

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Background

Ethiopia is endowed with diverse ethnic, languages and cultural identities, which in turn have paramount importance in molding the psychology, norms, value systems and institutions. There are empirical evidences that show behavioral and institutional variables are powerful governing forces than conventional rules and principles in the context of eastern Ethiopia communities. However, the importance and implication of the value systems, norms and socio-cultural institutions in shaping the behaviors of people in their decision makings that affect their well-beings is far less explored in the context of communities living in different parts of Ethiopia.

The existing few are limited to exploring the role of those variables as complementary, rather than explaining the whole fact or particular cases like the livelihood of rural households (See Degefe, 2009; Tewedaj,2006); Community development endeavors, like their role in addressing the problem of HIV/AIDS (Selamawit, 2005); soil conservation works (Mintiwab, Abebe, Zenebe and Liyusew, 2013). Similar studies conducted so far in the context of eastern Ethiopian communities are too inclined to looking the role of socio-cultural institutions to households' food security (see Hassan, 2014; Ahmedin 2014; Ahmed, 2014).

Apart from the aforementioned dimensions, the importance of Socio-cultural institutions to development has another interesting dimension, where it explores how these institutions mold the behavior of people, which in turn implies to the socio-economic progress (see Sunstein 1997; Young 1998; Weiss and Fershtman 1998; Parakesh, 2002). In this regard, if these variables makes people develop traits that are progressive or retrogressive should be enquired. It is, however, impossible to thoroughly understand behavior, mindsets, attitudes and outlooks of people without having insights into some of the overall environment of communities like socio-cultural institutions, normative and value systems peculiar to the communities of interest (Degefe, 2009).

Despite their role and/or importance of the interlinkeage of behavioral and institution to the wellbeing of communities of interest, the issue has been far less explored so far.

This book, therefore, is meant to fill this gap.Hence, exploring the linkage between behaviors (motivation) of people on one hand, and the overall environment( to include socio-cultural, economic, past governance, geo-political environmen) on the other hand takes the pillar of the study . It also tries to model the behavioral and institutional elements specific to eastern Ethiopian communities. The book also tries to infer the behavioral (motivational) and institutional or structural elements in line with possible implications to the well-being. key and variables unique in the communities of interest in relation to affective and eudamonic wellbeing were philosophy of life, socio-economic institutions like individualism, consumption and saving.

## **1.2. Major Questions the Book Addresses**

- ★ Are there shared values among people belonging to east Ethiopia communities?
- ★ Is there any thing as a philosophy of simple life style among easterners?
- ★ If yes, what is the very constructs and essence of shared philosophy of life?
- ★ What are major manifestations of the simple life style in the context of eastern Ethiopia?
- ★ How would the behavioral and institutional deductions of simple life style interpreted into the wellbeing of people?
- ★ What lessons the academic and policy regimes can infer so that respective endeavors of reserchers and policy practitioners can change or influence the development policy directions in a way to better promote the wellbeing of people and communities of interest?

## **1.3. Objective**

The book is by and large meant to model the unique behavioral and institutional elements ascribed to Eastern Ethiopia communities. More specifically, the book tries to address for the followings:-

- ★ Inquire if there commonly shared value system (Philosophy of life) among communities within eastern Ethiopia, as reckoned in the book as easy life style
- ★ Define pillars and peculiarities of simplicity in eastern Ethiopia settings and/Or figure out behavioral and institutional elements of the valued lifestyle
- ★ Address how the concept of simple lifestyle interpreted into hedonic, eudamonic and affective wellbeings of individuals
- ★ Forefront what lessons the academic circle and policy practitioners draw in their respective endeavors aimed at promoting the wellbeing of people and communities
- ★ Infer on how better policy regimes can address community development and collective wellbeing in general and in the context of Eastern Ethiopia in particular

## **1.4. Sources of Information and Methodology of Inference,**

### **1.4.1 Source of Information**

While developing this book both primary and secondary sources of information were consulted. The primary sources are entirely relied on Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), in depth Interviews (IDI) interviews. In this regard, people from different walks of life living and working in major cities of eastern Ethiopia: business people, government employees, investors running different projects, elders, and community leaders were interviewed. Discussions with those who have rich experience of the area, academicians, and intellectuals conducted studies in the communities were important as it added insights over the issue considered. Personal experiences were also key sources of information. The secondary sources of information includes among other: review of related empirical studies; documents and reports of different projects and programs undertaken so far in the eastern communities.

#### **1.4.2. Methodology of Inference**

Ethnographic and formative research techniques were used as tools of analysis and inference in the book. The book will be completed undertaking three core interdependent tasks. First, the book hypothesizes and define the unique value systems prevailing among eastern Ethiopia communities. Second, behavioral and institutional modeling in line with the hypothesized and defined value systems will be made. Hence, the pillars and distinguishing features of shared philosophy of life will be explored. Third, the implication of shared behavioral and institutional elements to wellbeing of people will be made.

## 2. ESSENTIALS OF SIMPLE LIFE STYLE AND WELL-BEING

### 2.1. What is Voluntary Simple Life Style?

Voluntary simplicity involves both inner and outer condition. It means singleness of purpose, sincerity and honesty within, as well as avoidance of exterior clutter, of many possessions irrelevant to the chief purpose of life. It involves a deliberate organization of life for a purpose. Of course, as different people have different purposes in life, what is relevant to the purpose of one person might not be relevant to the purpose of another. It means an ordering and guiding of our energy and our desires, a partial restraint in some directions in order to secure greater abundance of life in other directions. It involves a deliberate organization of life for a purpose. The degree of simplification is a matter for each individual to settle for himself<sup>1</sup>, but the meaning of the principle is “we can work less, want less, and spend less, and be happier in the process.”<sup>2</sup>.

### 2.2. Academic Interventions on Simple Life Style

Early works that galvanized the voluntary simplicity movement were *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered* (1973) by E.F. Schumacher and *Voluntary Simplicity: Toward a Way of Life that Is Outwardly Simple and Inwardly Rich* (1981) by Duane Elgin's. In his book, Schumacher criticized modern economic principles, where he rejected the economic system founded individual greed and limitless growth, calling instead for wisdom, which he believes translates into an economics of permanence:

Duane Elgin's deeply philosophical manual on the modern simplicity movement popularized the term “voluntary simplicity,” often taken as a characterization of the modern simplicity movement. *Voluntary Simplicity* became a sort of Bible for the voluntary simplicity movement, and it remains a much cited piece of literature. According to Elgin, to live voluntarily is to live conscientiously and deliberately, and to live more simply is to unencumber oneself in all aspects of life in order to “[meet] life face to face.”

David Shi defines simple life as a “shifting cluster of ideas” that elevates the ideal over the material. These ideas include the rejection of luxury, a respect for nature and preference for rural living, a desire for personal self-reliance, a nostalgia for the past and skepticism toward modernity, conscientious rather than conspicuous consumption, and an aesthetic of plainness<sup>3</sup>

According to Katherine M. Barton (2014), voluntary simplifiers reject the ideal of consumerism: the notion that the acquisition of more material goods will make our lives better. Instead, they work less and focus on truly fulfilling experiences, such as relationships with family and friends, creating things, and the cultivation of holistic health. The goal of voluntary simplicity is not self-denial or austerity—on the contrary, voluntary simplifiers believe they are genuinely happier living with less.<sup>4</sup>

Duane Elgin (2010) defines simplicity based on a particular value of people. Table 2.1 is a summary of Elgin's classifications of simplicity.

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<sup>1</sup> Richard B. Gregg, *The Value of Voluntary Simplicity*

<sup>2</sup> Linda Breen Pierce (2000)

<sup>3</sup> Shi, David (1985), 3-4

<sup>4</sup> Katherine M. Barton (2014)

Table 2.1. Variants of Simplicity and their Distinguishing Features (based on Duane Elgin (2010))

No	Variant of Simplicity	Distinguishing Feature
1	<b>Uncluttered Simplicity</b>	Avoidance of lives that are too busy, too stressed and too fragmented. Simplicity means cutting back on clutter, complications and trivial distractions, both material and non-material, and focusing on essentials-whatever those may be for each of our unique lives.
2	<b>Ecological Simplicity</b>	Ecological simplicity feels a deep reverence for the community of life on earth and accepts that the non-human realms of plants and animals have their dignity and rights as well the human.
3	<b>Family Simplicity</b>	Simplicity means to place the well-being of one`s family ahead of materialism and acquisition of things. Family simplicity affirms that what matters most in life is often invisible-the quality and integrity of our relationships with one another. Family simplicity is also intergenerational-it looks ahead and seeks to live with restraint so as to leave a healthy earth for future generations.
4	<b>Compassionate Simplicity</b>	Feeling a bond with the community of life and being drawn towards a path of cooperation and fairness that seeks a future of mutually assured development for all.
5	<b>Soulful simplicity</b>	Simplicity means to approach life as a meditation and to cultivate our experience of direct connection with all that exists. By living simply.
6	<b>Business simplicity</b>	A new kind of economy is growing in the world with healthy and sustainable products and services of all kinds (home building materials, energy systems, food production, and transportation).
7	<b>Civic Simplicity</b>	Living more lightly and sustainably on the earth requires changes in every area of public life-from public transportation and education to the design of our cities and workplaces; A new approaches to governing ourselves at every scale.
8	<b>Frugal Simplicity</b>	we can achieve greater financial independence. Frugality and careful financial management bring increased financial freedom and the opportunity to more consciously choose our path through life. Living with less also decreases the impact of our consumption upon the earth and frees resources for others.

