሙሉእርሱም ሴቶች ልጆች ለገለጻዳዊው ለዮፍታሔ ልጅ በአመት አራት ቀን ያለቅሱላት ዘንድ በአመት በአመት ይሄዱ ነበር። ይህችም በእስራኤል ዘንድ ስርዐት ሆነች።

(34) And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she was his only child; besides her he had neither son nor daughter. (35) and it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his cloths, and said, Ala, my daughter! Thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them and trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back. (36) And she said unto him, my father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon. (37) And she said unto his father, let this thing be done for me: let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows. (38) And he said, Go. And he sent her away for two months: and she wet with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. (39) And it came to pass at the end of two months, which she returns unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he, had vowed, and she knew no man. And it was a custom in Israel. (40) That the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.

According to this Biblical connotation Shadeye/Ashendiye/ Solele festival is celebrated for the commemoration of Jehphthah’s (ገጉስ ዮፍታሔ) Virgin daughter as clearly indicated in the Holy Bible. Therefore, according to this assumption Shadey/Ashendiye/Solele festival was started to celebrate before the birth of Jesus Christ.

The second view was attached with the ascension of Virgin Mary (mother of Jesus) to Heaven. Most of the informants supported the arguments that the relation of the festival with Virgin Mary and her rise to Heaven or feast of Assumption of Saint Mary (Felseta). The festival is celebrated once a year in relation to the end of Orthodox Christians Felseta fasting. The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church teaches her followers about the ascension of Virgin Mary to Heaven in soul and body. According to the church fathers, the Assumption of Saint Virgin Mary is the most highly honoured feat in Ethiopian Orthodox Church and even the largest honoured feast from all saint’s feast. The honour of the feast clearly observed on August 16 of each year by faithful believers. Because the feast is honoured by the end of the feast (August 16 in Ethiopian calendar) is a joyful day. By considering this, the Ethiopian ladies, especially Shadeye/Ashendeye/Solele females celebrate and call it Ashenda. The occasion is extremely expected by the young ladies to praise the resurrection of Virgin Mary to Heaven. Several countryside and town peoples gathered with several observers to celebrate. The Ethiopian orthodox tewahido church calls it “the six-day festival of the Assumption of Saint Mary”. The young ladies also take this connotation as a celebration of Shadeye/Ashendeye/Solele festival. The Shadeye/Ashendeye/Solele females consider the festival as an expression of their love to Virgin Mary and the Almighty God. The religious fathers said that young females express their feeling of love to the Virgin Mary. And, simply, the festival is the expression of love to Virgin Mary with its religious roots and values. The key informants told us; “even the practice during the celebration is attached to religious roots... the circle shape of the leaf...when the girls sing

and dance, they make the shape of the leaf circle.... the leaf symbolizes the action of Angels which carry Virgin Mary to the heaven”.

### **Significance of the Festival**

These cultural identifiers are practiced by the local community and always waited by the youngsters especially the ladies because of they are seen to be necessary for their social interaction. As societal resources, they able to get a special place in the heart of the youngsters because of these festivals have religious and moral values. That is why all the three festivals were celebrated in religious undertones- they begin with praising God to reach for the special day and ending with thanking their God. The ladies praising started from the church and ends with the word of God.

The local communities especially the young women eagerly await the celebration of the festivals within that specific time period (predominantly from August 16 to 21 in Ethiopian calendar every year/. This is because these community festivals considered as “time of networking with different peoples to share cultural, social and economic roles. The young women’s present themselves as a primary stakeholder of the festival celebration of Shadye/Ashendye/Solele. This festival is believed to be the source of” Freedom of Women’s” declared in this festival (Interviewee). She is free and every woman is out of their home and celebrates the day with a memorable and unforgettable ways. The freedom creates power for the provision of social bonding among ladies and young men.

Shadeye/Ashendye/Solele community festival is the major sources of marriage arrangement among the young man and female. During this celebration the young female will be candidate as to be a wife by the young men participants. These are also one of the legacies of these festivals to be a socially formed marriage arrangement and have a great social contribution.

During the celebration of the festival of Shadeye/Ashendye/Solele; the morality issues are raised. That is the “bad” and the “good” are identified by the singing words and phrases. Adultery, stealing and other form of immoral acts and behaviors are strongly discouraged. As indicated in the historic roots of the festival, the majority of the informants affirmed that these festivals have religious background. Therefore, this festival is the basic fulcrum of community activities as a major religious value. Throughout their daylong celebration and singing the ladies praise St. Marry, Good and Angels. There celebration demanding the blessing of God, St. Marry and St. Angels. This festival is also the preaching podium of equality and equity among the peoples. The female singers during the celebration describe their stand in their words. They express in their Amharic folklores: “አሽከር ይሙት ይሙት ይላሉ የኔታ አሽከር አይደለም ወይ የሚሆነው ጌታ” Literal meaning; they say, “Let the manservant die and say,” Not the manservant of the Lord who is.”). The ladies preach love in their singing and express the power of love for brotherhood and fraternity.