### 2.3. Simple Life Style and Well-being of People and Public Policy

The end objective of pursuing voluntary simple life style is to promote and/or beef-up the welfare or well-being of people. As such, elements of simple life style largely determine the well-being of people. Self-Determination Theories depict that elements of simple life, like intrinsic motivation, are facilitated by the satisfaction of three elements of psychological well-being of people: the need for autonomy (making one's own choices), competence (the experience of success in what one does), and relatedness (the experience of being close to other people)<sup>5</sup>. Moreover, social aspects of simple life style like Socializing and getting and giving social support is important precursors to wellbeing<sup>6</sup>. Accordingly, absence of opportunities for social interaction leads to loneliness, which has significant negative effects on physical health and wellbeing. A sense of autonomous motivation powers job satisfaction, establish social contacts between workers themselves and between workers and clients, which in turn provide decision-making power and meaning in their work and/or their life too, and hence better position in their well-being<sup>7</sup>.

There are bulk evidences supporting simple life style and well-being elements could be vital variables to promote the socio-economic progress of communities<sup>8</sup>. Promoting elements of Simple life style could be used as strategies for policy intervention towards promoting the well-being of people. those researches conclude that as promoting aspects of simple life style could be used as an input (catalyst) to economic growth, national governments can provide the enabling conditions for wellbeing through better public services (e.g., health and education), urban planning that promotes relational leisure and diminishes commuting times, and a stronger social safety net<sup>9</sup>.

The importance of aspects and/or elements of simple life style and well-being on interventions aimed at enhancing production and productivity is well-depicted in (Turner, Kessler, & House, 1991; Vastamäki, Moser, & Lucas et al., 2004 and (Paul, 2009).

Those studies also raises instances where promoting well-being and socio-economic progress simultaneously involves trade-offs between different contributors to wellbeing, including freedom, opportunity, efficiency and equality.<sup>10</sup> To best enable social wellbeing, each government needs to weigh up these tradeoffs, depending on what constituents value. On average, for example, the French probably value equality over freedom, whereas Americans prefer freedom over equality.

The role of government policies in promoting and nurturing elements of simple life style is also explored in empirical and theoretical literature. For example, one important element of well-being, that is, autonomy could be promoted in two ways: firstly, by creating policies that provide people with more opportunities for choice in different domains of their lives, and, secondly, by removing unnecessary legal barriers and limitations in people's daily environments<sup>11</sup>. Government interventions can also be used to build meaning on people. One way to do so is providing opportunities to engage in meaningful activities is individually, socially, and economically beneficial. Interventions that provide meaning and self-efficacy in the

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<sup>5</sup> (Deci & Ryan, 2000) shows that

<sup>6</sup> (Turner, 1981).

<sup>7</sup> Millette and Gagné (2008); (Cacioppo, Hawkley, & Berntson, 2003)

<sup>8</sup> Easterlin (2013) and others (e.g., Deaton, 2008)

<sup>9</sup> Easterlin (2013) and others (e.g., Deaton, 2008)

<sup>10</sup> (e.g., Okun, 1975)

<sup>11</sup> (Powdthavee, 2005)

workplace exist. Strategies like opting for open shared office spaces with natural lighting would enable to achieve those goals as it contributes to information sharing, to employee motivation, and to a sense of belonging to a community.

### 3. TECHNIQUE OF ANALYSIS

#### 3.1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of synthesizing ideas in this book is based on Karim Errouak (2016). The framework is primarily developed to look the connection between economic structure and motivation of economic agents. The two aspects of the economy: structure and typical motivations of agents. According to this framework, there are two aspects of the economy, roughly its structure and the typical motivations and behavior of its agents, which give rise to two lines of analysis. The first looks at the linkages and connections between economic institutions, making it possible to calculate various relation-ships. The second examines motivation and strategy in various contexts, showing how these can explain behavior.

Karim Errouak (2016) proposes theoretical framework in addressing for questions ascribed to each aspects of economy. In dealing with the structure of the economy, the researcher recommended what he referred *Fieldwork and Modelling Structure*. Fieldwork and Modelling Structure investigates the economy by looking at relationships in production, exchange, and distribution – such as the linkages between sectors or agents, for example; technological and legal interdependences (input–output relationships, interest on capital, wage or salary contracts); or relationships of status and authority, as in comparing the positions of property or wealth-owners and the property-less in various sectors.

According to Errouaki (2016), *Fieldwork and Modelling Behaviour* is used to explore for the second aspect of the economy: motive and behaviors of economic agents. It involves ‘*concerns motivation, attitudes, preferences and other subjective influences on behaviour, given the context – laws, customs, technology, and so on. It is an exploration and mapping of the chief features of the states of mind of the agents, picturing such states as are likely to affect behaviour. It is not, however, personal biography: the issues concern the subjective influences on economic behaviour, typical economic behaviour. Personal histories may well be illuminating, but they are relevant only insofar as they shed light on economic decisions and actions.*’

As the theme of this book is largely with regards to how and why the behavior or motivations of people shaped by multitudes of variables, be it economic, socio-cultural, psychological, geo-political, geographic, among others, a combination of the two techniques mentioned above were used. Hence, ***Fieldwork & Modelling Structure and Fieldwork & Modelling Behaviour*** are customized in a way to better explain the link between wider environment and motives or behaviors of people.



### **3.1.1. Fieldwork, Modelling Structure and Behaviour**

The nature, scope, objective and workings of social relation depends on the particular department of life considered. People have different departments of life: personal, social, economic, political. Hence, explaining the societal construct entails depicting or modelling how people behave in decision making in different departments of life. One commonality of all those departments of life mentioned is that they have two aspects: behavioral and institutional.

More importantly, one can infer visible interdependence among the two aspects through the channel of shaping the incentive system. As a technique of analysis, narratives of the book organized in a way that better entertain those mentioned issues, which the book addressed in three lines of narratives.

The first line of narrative was meant to answer the two pillar objectives of the study: ***'is there commonly shared value system (Philosophy of life) among communities within eastern Ethiopia, as reckoned in the book as easy life style?' What are pillars and peculiarities of simplicity in eastern Ethiopia settings? Or what are behavioral and institutional elements of the valued lifestyle?***

Hence, environmental and institutional scannings were made where socio-economic structure, socio-cultural norms and values, religion, institution of social capital, family institution, clan organization, livelihood system, geo-political elements, geographic location, among others were studied. Doing so, narratives tries to locate the genesis of shared behavioral and institutional elements in the communities of interest.

The second line of narratives were inferring on possible implications of shared values to incentive system, motives and behaviors. Hence, it aimed at addressing the third objective of the study: ***How the concept of simple lifestyle interpreted into hedonic, eudamonic and affective wellbeings of individuals?***

The third line of narrative is to forwarding summary of core inferences the book made. It also aimed at forefronting issues, topics and problems pinpointing an emphasis by those at the helm of academic, research, policy enactments & practices. Essentially, those efforts are in line with the fifth and sixth objectives of the study: ***'What lessons the academic circle and policy practitioners draw in their respective endeavors aimed at promoting the wellbeing of people and communities?'*** And ***'How better policy regimes can address community development and collective wellbeing in general and in the context of Eastern Ethiopia in particular?'***

## 3.2. TECHNIQUES TO MAKING INFERENCE

The techniques of analysis and making inference made in this book involves a combination of ethnographic approach; technique of characterization, comparison & conceptualization and formative research approaches. Those techniques are in compatible with the core objectives of the book (see sub-topic 1.2 in Chapter one).

### 3.2.1. Ethnographic Approach

To address the first and second objectives of the book, the author eyed on ethnographic account. Ethnographic account entails attempts to investigate, explain and/or model the prevailing institutions & social fabric shared amongst eastern Ethiopia communities. In its ethnographic face, the book tries to explore and infer on shared norms, attitudes, value system, socio-cultural and demographic dynamics in the communities of interest.

Ethnographic account also involves an inquiry into the people and prevailing institutional arrangements that govern life among communities of interest. Doing so, the decision making behaviors of individuals (people) in different departments (aspects) of life can be framed.

Furthermore, ethnographic approach help depict on the essence, nature and workings of institutions for social, cultural, economic, religion (faith), security, governance, resource allocation, risk sharing and diversification, among others.

In general, as the first objective of the book is meant to draw the shared value system among eastern Ethiopian communities, a technique of ethnographic study better helps to making inference.

There are some more reasons ethnographic study technique ideal to better explain on one of the major objectives of the book. According to Whitehead (2015, Pp 4), some attributes that are associated with ethnography, include the following:-

- Ethnography is a *holistic* approach to the study of *cultural systems*.
- Ethnography is the study of the *socio-cultural contexts, processes, and meanings* within cultural systems.
- Ethnography is the study of cultural systems from both *emic* and *etic* perspectives.
- Ethnography is a process of *discovery*, making *inferences*, and *continuing inquiries* in an attempt to achieve *emic validity*.
- Ethnography is an *iterative* process of *learning episodes*.
- Ethnography is an *open-ended emergent learning process*, and not a *rigid investigator controlled experiment*.
- Ethnography is a *highly flexible* and *creative* process.
- Ethnography is an *interpretive, reflexive, and constructivist* process.
- Ethnography requires the daily and continuous recording of *field notes*.

- Ethnography presents the world of its *host population* in human contexts of *thickly*.

As a tool of information gathering and making inferences in the ethnographic aspects of narrative, ethnographic fieldwork is adopted in the book. Ethnographic fieldwork entails the extended residence of the researcher in a field setting (e.g., community, village, institution), participating and observing the daily activities and behavior of the people where research is carried out. Hence, field work and personal observation takes the core of drawing inferences.

### **3.2.2. A Technique of Characterization, Comparison and Conceptualization**

In order to make inferences on the third and fourth objectives of the book, a technique of characterization, comparisons and conceptualization is employed.

By way of characterization, the hypothesized shared value system was triangulated or attested with the prevailing realities ascribed to particular aspect of life in the communities of interest. Such triangulation heavily dependent on the personal observations, informal discussion with people belonging from those communities and/or individuals having a good knowledge about people, fabrics and institutions in the communities of interest.

Where it is necessary, a comparative look across socio-cultural setups, social norms & value systems, faiths (religions), systems of governance, livelihood systems, family types & structures, generations.

When it is appealing, comparative look across strands of thoughts, socio-economic and socio-cultural contexts were made to identify, conceptualize or explain the peculiarities or deviations of prevailing behavioral and institutional elements ascribed to eastern Ethiopia communities. Inferences made on concepts like simple lifestyle, individualism, consumption and saving peculiar to eastern Ethiopia communities were made using such techniques.

Moreover, ideas, cases and/or concepts were set for deliberation with or challenged against appealing theoretical and/or empirical evidences from host of social science studies: positive psychology, behavioral economics, institutional economics, behavioral geography, economic sociology and anthropology, among others.

### **3.2.3. Formative Research Approach**

Formative research technique is employed to make inferences on the third, fourth and fifth objectives of the book. Formative research is an activity conducted before making practical interventions, and often at the beginning of programs or project design process. It is used to gain insight into the overall socio-economic environment; relevant characteristics of primary and secondary audiences; communication access, motives, habits and preferences of people; and the main drivers of behavior. Formative research is critical to developing program materials, tools and approaches that are culturally and geographically appropriate.

In its formative aspect, the book tries to show why and how the shared value system depicted may end up progressive or regressive to individuals and communities. To infer on possible implications to wellbeing of a particular behavioral and/or

institutional element, appealing (relevant) theoretical and empirical evidences were consulted from wider literature.

Those efforts were also complemented by firsthand information gathered through personal observations, fieldwork anecdotes and informal discussions with individuals the author considered for having rich account on the people and institutions of Eastern Ethiopia communities. Furthermore, the topic was discussed and debated, when it was presented as a panel paper on the Third Annual Conference on Eastern Ethiopia Economic Development held in the year 2014.

Moreover, the book adopts formative technique of analysis in line with the objective of initiating the academia and emphasizing policy practitioners to emphasize those variables in their respective endeavors. In this regard, discussions with scholars, bureaucrats or officials having rich accounts of or backgrounds on the workings of the institutional system and/or fabrics of communities of interest was subjected an important technique of inference.

On subjects, topics, concepts or issues to the capacity of the author, attempts were made to depict perspectives and insights using case studies. On subjects or topics seeking detail looks and in-depth research, the author proposed for further investigation and inquiry.

In some cases, the author makes critical inquiries and attempted to forefronts own understandings, hypothesis or inferences, as presented in the book, under case studies, footnotes, or end notes.



## **4.2. History, Governance and Socio-economic Structure of Eastern Ethiopia (1880's Present).**

In the genesis, development and progress of the social, economic and political landscape of cities and communities of eastern Ethiopia three periods are worth considering. The first period stretches from 1880's to the late 1960's; the second period is 1969-1991; and the third is post 1991 period. Those periods remarks quiet different faces of eastern Ethiopia on a number of accounts: demographic composition; socio-cultural mix; socio-economic development. More importantly, those periodic classification gives clues shapes institutional and behavioral implications, hence to the overall well-being of eastern communities.

### **4.2.1. System Governance**

Since incorporated into central Ethiopian rule by Emperor Menelik II (1889-1913) dating back to the last quarter of 19th century, Eastern part of Ethiopia, as in the geographic limit this book considers, has passed through a more or less same domain of bureaucratic governance. This part of Ethiopia, with administration name as *Harerghe Teklay Gizat*, has been under same bureaucratic governance until the end of the imperial regime in 1974.

Those imperial days could be regarded as the establishment of major towns and cities in east Ethiopia. Towns and cities has been given special privileges in the imperial era for many reasons. For one, eastern part of Ethiopia belonged to the royal family that ruled Ethiopia nearly for a century since 1870's.

The first governor of the district was Ras Mekonnen. A close aide of Emperor Menilik II, Ras Mekonnen was such an influential figure that he was the favorite as a successor of Menilik II. That, however, seems to have been faded away with the sudden death of Ras Mekonnen.

However, the younger son of Ras Mekonnen, Teferi Mekonnen, who later reigned as Haile Selassie I took the throne to rule Ethiopia for roughly 45 years. Haile Selassie's rule of Ethiopia can be considered the most important historic event that gave eastern part of Ethiopia the dominant position over other parts of the country.

The new king embarked on the integration works pending following Lij Eyasu's dethron, where he engaged recurrently to communities . Emperor Haile Selassie built numerous mosques in different cities and towns: like Harar, Jigjiga, Kebridahar and Gode, among others. The wise king sat down to discuss with influential community leaders in the larger portion of east Ethiopia. The imperial palaces were also erected in cities like Dire Dawa and Gode, where the king used as his seat in his frequent tours to engage in dialogue with clan leaders, religious and community leaders.

### **4.2.2. Dynamics in Demographic Composition and Social Relations**

When Emperor Menilik integrated the eastern Ethiopia into his rule in 1880's, Ras Mekonnen, the father of Emperor Haile Selassie, was appointed governor of the district. Following that, people from various ethnic background belonging to central Ethiopia, mainly the Amhara people came to settle in a newly incorporated land as servants of the imperial regime as governors of districts, military men, tax collectors and religious services. The new settlers established new towns like Dire Dawa, Chiro

(Assebe Teferi), Hirna, among others. The existing small villages like Jigjiga were also turned to towns.

The new settlers also introduced Christianity (Orthodox Christianity) in almost homogeneous society whose religion is Islam; with the new comers is also a new language (Amharic) and culture to add up to the prevailing Oromo, Harari and Somali languages and cultural mixes. Those times were important as they laid the basement that has grown and diversified demographic, socio-cultural and religious mix as we know it today.

One can fetch the pictures on the social fabrics and the socio-economic structure characterizing many urban communities of eastern Ethiopia in the imperial days from two books: *'Notes from the Hyena's Belly'*, by Nega Mezlekia and *'Ye To Meda Welowoch Ke Semen Eske Mesrak'* by Kassaye Chemed (Brigadier General). The former is much informative about the socio-economic order of the day. Born and brought up in Jigjiga, Nega Mezlekia, the author of *'Notes from the Hyena's Belly'*, depicted his childhood memories in Jigjiga. With those memories, he tries to give readers a picture on the then social fabrics, societal relations, socio-cultural & religious make-ups and value system prevalent in city of Jigjiga.

Looking at written accounts, symbols of past socio-economic order, information from local elders, observations into the major socio-cultural institutions and value systems tells cities and urban communities in eastern Ethiopia had similar look as in the case of Jigjiga. How war shaped the social fabrics, social institutions, and ultimately the psychology and behaviors of people is subjected in the subsequent chapters (chapter seven to ten).

In the last years of Emperor Haile Selassie were the standoffs between the newly liberated country, Somalia and Ethiopia. The first war between Somalia and Ethiopia broke out in the year 1967. In subsequent years there emerged numerous rebel groups hatched out raising various causes. With the downfall of Emperor Haile Selassie rule and coming of Dergue, those domestic and foreign elements waging war against Ethiopian rule even intensified. In the early 1970's, Somalia has been in proxy wars against Ethiopia via Ogaden Liberation Front (OLF), West Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), dominant rebel groups active in different parts of eastern Ethiopia back then.

In the year 1976, the then ruler of Somali, Zeyad Bare has launched an open war on Ethiopia. A well-armed Somali force easily defeated the ill-trained and armed Ethiopian army to enter to the border of Ethiopia and control the whole Hararghe district (up until the Awash River). The Somalis stayed up for more than six months in their control lands, up until they got a set back from Ethiopian armed forces to drive them away entirely from Ethiopian borders.

With all those moves and struggles to liberating the eastern and South eastern Ethiopian lands from Somali rule has been the formation of a new social fabric, the eastern Ethiopia became a major military zone, where the central government built up military camps and fortresses here and there in different cities from Awash Sebat (7) to Assebe Teferi (Chiro) to Harar to Jigjiga to Gode. In those mentioned towns militarization has number of effects from changing the demography of the area to restructuring the political economy to redefining and changing the social fabric.

Following the outbreak of the war, a new family type family took its formation in the major urban communities. This new family type is households largely formed by members of armed forces stationed in the area. Along with solders were sex workers who came from different parts of Ethiopia, which could be regarded as nucleus of the new version of family and social fabric. More importantly, those changes were important in determining the state of social fabric and demographic composition of major urban communities of Ethiopia as we know them today. Soldiers' families were privileged, where their family members used to get primacy in getting social services like education, health and public homes.

Socially too, those families were having their unique status as their members as they were influential in social transactions. In many instances, the upper hand by solders' families takes a form of exploitations or oppressive. As a manifestation of that is looking at the relationships between children from soldier families and non-soldier families and/or local (Somali, Harari or Oromo living in the urban settings), where the former show aggressive character against the latter.

The families of soldiers has also another face, which is quite important in defining the current state of social fabrics prevalent in major urban communities of east Ethiopia. The soldiers were either died in war front or never returned back to their families, which in either of the cases children remained without their father or the rise of female headed households.

Following the downfall of Dergue, the demography has taken a different look. Since the new regime, EPRDF, has followed ethnic based federal rule in Ethiopia, those cities and towns were taken as seats of governments at different levels (from Regional or Zonal or Woreda administrations. With that, the demographic composition, diversity (in terms of religion, ethnicity or culture), and power relations among family units (households) and communities has changed. Particularly, the dominance of Amhara culture, language and religion (orthodox Christianity) declined, whereas local ethnic groups were empowered. Moreover, in the newly established relationships, the soldiers' families has lost their privileges; new settlers from predominantly belonging to dominant ethnic groups started to settle in urban areas. Those changes and implied structural and institutional changes is beyond the scope of the book, and hence is given little accord.