According to our informants, Shadye/Ashendye/Solele Festival is also considered as one of the podium of apology. At the end of the celebration, the males and the females apologize to each other if they conduct bad activities during the course of the festival. After their apologies, they take oaths for the next year to come in peace mind and they praise their God to bring them for the next year celebration. One of our informants told us that “these intangible cultural practices are our identity ...and the means of expression of our internal feelings, perceptions and our ideological meanings.” In addition, the festival enhances the national and local identity. For this connotation, one of our informants told us that “we develop sense of belongingness, share certain traits and norm of good behavior

and taking responsibilities with the participants". The performers also develop positive impression. In this case, one of our young ladies/informants express her feeling "these festivals add color in my life just as an active participant because it increases my personal interaction, gives education, exchange opinion and ideas about our future collaboration". Shadeye/Ashndeye/Solele females learn leadership and teamwork in the course of the celebration. As we see in the course of the celebration, the females elect team leader, cashier and singers for the celebration. In these ways females learn leadership and exercise management in skills. Beside its value in the development of social capital and promoting the pride of the local communities, this festival has also a religious and spiritual value for the local as well as the visitors. From the beginning, these festivals have a religious root and spiritual values for the local. Participants enjoy the spiritual values of the festival by associating with St. Mary resurrection to heaven. Particularity in Lalibela and the surrounding areas the festival opens by the blessing of the priests.

### **Challenges of *Shadeye/Ashendeye/Solele* Festival**

The changing face of the festival in the rural and town communities: The celebration of the festival in the rural and the urban communities are quite different in terms of dressing and decoration style, timing, age difference and many other identifying factors of the festivals. The rural communities try to practice the original form of celebration with traditional form while when we see the urban they are more affected by culture diffusion and seem to spin.

The age differentiation of the festival participants: The celebration is mainly divided into three segmentations (married group, unmarried group and girls' group). According to the traditions, married groups celebrate separately from the unmarried groups and girls (kids) in another group. However, in the current time, they celebrate it in a mixing way especially married and unmarried women celebrate without division. This practice creates a great challenge for the sustainability and originally of the festival for the next generations. The difference in past and present celebration in terms of courses: The original celebration was conducted in the local communities' houses starting from the church. But nowadays, female's celebration asks money in restaurants, groceries and local tavern houses. This was out of the original celebration. In the current time, collected money, cereals and other items are distributed among the participants. It is also out of the original culture of the celebration.

Lack of market-oriented operation to develop the festival as a tourist product: As we observed and got information from the interview, these festivals are deep rooted in the government's administrative intervention rather than market-oriented development strategy. Such government sponsored festival does not have a real change and the market mechanism, finally the celebration of the festival failed if the government sponsorship stopped. Therefore, it is difficult to implement market operations and thus it will be hard for the sustainability of the festival.

Challenges of creating cultural regeneration and culture led development strategy: These festivals have so many significances and values for the local community, regional state and the country as well. However, to exploit the full potential of the festivals as there is no cultural regeneration programs and culture led development strategy in the study areas. There is little integration of culture and the economy as well as culture-based development agenda in the study areas.

Lack of cooperation and partnership among different stakeholders: The interviewees and

FGD discussants identified many stakeholders who have responsibilities to work in cooperation and partnership for the development of these festivals. These stakeholders are; local governments, national and regional NGOs, universities and schools, business sectors, Medias, host communities, performers, visitors, sponsors and federal government. These different actors do not work in cooperation and thus there is no social networking for the development of the festivals. The local communities expect to take some responsibility for the sustainability of these festivals. The interviewees affirmed that local government, sponsors and regional and national NGOs are responsible in have affiliations with local groups, the local business community, media, individual community, local residents, performers and visitors.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **Conclusion**

This research work has set to explore the historical roots and significances of Shadeye/Ashendeye/Solele festival in North Wollo and Waghmra Zone. The research concludes that this festival has religious roots and its history goes back to before the birth of Jesus Christ and the Resurrection and Assumption of Virgin St. Mary to Heaven. It was mainly associated with the Assumption of Virgin St. Mary to Heaven fasting (Filsata in Ethiopia). Starting from that time; young females gathered and praise their God in different aesthetically, religiously, historically, folkloric pleasurable words for the resurrection of St. Mary. Since then, the young females practice Shadeye/Ashendeye/Solele festival by warping up a green leaf in their flank/waist in order to express their happiness and to commemorate with the Angels' delight in the resurrection of St. Mary. The females seek social opportunity, experience the social desires, gain knowledge, social enhancements, and increases social relations as well as communication skills. This festival is the sources of cultural and societal interaction that is infused with the culture of the society. Shadeye/Ashendeye/Solele community festival is the major sources of marriage arrangement among the young male and female, morality issues ("bad" and the "good"), avoid stealing and other form of immoral acts and behaviors. This festival encourages equality and equity among the peoples as preached: The ladies preach love in their singing and express the power of love for brotherhood and fraternity where apology is also practiced. Shadeye/Ashendeye/Solele females learn a leadership and teamworking in the course of the celebration. The festival has currently faced the major challenges including the changing face of the festival in the rural and urban communities, the past and present scenario of the festival celebration and the lack of market-oriented operations to develop the festival as a tourism product.

### **Recommendations**

- Our research suggested that non-profit organizations, publics and researchers will be integrated and interrelated for the full utilization of this cultural practice for local development through tourism and other art industry.
- Public policies should explicitly incorporate cultural festival of the study area into community priority area and development agendas (example developing a strategic plan).
- In order to increase the international and national addressability of the festival, to improve the local economy and the sustainability of the festival, it needs a strong market oriented operational management. Therefore, culture and tourism office should work on the comprehensive coordination with different stakeholders.
- This festival has a power to create strong economy, local empowerments and tourism

development potential as well as national and international reputations. Therefore, it needs a strong support from different national and international stakeholders based on local circumstances.

- The local beholders of the festival should be aware about; the originality of the festival and sustainability. They should make sure that local is sustained in its original form. Therefore, culture tourism offices, culture led development agencies and NGOs should create and organize a discussion forum with the locals for its sustainability and originality.

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