#### 4.2.3. Socio-Economic Structure

Business in eastern Ethiopia is dominated by informal sector, with smuggling of goods the lifeline of communities both as major source of supply and employment. The prevailing trade system implicates into behavioral and institutional elements much in compatible to the characterizations made on simple life style. There are empirical evidences which depicts contraband to have been implicated into risking economic uncertainty thereby spurring poverty and corrupting the trade regime. Moreover, contraband has direct behavioral implications which go with the behavioral deductions made so far in line with simple life style

##### TEXT BOX ONE

##### THE FIGHT AGAINST CONTRABAND: LESSON FROM GIRMA ME NEWAY'S ADMINISTRATION

*Below is a record from historical notes how integrating market forces would be an important instrument to mitigate contraband.*

*(Extracted from Habbitamu G. and Wubeshet Gezahegne (2016), Pp 5 )*

Girmame Neway, who was one of the orchestrators of the failed coup d'état against the Emperor Haile Selassie I in 1960, was once a governor of Jigjiga district. In his tenure as a governor, one thing that challenged his administration was the rampant smuggling along the Tog Wuchale-Jigjiga Corridor. Contraband was largely responsible that dwarfed the economy of the district he governs in particular. Girmame has understood the wider price differential between the contraband market and the legal one was the major driver for smuggling business to flourish. In his fight against smuggling, his government focused on narrowing the price differential. To that end, he invented a scheme where custom officials are capacitated to effectively inspect and seize smugglers and smugglings; the confiscated goods would be stored and sold in government owned sales shops opened for this purpose. The price tag in those shops were even lower than that of the contraband market. As such, the prevailing price differential became in favor of the legal market, which in fact was instrumental in the fight against smuggling.

### **4.3. Socio-Cultural Institutions for Mitigating Material and Spiritual (Emotional) Risks and Uncertainties.**

Eastern Ethiopia involves a uniquely defined socio-cultural institutions, whose impacts is paramount to molding the motives or behaviors of people and socio-economic structure among communities in the area. The very essence of the prevailing socio-cultural environment, as will be detailed in the forthcoming discussions, is to mitigate their risks or uncertainties related to economic, emotional (psychological), social and governance (promote social peace and order). Some of socio-cultural institutions for risk sharing, mutual help and cooperation includes: Social capital and Clan based organization.

#### **4.3.1. Social Capital**

Social capital, mainly manifested in sharing of information and trusts, is where people acquire information on matters that determine their material and spiritual well-beings of eastern Ethiopia communities. Information is key resource particularly among those with pastoral livelihood. Pastoralists share information on availability of water, security related risks and messages (rules or order) from government offices, clan leaders, religious leaders, community leaders. Social capital has an important facilitating role in community affairs, local governance, resource sharing, allocation or management, also in conflict resolution, among others.

Though it take quite different look in the urban settings, social capital remains a valuable asset for communities to withstanding economic and emotional shocks and uncertainties. For business people, the institution of social capital is instrumental determining their success in their endeavors. For many who are engaged in the different business ventures, the prevailing social capital - which manifests in trusts and information flows - is a key resource that they should not dispossess, if to stay successful. For business people in need of finances but can't access or qualified for banking services, it is their social capital that helps relieve their financial bottlenecks, where huge sum of money change hands as lending (borrowing) with *trust* being a collateral.

## CASE STUDY ONE

### SOCIAL CAPITAL AS MODERN CREDIT CARD SYSTEM

(Pastoral and Agro-pastoral Communities of Ethiopian Somali Region)

*(This case study is based on Ahmed Ali Gedi (2015), Optimizing Social Capital: The pastoral 'credit card' systems in Fafan Areas of Somali Regional State in Ethiopia, A Concept Paper Written for the Admission of Doctor of Philosophy in Rural Development)*

The Ethiopian Somalis as Somali elsewhere in the horn of Africa are structured and organised on the basis of clan and sub-clans (lineages) which either binds or divides depending the level allegiance. Such social organisation form the basis of much of social institutions and norms of traditions or Xeer including Rights to resources, personal Identity(Af-tirsin), customary law(Xeer), blood compensation group(mag-paying), and support system. The mag-paying and support system have complex allegiances. The later can have members who are either blood related or traditionally adopted who do not change clan allegiance in times of alliances and adversarial threats.

A crucial feature of the Somali Region economy, easily overlooked by analyses that focus on pastoralism in isolation, is the interconnected nature of different livelihood activities. Capital flows occur around this system because pastoralists sell animals to traders and buy food produced by farmers and agro-pastoralists; relatives with jobs in urban centers invest in the rural economy; other relatives living abroad remit cash back to the region. This dynamic and complex set of economic relationships is a source of strength but also a source of vulnerability, as any threat to one set of actors in the system can undermine the livelihoods of many others. the economic system is to be viewed holistically as “a complex interconnected system” in which a system of social networks where the sustainability or vulnerability of each livelihood depends as much on the individual's interpersonal relationships as on his or her assets and income at any point in time. Viewed from this basic structural outlook, the Somali pastoralists in the study area are Socio-economically organized in a way that is so unique that, it has interesting special traits. Socially, they are organised in a clan basis; economically they established a social credit system. The clan set-up complements the social credit system. The clan organisation sets rules and regulations that helps a smooth economic order of Somalis. The economic order, although with some unique features, resembles the modern credit card system.

There are a number of reasons for the Somalis to opt for social credit system. One key reason is that there is immense social capital that ties communities, a sense of livelihood based on cooperation. The other reason is that due to geographic location of the people of Somalis in that they are living in drier areas, making them susceptible to recurrent drought. Hence the social credit system is the best option to cope up with uncertainties attached with sustaining livelihood. The social credit system is too sophisticated and has worked for generations without failure. Unlike the modern credit system, the social credit system is free of interest payment; also there is not binding time for repayment if the creditor encountered problems that s/he unable to withstands. Totally the system is based on cooperation and not on profit seeking business like the modern credit system. This is the very element that kept the system alive for centuries without failure.

In line with improving the socio-economic status of pastoralists and helping to realize sustainable development, the traditional credit system prevailing has four important elements. The key element of the system is that it is built on **value of trust**. The other feature of the system is that, it is conducive to bring about **economic justice**; the third aspect worth to consider is that the system functions with **little side effects**, from socio-economic and environmental perspective. Moreover, the traditional system operates with **little transaction cost** and maintaining the system is easy. One should not forget that, given a condition of recurrent drought in the area and the largely aridity nature region, there has to be functioning risk management mechanism to sustain food scarcity and ecological imbalances.

#### 4.3.2. Clan mode of Organization

Clan system has been a dominant institution installed to govern life in eastern Ethiopian communities for generations. The basis of clan formation was to protect communities from risks of different forms: security, socio-economic injustices, conflicts over resource ownership and entitlement.

The importance of clan system is also key to sharing resources in time of scarcities etc... Though the stronghold of clan organization goes to rural (pastoral and agro-pastoral) area, it also works in urban settings too, particularly among communities of Ethiopian Somalis.

In today`s context, where modern governance prospering across the pastoralist communities, the advancement of urbanization, the social and economic structure taking different shape and getting more complex, the relevance and effectiveness of clan system is subjected to a number of challenges.

#### CASE STUDY TWO

##### **XEER- AN INSTITUTION MEANT FOR GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL STABILITY TO SOMALI COMMUNITIES**

*(Based on PDRC, 2003; Le Sage, 2005; Mohamed, 2008.)*

*Xeer* is an unwritten agreement that has evolved within and between Somali clan communities over generations. It is particularly important in rural areas, where the presence of modern political institutions is weak. However, even in urban areas with local administrations, *Xeer* is usually the first recourse in dispute management, settlement and reconciliation. Although *Xeer* is both guarded and implemented by respected elders, known as the *Xeer Begti*, it is widely open to interpretation. Although it bears no formal institutional structure, the implementation of *Xeer* is overseen by traditional elders. *Xeer* can be divided into two broad categories: *guud* and *gaar*. *Xeer guud*, includes the general aspects of traditional clan law that regulate common, day-to-day social interactions, civil affairs, and means of dispute settlement within a clan and between different clans. That said, *xeer guud* can be broken down into a penal section (*dhig*) and a civil section (*dhaqasho*). *Dhig* can be broken down further into matters of murder (*qudh*), aggression (*qoon*) and thievery (*tuugo*). *Dhaqasho* – the civil code of *xeer* – can similarly be broken down into four categories regulating issues of family (*xilo*), private property (*xoolo*), territory (*deegan*) and hospitality (*maamuus*). *Xeer gaar* includes specific laws that regulate localized economic production relations for clans and sub-clans specifically involved in pastoralism, fishing, frankincense harvesting, etc

## **5. MODELING A *PHILOSOPHY OF SIMPLE LIFE* STYLE IN EASTERN ETHIOPIA SETTINGS**

An attempt to probe into shared behavioral and institutional setups of communities, as this book, stands to, is perhaps is pretty difficult, if not adventurous. Indeed, the task requires caution, systematic and investigative. Addressing the issue at hand ought to begin questioning for shared value system, if any, amongst communities. To that end, justifying those questions itself is required first. The first four chapters of the book were meant for that. The purpose was all to depict if there is shared value system amongst eastern Ethiopia communities.

This chapter links the preceding four chapters with the subsequent chapters of the study. Therefore narratives in this chapter are relied justifying the shared value system with evidences from theoretical and empirical literature in divergent fields of studies in social science and humanities. Those efforts were complemented by peculiarities and practical realities prevailing around the communities of interest as inferred from field work evidences.

All in all, this chapter attempts to address the following questions:

- Are there a commonly shared norms, value system, behavioral and attitudinal traits, institutional elements that can be generalized as ‘simple life style’ in eastern Ethiopian communities?
- How shared value system may interpreted into philosophy of simple life style?
- What are the core attributes or features of the prevailing simple life style in eastern Ethiopia setting?
- How can we conceptualize or characterize philosophy of simple life style variables determining the wellbeing of people and communities, like the behaviors or motive of people, the incentive and/or institutional system in general?

### **5.1. Is there Commonly Shared Value (Philosophy of life) among Communities within Eastern Ethiopia?**

Social norms and values differ from community to community and family to family (NSW/ACT, 2012: p 42). Still, however, we can identify commonly shared value systems that are important in molding the behaviors and hence the institutional settings that govern life in those communities.

As depicted in chapter four, communities within eastern Ethiopia share a lot in common, among others:

- Historical events and incidents
- System of governance in the past and present;
- Socio-economic structures;
- Religion and religious values, Islam and Islamic values predominantly molding the prevailing social fabric;

- Socio-cultural institutions;
- Geographic and geo-political elements;

Generally speaking, those mentioned shared elements, in one way or the other, are far-reaching in defining shared norm and value system.

One important issue, in this regard, is identifying and/or characterizing the shared value system among the communities of interest. The first step in probing into the shared identities and features of social fabrics characterizing eastern Ethiopia communities is inferring on possible elements of those shared elements.

As highlighted in chapter five and further detailed in subsequent chapters (**chap seven to ten, as in the main book**) the broader behavioral and institutional (structural) elements featuring eastern Ethiopia communities in the past and present, though the degree varies, evokes risk or uncertainty in life, resulting negative affect or stress on people.

Worth mentioning is that studying the possible linkage between behavioral and institutional elements is that both are interwoven in a way impossible to disentangle one from the other. This is because our beliefs and knowledge influence how we behave and decide (act); also our conscious are influenced by what we feel or state of mind.

Accordingly, cognition and behavior are intertwined with affect and motivation, which in turn implicate into depicting the nature, functioning and role of institutions in line with wellbeing of people. Hence, when looking at the linkage between behaviors (motivations) of people and their environment the pillar point should be the possible implications to affect or stress on people.

## **5.2. The Essence of Shared Philosophy of Life in Eastern Ethiopia Settings**

The discussions in the previous sub-section entails that shared values or philosophy of life is a result of common background of those communities in terms of geo-political, socio-cultural and economic, institutional and other aspects in the past and present. Moreover, the bridge that links the interrelation between behavioral (motivational) and institutional (structural) elements were the affective status of people.

The broader literature in positive psychology and behavioral economics designate various forms of risks/uncertainties implicated differently in conditioning the affective status of a person, in this regard, the negative affect or stress.

According to empirical studies, the behavioral effects of negative affect or stress takes different forms like anxiety and sadness (Raghunathan & Pham (1999); fear and anger (see Lerner & Keltner, 2001, Lerner et al., 2003); stress (see Mather et al. (2009), Porcelli & Delgado (2009), Lighthall *et al.* (2009); fear (Heilman *et al.* (2010), Kugler *et al.* (2012); fear, sadness, joviality and anger(Conte *et al.* (2013); stress and fear (Cohn *et al.* (2013).

Those mentioned and similar other studies also concludes that, though negative affect or stress manifest itself in different forms, it ends up in the same effect, that is people develop risk aversive values. The conclusion that negative affect or stress takes different forms, implies that resulting risk aversion behavior takes different forms.

### 5.2.1 Defining or Depicting the Shared Philosophy of Life

While defining the shared philosophy of life in the context of eastern Ethiopia, the book adopted a theoretical framework by Errouaki (2016) and Duane Elgin (2010). According to Errouaki (2016), using *Fieldwork and Modelling Behaviour framework*, one can explore and map the chief features of the states of mind of the agents, picturing such states as are likely to affect behaviour. Elgin (2010) developed a framework of behavioral inferences based on a particular value of people, conceptualized as **voluntary simplicity**

In lieu of the two theoretical frameworks, the book hypothesized for the governing values (principles) of life, as shared by individuals belonging to eastern Ethiopia communities, as follows:-

- People are less interested to critically evaluate on issues before making decisions.
  - Across much of Ethiopia, such state of mind is taken for granted typical behavior of individuals from eastern part of the country. The mentioned value is regarded pillar of a 'unique lifestyle' peculiar to easterners
  - Psychological explanations for why people behave so entails a risk aversion mechanism, signaling people are faced with risky situations. For Porcelli & Delgado (2009, Pp 278–283), people taking such mode of risk aversion behaves in 'Higher risk aversion in gains domain, more risk seeking in loss domain'.
- People are less interested, and in many instances deliberately avoid, to hear or see the negative outcome of their decision.
  - Evidences from psychological theories entails such behavioral response arises how people deal with risky environment, signaling individuals are met with problems they cannot solve by own action alone. According to McClelland (1961, Pp 99), people develop such a psychology because "*Such knowledge is a source of anxiety because it provides not proof of success but also clear evidence of failure*".

As depicted in subsequent chapters of the book, the behavioral and institutional deductions out of the mentioned two values in general, is akin to the concept of simplicity. The principle of simplicity is "*we can work less, want less, and spend less, focus on truly fulfilling experiences, such as relationships with family and friends, creating things and be happier in the process.*" (see Pierce, L. 2000; Barton, K. 2014).

Though the valued lifestyle among eastern Ethiopia communities has a lot to share with principle of simplicity mentioned above, it has some peculiar features. As will be depicted in characterizations made under chapter six of the study, simple lifestyle in eastern Ethiopia settings involves some departures.

The conventional simple lifestyle often holds at an individual level, where an individual may choose a life style based on his/her values (*see table 2.1 for various forms of simple lifestyles*). Also, the degree of simplification is a matter for each individual to settle for himself.

Moreover, the goal of voluntary simplicity is not self-denial or austerity—on the contrary, voluntary simplifiers believe they are genuinely happier living with less (Barton, K. 2014).

As opposed to the conventional simple lifestyle, which is understood at an individual level, simple lifestyle in the context of eastern Ethiopia communities is understood at collective level.

While conventional simplicity entails a lifestyle which is self-imposed or voluntary, simplicity peculiar to communities within Eastern Ethiopia is rather ***non-voluntary***. As will be detailed in subsequent chapters of the study, simplicity in eastern Ethiopia context is a behavioral and/institutional mechanism individuals and/or communities developed to better shield (mitigate) themselves from risks of deprivations of material and/or spiritual (emotional) wellbeing triggered by the prevailing uncertain environment attributed to socio-economic, livelihood, geo-political, geographic and governance factors, among others.



## 6. CHARACTERIZATION OF SIMPLE LIFESTYLE

Characterizing philosophy of simple life style entails exploring the possible links between the behaviors & motives of people on one hand and the wider environment prevailing in Eastern Ethiopian settings on the other. In general, the essence of characterizing the philosophy of simple life styles, as depicted in the study shall be understood from two perspectives.

First, characterizing simple lifestyle is to substantiate the shared values among easterners hypothesized in the study with theoretical empirical and circumstantial (practical) evidences. Recent developments in social science entails that exploring for the wider environment is critical have to sketch the motives (behaviors) of people and depict the nature and functioning of institutions. To that end, psychological, economic, socio-cultural, geo-political & geographical environment in context of eastern Ethiopia - in line with possible implication to evoking for uncertainties of life - is explored.

That being the case, the nature, forms and extent of risks vary subjected to different variables: demographic, institutional, socio-economic variables, among others. The risk levels also vary from time to time; place to place too.

Therefore, the second aspect of characterizing simple lifestyle in eastern Ethiopia setting entails forefronting and explaining the way simple lifestyle manifests itself under different setups.

As such the book forefronted for risk level differences attributed to demographic variables to include: family background, age, sex, marital status, if local or endogenous or new comer to the communities of interest , faith or religion, particular culture, customs, traditions.

Variables within the socio-economic domain were: employment status, wealth (self-made or inherited), and the main stay of the person or his family (like trade, government employee, agrarian, agro-pastoral or pastoral).

*Time* and *spatial* elements are also key variables to integrate while modelling the philosophy of simple life style. This is because, along with the dynamics in time and space, there appeared structural (institutional) changes, in turn implicating into value system, behavior and motives of people and communities.

At least for analysis and inference made in the book, the time dimension is meant to indicate mainly two things: the times associated with systems of governance communities has passed through; another one is to locate individuals to which *particular generation* they belongs to.

The spatial dimension, in the context of narratives of this boom is installed to refer whether a person`s background is from *rural* or *urban* settings; alternative agro-ecological zones (agrarian, agro-pastoral, or pastoral), or different climatic zones (arid, semi-desert or desert).

## 6.1. PSYCHOLOGICAL AND BEHAVIORAL CHARACTERIZATION OF SIMPLE LIFESTYLE

Theoretical and empirical evidences from positive psychology entails the shared values identified so far as characterizing eastern Ethiopia communities are behavioral and/or institutional mechanism people and communities devised to cope up deprivations of affective wellbeing.

People develop a psychology not to look for the definite knowledge of the results of their choices as psychological tools to mitigate exposure for various forms of risks and associated emotional deprivations or negative affect. According to McClelland (1961, Pp 99) people develop such a psychology because *“Such knowledge is a source of anxiety because it provides not proof of success but also clear evidence of failure”*.

One key element that features the very construct of social fabrics in eastern communities is quiet unique moral standards on people so that shape their values on different aspects of life. From behavioral perspective, simple life style shapes the moral value, ethical standard, life principles of people. Some behavioral manifestations of simple life includes: people value for openness and free communication, cherish the principle of living for today, disregard to hierarchy and status, among others.

### 6.1.1. Value for Open and Free Communication

One major trait that distinguish people from eastern communities is that they are really sociable. Easterners value for open communication, and freely express themselves. While they face idea differences or resentments against others, they opt for open confrontations rather than blaming or criticizing the person whom they confront with from behind. While being in discourses or discussion with others they talk in loud, which likely take a stranger (one who do not understand their norms) flummoxed as if they are in quarrel. However, for one who understands the norms and value system that govern life in eastern communities, s/he enjoys to sit together with an easterner.

The bad side of philosophy of simple life style in its behavioral manifestations is that while people engaged in open confrontation, they lack a sense of respect. Perhaps it is not unusual to see people be bold of depriving one`s privacy or dignity. Though such generalizations doesn`t appeal for all people in east, it is more apparent among women. For instance, a through look how women in close neighborhoods handle their disagreements gives light sense on the issue, where it is usually in shouts and exchanging humiliating words is common. The interesting thing is that it is also common to see those in dispute reverse things normal and would sit down for a meal or drink, with no third party interfering to engage them to resolve their disagreements.

### **6.1.2. Disregard to Hierarchies and Status**

Hierarchies and status have little or no importance in defining the nature, manner and ways in relations defined for different reasons, be it economic, social, bureaucratic, and political or any other transactions. Disregard to hierarchies could be manifested in dressing style and code, life style of people, social interactions, working relations among bosses and minors in bureaucracy or other businesses.

Easy dressing style is one form the philosophy of simple life style manifests itself. That makes people, irrespective of the economic, social or political (power) positions dress in somewhat same fashion. As against to the case in other communities in other parts of Ethiopia, dressing may not be a gauge to correspond one's dressing style and his/her status in terms of economic or political power, education level.

In social relations too, whether one is poor or rich, educated or illiterate, new comer or local is welcome to openly make transaction and/or consume social goods without exclusion. In the working areas, the boss-minor relation is not that we observe in most other communities of Ethiopia, where the boss treats his subordinates in tougher manner and distance himself/herself from his minors, as is often the case. However, this doesn't define cases in eastern Ethiopian communities, where one at the bottom of organizational (power) ladder openly and freely speaks his chiefs.

### **6.1.3. Value Emotional Well-being**

As has been discussed in previous chapters, particularly since the 1970's, people in east spent their life in many respects where they faced the trauma and distresses out of those deprivations of the past and their extensions of the present. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the case with the institution of family. As will be discussed in chapter nine, family institution is most affected by recurrent war and instability in eastern communities in the past, where the structure and essential values of family were damaged, damaging the emotional wellbeing of people.

The recurrent wars and conflicts has also affected the material and emotional wellbeing of families risking them to violent environment, depriving their peace and hence exposing them to affect. Instabilities has also exacerbated the socio-economic problems narrowing employment opportunities. As a byproduct of structural problems, the trade regime opened room for contraband takes rampant; made markets for basic consumables to be volatile in supply and prices; created fertile ground for rent seeking market order, where people doesn't get goods and services with the right price and quality.

All in all, people in eastern communities share material and spiritual deprivations which put them in risky and uncertain environment implicated into their affect and stress. Hence, what endows meaning in life for easterners is preserving one's emotional wellbeing, which takes the core value in eastern communities. That is why the social fabric in eastern communities is built to maximize the emotional status of people. One can observe this by taking look into the essential constructs of their social fabric: from institutional set-up to installed norms & value system to ethical and moral standards. Indeed, one face of a philosophy of simple style is that it has behavioral manifestations where people greatly value their emotional wellbeing.

It is important to mention instances where people overvalue their emotional wellbeing. Such tendencies are often implicated into some undesired outcome, which often ends counterproductive. For one, it deprived people of that courage and

concerns for taking life seriously. One show case of this tendencies is to look into how they deal with problems.

A glimpse into the working of social fabrics in eastern Ethiopia communities entails that people are often passive towards problems, where they little exert to avert or protect themselves from the problem. It is less uncommon to observe such things when people try to pursuing a strategy to adapt the problems when dealing with their problems. Behaviors to evade oneself from blame for the problem, or attempting to externalize are manifestations of that.

All in all, tendencies to maximizing emotional well-being sense leaves people be passive in their personal, family and societal affairs, which in its worst case might take them ignorant.

As another manifestation of overvaluation to emotional well-being, people in east are less interested of making focus on a particular issue. People tend to give a snap shot of the case and are interested to give their own interpretation, while the issue might take another look or form. Such traits leads people to see life in somewhat blurred or corrupt way as it leaves them in misinterpretation and/or misunderstanding of happenings in life. For instance, people doesn't differentiate between thinking and stress. They tend to liken one's thinking to resolve own problem with stress. As a consequence of overvaluing emotional well-being, people give due regard to entertainment, where they allocate almost every resources for entertainment, spending much of their income and time to purchase goods and services that entertain them.

#### **6.1.4. Valuing Informality**

For one who value formality perhaps in most part of life from informal gatherings to his professional jobs, eastern communities are not ideal locations. S/he is likely to find himself in difficulties in his missions of what so ever, if he tries to be formal or expect others be formal. As the family institution is where people's behaviors and values is molded to locate their status as formal or informal, it is important to look at the structure and values of families in eastern Ethiopia communities in line with values of formality.

For illustrative purpose, it is better to glance how life goes in other parts of Ethiopia to depict what is unique in family institution in eastern communities that, in one way or the other makes people cherish informality in their walks of life.

There is a visible difference between individuals from highland culture and individuals belonging to eastern Ethiopian communities on the ethical standards, normative and value systems. To understand how wide the difference is, enough to give minutes of stay looking at the manner they speak; their gesture while taking people in dialogue; the tone and volume while speaking; the way they dress; or the way they understand things and looks life in general.

In the tradition of highlanders, family institution is where people shaped of those issues, where a father/mother or elder siblings took the responsibility of shaping the conduct of their family members with what is known as in Amharic *Gebregeb*, to mean *ethical and moral standards*. Though the task is primarily given to a father or a mother, elder children of the family also share the responsibility to teach their younger brothers/sisters in the family. Family leaders and members are very

concerned of living by the accepted norms and ethical standards. This is largely because the sanction mechanism is unbearable.

Highlanders instituted a system of social sanction in case of defying accepted ethical and normative elements, to feel members of the community consider it a great loss. In case any member of the family is guilty of defying those standards, it amounts to be disgracing the whole family. Indeed, the society blame his family, not the individual, often dubbed as '*Asadagi Yebedelew/Yebedelat*', roughly to mean 'one *who deprived (of ethical or moral nurture) by his (her) family*'.

Hence, to distance oneself from those harsh social punishments, the father and/or mothers inspect or audit every walks of their children: where and with whom they spent their leisure times (when they are away from school or weekends); time set when they should come to home in evenings; how they should treat their parents, their elders and other family members; should treat their friends and neighbors.

The social fabric of highlanders has also its own ways to effect those accepted moral and ethical standards. Every neighborhood has such figures that play the role model to other households, *Yetekebere Beteseb*, to mean 'respected family'. The source of respect and hence influence of that particular household emanates not necessarily from its material status, but the disciplinary or moral heights of household heads and family members.

The man or housewife belonging to that particular family is influential decisions that determine the individual and community well-being. Those households play key role to keep the social peace and harmony of neighborhood, where they endow advisory role in cases of defiance of the accepted ethical standards by members of the village; mediation and reconciliation role in cases of disputes or rows among individuals belonging the neighborhood; or reconcile in cases of conflict or clashes among community members and/or households.

As a byproduct of the aforementioned family values, those individuals brought up by highland culture are typified by valuing formality in every aspect of life. They even have a particular code of conduct in different settings in their walks of life. People are cautious of the manner they greet when they approach a stranger; inspect themselves on the way they sit; one has to self-censor the way s/he speaks while in dialogues with his family members, friends or in public gatherings. In each settings, people try to behave in somewhat pre-planned manner to appear formal or genteel where they might do what they think would be righteous from the tone and volume of their voice.

The social fabric of eastern Ethiopia communities is quite different. Easterners disregard, if not give little accord, to value systems and moral standards of highlanders at least as in the case mentioned above. In fact, it is apparent to see obvious differences in the value system and norms in eastern communities as against to the highlanders, as the former is influenced by Islamic teachings and traditions while the latter conditioned by the Christian ways.

More importantly, the social fabrics including the family institution give little accord to predefined defined rules or laws that directs people on how to behave or act. The easterners have their own value system and moral standards in family management. In most instances, children get better freedom to express their ideas and thoughts. This is unlike the norm in a typical highlander family, as family codes limits children their

freedom to freely speak their ideas; openly communicate with their parents and other family members.

Another distinguishing feature of eastern families is that the nature of follow ups parents make to their children. Unlike the highlanders, family institution in Eastern Communities is not structured in a way fathers and mothers give regular advices and/or teaching to their children on how they behave and act according to acceptable ethical and moral lines. Children grow up in a free environment where they get little punishment for misbehaviors or so. This, however, doesn't mean that such family management evokes children to experience the evils and hence develop bad behaviors. The issue shall be considered as a mere differences in the belief system on the family management. Whereas the highlanders customarily developed a system of dictations, coercion and punishment, the easterners pursue little coercion and more relaxed approach towards their children.

#### **6.1.5. Substance Abuse and Behavioral Effects**

Khat chewing is a predominant habit in eastern Ethiopia communities. For instance, nearly three-quarters (72.9%) of residents of Dire Dawa chewed Chat. Across the Hararghe district and/or in parts of Somali region too, Khat chewing is common. Those habits in turn influential in molding the way people behaves and act.

Existing empirical evidences on effects of chewing Khat involved behavioral and socio-economic. Some of behavioral effects of chewing Khat are akin behavioral characterizations of philosophy of simple lifestyle like impatience, carelessness, disregard for managing and planning resources like money, time, etc.

### **CASE STUDY THREE**

#### **CHEWING KHAT (CATHA EDULIS) AND ITS BEHAVIORAL AND HEALTH EFFECTS**

Based on Drake PH (1988); Kalix, P. & Braenden (1985); Dechassa, L.(2001); Taye, H. and Jens, B. (2002); Yigzaw et al (2005); NIDA (2011); Bizuayehu et al (2014)

Khat (*Catha edulis*) is a perennial crop widely produced in eastern African countries like Ethiopia and Kenya and also in the middle east-Yemen. The leaves of the crop are used for their stimulating effect. The main psychoactive ingredients in khat are cathine and cathinone, chemicals that are structurally similar to, but less potent than, amphetamine, yet result in similar psychomotor stimulant effects. For over 1400 years, the chewing of fresh leaves of *Catha edulis* Forssk. variously referred to as khat, chat, Abyssinian tea, etc. as a stimulant/euphoria has been practiced in the Middle East, Somalia, Ethiopia and Djibouti, among others. In Ethiopia, Khat Chewing is growing habit among the youth and elderly. Studies on the issue reveals that Khat chewing is becoming one of the emerging challenges of social challenges that leaves the productive age group in to addictions that limit the physical and mental exertions that deprived the working hands of work spirit, emotional (psychological) disorder and even leaving chewers psychic.

Khat chewing is so wide that is accustomed for social gathering in many parts of eastern communities, beyond its social importance, Khat has great deal of economic importance in east Ethiopia. Khat growing and trade is a livelihood for many easterners in general and women, in particular. Considerable cash flows The pleasure derived from khat chewing- locally Known as *Mirkana* leaves chewers in a state of euphoria and elation as well as feelings of increased alertness or arousal, enhanced imaginative ability and a higher capacity to associate ideas. The user can also experience an increase in blood pressure and heart rate. The effects begin to subside after about 90 minutes to 3 hours, but can last 24 hours. At the end of a khat session, the user may experience a depressive mood, irritability, loss of appetite, and difficulty sleeping. Studies on the effect of Khat concluded that khat intake causes risks on cardiovascular problems such as hypertension and oral health problem. In addition to the cardiovascular effect, khat has influence on the respiratory center, which is expressed as quick breathing, marked hyperthermia and finally death.

## **6.2. SIMPLE LIFE STYLE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING**

This sub-section addresses how the cherished life style among eastern Ethiopia communities determine the psychological wellbeing of people. In this regard, the behavioral and institutional aspects of a philosophy of simple life style in relation to eudemonic and social wellbeing were subjected.

### **6.2.1. Brings About Social Harmony**

Some traits and values characterizing the easy life style of people include the virtue of good communication, sense of togetherness, deeper attachments and affiliations, tolerance and mutual help. For people who are deprived of their emotional well-being, those traits and virtues are healings.

The institution of social capital prevailing in eastern communities endow a sense of trust and togetherness among people, such institutions allow little room for class differences and income inequality. In such an environment social evils like robbery and other crimes are less likely to prevail. As such, norms, values and social capital can be key ingredients of development

### **6.2.2. Installed Norms and Value System Promote Emotional Wellbeing**

The installed values, norms have important implications to promote eudemonic wellbeing of people. Value for open and free communication allows people to express their resentments to whom they quarreled with and hence enables them protect themselves from consequent emotional deprivations.

There are some other traits widely apparent among easterners which are important for good interpersonal relation. For instance, the prevailing social fabric opens little room for virtues of individualism that overemphasize material gain over spiritual glory as is often the case in conventional individualism. The easterners' version of individualism better balances the material and spiritual wellbeing of people. As a result of that, the conflict of interests born out of parsimonious acts and jealousy would be less likely, better defending people from consequent stresses in inter-personal relations.

### **6.2.3. Substance Abuse and Wellbeing of People**

Empirical evidences reveal that Chewing khat has a number of psychological, economic, behavioral and health effects on chewers and their families. Its effects are more visible in affecting the relationship among family members. One common thing that feature chewers is that they are very busy in non-family affairs, hence little time, energy and emotions they scarify for family causes.

Khat habits also erodes the material wellbeing of families, as expenditures on it and other derivatives of Khat would have gone otherwise on things that would add to the wellbeing of members of the family. Moreover, there are bulk empirical sources that conclude Khat erodes the sexual performance of its addicts in the long run. This in turn damages the health of a family as it implicates into sexual incompatibility problem among pairs. As sexual life of partners is key to hold up the family in pace, where such a case would inevitably source of dispute, often end up in divorce (see case study four)

#### CASE STUDY FOUR

##### KHAT CHEWING AND WELLBEING OF FAMILY

A mother of three, Tigist is resident of Jigjiga. She has married to a man, who born and brought up in Jigjiga. They have three children. She says she is not happy in her family. The only reason is her husband is addict of Khat. The whole time he is out of work, he spent in chewing, and when he finishes he goes to grocery for alcohol. She don't get time she and her children expects from him. Khat deprives the emotional and material wellbeing of her family. Materially, the expenses to Khat and alcohol has taken away considerable proportion of the family income. More importantly, she was unable to handle her husband's behaviors. He shows three behaviors in a day: before chewing he is quiet normal, but is a bit depressed, and irresponsive. When the time comes for chewing he is restless, and very violent. In midst of chewing he looks too generous and caring, but it lasts till his *mirkana* fades away. In the evening, he went to alcohol and shows all the behaviors that a drunken man shows. How one can handle that, she asks, in anger and distress...



### 6.3. ECONOMIC CHARACTERIZATION OF SIMPLE LIFESTYLE

The economic explanations of simple life style involves two: One is that it tries to depict the underlying factors that spurs risks and uncertainties in the working of the economic system. One way economic uncertainties prevail could be through damaging the economic structure, stifling the proper trade regime, and denying the proper incentive system, which in turn damage the economic well-being of people.

The second segment of analysis on interpretation of simple life style is inferring on behavioral elements and socio-cultural institutions in line with possible effects in risking people and communities to economic problems.

Hence, the topic of address of by this chapter would be explaining whether the behavioral and institutional elements of simple life style is a shield (adaptive strategies) that people and communities designed to mitigate possible risks or deprivations on their material well-being. The possible implication of behavioral and institutional elements of simple lifestyle to wellbeing is also highlighted.

#### 6.3.1. Behavioral Aspect of Simple Life Style

The economic characterization of simple life style, in its behavioral aspect can be generalized as people tend to be more focused for their short run economic problems. Another manifestation of simple life style in this regard is people pursue adaptive strategies to cope up with their economic problems. Brief sketches into behavioral element of simple life style is summarized below

##### 6.3.1.1. Value of Living for Today

A thorough look into the social set-up of communities in east gives a number of showcases as to how the value system risks them economically. One such is the prevalent life style which cherishes the principle of *living for today*. This principle, has behavioral and institutional effects, also implicated on the incentive mechanism too. In its direct effect, *living for today* disincentive postponing consumption or saving. Such values also deny reward for planned life and wise allocation of resources, promoting wasteful life style instead.

##### 6.3.1.2. Little Exertions and Disregard Planning for Economic Resources

As a direct implication of overvaluation of living for today, one aspect of behavioral characterization of simple life style, people are highly interested in jobs that require little physical and mental exertions.

A philosophy to avoid the negative consequences of their actions or decision, in lieu of psychological characterization of simple life style, implied by ill-defined easy life style would make people deny value to planning economic resources, like money or time.

When the governing principle is little plan and a tendency to live entirely for the sake of today, little importance is given to such traits like saving money and other resources. Such a life style may give temporary relief, but would never bring lasting

happiness. Rather, it erodes the hopes and vision of people, which in turn damages their work spirit.

Readers can see chapter twelve for an in-depth understanding on the underlying elements that shape behaviors and motivations of people in a way to disregard for planning for resources like time and money.

#### **6.1.3.3. Low Regard to Personal Development**

As has been discussed in chapter seven, some of behavioral characterizations of simple life style implicated into the personal development of people. One such was people value for emotional wellbeing. More often than not, people glorify (exaggerate) their emotional wellbeing. As a manifestations of that, people invest little resources (time, money, energy and/or emotions) in activities that adds up to their personal development.

Where people and communities exert unbalanced efforts in possession between material and spiritual capital, they are likely lose both. Indeed, as easterners invest discriminately between spiritual and material capital in favor of the former, at least in the long run, it is highly likely that their economic life would be subjected to risk, even to compromise their spiritual wellbeing.

#### **6.3.1.4. Attitudes and Outlooks Breeding Dependency Syndrome**

As depicted in the previous chapters, the essence of simple life style, both in its behavioral and institutional faces, is a defensive mechanism people and communities of eastern Ethiopia developed from risks of material and spiritual deprivations. The nature, importance, and potency of institutions for sharing risks, like the institution of social capital, may end up with unintended consequences unless wisely used.

A look into the workings of social capital in the communities of interest entails a pretty different scenario in urban and rural settings. In rural settings, social capital is where people share resources like information, food, cash and labor to face mainly evoked by deprivations of nature. For many reasons, those interdependences among communities in rural settings can be considered a home-grown resilience mechanism from human made and natural factors that has been leaving them in economic hardships and uncertainties.

As an emerging dynamics in the urban settings of those communities, however, the the functioning of institutions for mutual help and cooperation are increasingly challenged by rent-seeking behaviors. That is not to deny the crucial role of social capital for urbanites who are involved in business ventures (see text box eight).

As result of misuse of socio-cultural institutions in urban settings is mounting dependency syndrom as one emerging challenge to communities. For instance, labor forces who are victims of dependency syndrom feel economically secured in the face where they are not actually. That in turn disincentivizing hard work, in turn weakening the work spirit of victims, which in worst cases, distort the labor market (see section 8.3.4).

### **6.3.2. Institutional (Structural) Aspects of Simple Life Style**

#### **6.3.2.1. Simple Life Style, Poverty and Income inequality**

Empirical evidences support socio-cultural institutions for having key role in poverty reduction, guaranteeing just economic order and more democratic society (see UNICEF, 2002). In this regard, prevailing institutions for mutual help and sharing of resources among communities of eastern Ethiopia can be considered indigenous social security system where people share resources to mitigating deprivations of wider sorts posed by natural and man-made factors.

#### **TEXT BOX TWO NORMS AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

“I was born, raised, educated in Jigjiga. I have also experiences in Harar and Diredawa. In east few are accustomed with reading. Even those who are well educated are rather attracted to entertainments. I believe such society cannot thrive.”

Extracted from Discussion with Gossa,  
Resident of Jigjiga City

One key area of importance of the institutional aspect of simple lifestyle is in relation to food insecurity. That, in fact, is to the attestation of empirical evidences. For instance, there major urban and rural communities of eastern Ethiopia are relatively better off in terms of food poverty as compared to other measure (forms) of poverty like income poverty.

Moreover, value systems and institutions for mutual sharing of resources are instrumental in promoting just social order, shielding people and communities from social evils associated to unemployment and income inequality like crime, theft and robbery. Prevailing socio-cultural institutions are also paramount in spurring important traits for social stability, like a sense of togetherness, mutual help, cooperation and trust.

#### **6.3.2.2. Simple Life Style don't go-with the Assumption of Rational Economic Man**

Tendencies to avoid the negative aspects of actions or decisions, as depicted to be one of the pillar values of easterners, do not fits the *economic man* assumption, which considers people have to make calculations- computing the gains and losses- before decision in economic transactions. Such unique psychological order violates conventional order, posing real challenges to conventionally used remedies in a bid to promote the wellbeing of people and communities at hand.

For instance, where the mentioned element features underlying reality, and academic, research and/or policy interventions which disregard those contexts inevitably end up impotent. Hence, it takes to be cautious if conventional methods and tools in

undertaking research and policy interventions would comply to specific elements unique to prevailing contexts among eastern Ethiopia communities.

### **6.3.2.3. Distorts the Product Market**

As one of adverse effects of simple life style is its toll on the proper functioning of a product market is little regard to bargaining for prices and qualities in market. Such a case opens room for opportunist business people which may widen profit margins or inflate prices and deliver sub-standard products.

Moreover, when people show little regards for bargaining, strategies to fixing the market failure, like interventions to protect consumers using price and quality control strategies or subsidies would likely be impotent.

### **6.3.2.4. Distort the Labor Market**

The behavioral and institutional elements of simple life style have far-reaching consequences on the nature, functioning and performance of the labor market. In this regard, issues like Labor force participation, labor mobility and productivity of labor are worth considering.

#### **6.3.2.4.1. *Low Labor Force Participation Rate***

As depicted in discussions so far, over-dependence of people on one another implied by the institutional elements (like social capital) of philosophy of simple life style could shape the perception of people on work and hence their work spirit. As a result of overdependence on one another, people feel less unsecured and unemployed, even if they are not. Such instances manifested in number of ways. For instance, mutual sharing of resources may breed undesired consequences on people, like a mentality of dependency.

In its worst case, dependency syndrome may give pseudo shield victims (unemployed ones) not to sense the pains and deprivations associated with unemployment. Overall, the unwise use of institutions for mutual help and cooperation can harm the incentive system resulting into low rate of labor force participation an inevitable feature the labor market.

#### **6.3.2.4.2. *Restrict Labor Mobility***

The philosophy cherished in east is likely to erode patience and spiritual strength to bear the challenges associated with work. As a reality amongst communities of eastern Ethiopia, people often avoid works - and in most cases would rather remain unemployed than selling their labor in occupations requiring exertions: laborious, risky, innovative and mental exertions. The prevailing reality in the communities of interest is people are often attracted to and engaged in occupations with little exertions.

Such a case inevitably results structural problem labor market, where the problem manifest itself in at least two ways. For one, it implicates into business to be concentrated in businesses that open wider door for rent-seeking political economy to spur. That means resources are likely channeled towards economic activities involving simple exchange of good. And economic activities which add value, and which employs more labor would inevitably be scarcest.

Another consequence pertaining to avoidance of jobs requiring exertions would be mismatch in labor demand and supply featuring labor market. Thence, labor supply skews in activities or jobs that require less pain & exertions while shortage of work force would be inevitable in laborious and technical jobs.

When one gives a thorough look into the economic structure and labor market in eastern Ethiopia communities, the aforementioned scenarios are typical features. All in all, researchers interested in addressing problems related to the market structure, particularly on labor market and unemployment in the communities of interest find the mentioned scenarios takes an important considerations in their undertakings.

#### ***6.3.2.4.3. Impact on Labor Productivity***

One may fetch theoretical and empirical evidences from economic literature on factors that in one way or the other determine labor productivity. In this regard, behavioral variables ascribed to quality of labor and hence to labor productivity includes, among others: virtues of independence, industriousness, innovativeness, workaholic and work discipline.

As depicted in the book so far, the life style cherished among eastern Ethiopia communities can be implicated into the above mentioned virtues of productive labor force. As such, behavioral and institutional elements of simple lifestyle implicated into labor productivity thereby breeding virtues which are progressive or retrogressive.

#### ***6.3.2.4.4. Makes Policies to Mitigate Unemployment Likely Impotent***

According to the standard principles in labor economics, individuals in working age bracket are treated as unemployed when they actively looking for a job but unable to secure in a definite period of time. As one feature of the socio-economic fabric of eastern Ethiopia is instances where the definition of unemployment and individuals as unemployed do not hold.

Where such circumstances prevail, often-used Strategies to draw more laborers into workforce via like provision of credit services, technical training and other capacity building schemes are less likely work.

#### ***6.3.2.5. Affects Entrepreneurial Efforts***

As one of characterizations made on the shared value system amongst eastern Ethiopia communities was risk averse behaviors and institutions meant to mitigate risk. Risk taking behavior being the core virtues of entrepreneurship, the cherished lifestyle in the communities of interest in many ways can affect entrepreneurship and entrepreneur minds be scarce.

Investigating on this problem may take an important area of research in the realm of business management, entrepreneurship development and/or economics of entrepreneurship. For instance, in lieu of the above narratives, a researcher may hypothesize saying the scope for entrepreneurship development is limited. Perhaps that can be a reasonable hypothesis as far as his undertakings involves the eastern Ethiopia perspective.

#### 6.3.2.6. Principal-agent Problem

As depicted in preceding chapters, some of the behavioral and institutional deductions out of the value system governing life among eastern Ethiopia communities implicated into making employer-employee relationship a bit rough. The behavioral inferences in relation to principal-agent problem includes: tendencies of free-ridership, lack of independence, unpunctuality, and little commitment to rules, regulations or terms of contract ascribed to a particular job or appointment.

Indeed, a critical look into the workings of the fabrics of socio-economy in eastern Ethiopia settings entails principal-agent problem a real challenge to employers, both the private and public sectors (see text box three)

##### TEXT BOX THREE

##### AN INVESTOR UNABLE TO GET DISCIPLINED LABOR FORCE

*I am an investor engaged in commercial farming in the Shebelle river basin. Currently I cultivated peanuts on 70 hectares of land, and is harvesting my produces. The regional investment bureau and other regional officials were very helpful; the biggest challenge for me was nothing but finding dedicated labor force. There are too many people unemployed around but many of them are unwilling to work, and the existing few who are willing to supply their labor are ill disciplined, with poor working mentality and less determination to work according to their contracts. Once they get their wages, they quit their job and fled to the town, spend their earning on Khat and entertainment, and the next day you see them desperately standing looking for job. Hence, it was too challenging for me to proceed with harvesting works with these workers that I decided to bring 20 labor forces from Babile area (Eastern Harerghe), to fill my short run labor shortfalls and complete harvesting of my produces. Even if it is costly to do so, this is what I have to do. In the next harvesting season I am planning to have laborers from South Ethiopia, where I think I can get disciplined and dedicated labor forces.*

***Words from Commercial Farm Owner and Manager***

## 6.4. SOCIOLOGICAL AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL CHARACTERIZATION OF SIMPLE LIFESTYLE

From sociological perspectives, philosophy of simple life style encompasses socio-cultural institutions related to dealing with socio-economic, climatic, and emotional and security (safety) related uncertainties. Hence, the communities designs and establish a social fabric that produces a shield from all uncertainties of life. Such explains the genesis of a social capital, which manifests itself in mutual help, trust and fast flow of information, which in fact fits the nature of social capital prevailing among eastern Ethiopia communities. Sociological & anthropological variables also have implications to molding the behaviors of people in different ways, which can add or detracts to their wellbeing<sup>12</sup>.

Socio-cultural institutions in the context of simple life style involves their role in shaping behavioral and institutional elements, which in one way or another, conducts the motives of people; defining the nature and functionality of institutions having wider importance to socio-economic wellbeing of people and communities. This part of the study explore the importance of behaviors (motives) of people in conducting the functioning of socio-cultural institutions.

### TEXT BOX FOUR

#### SOCIAL CAPITAL: ABUSED OR OPTIMIZED?

“Even if social capital has many positives towards enhancing the welfare of people, it does also have negative consequences over workmanship and productivity of the labor forces. This is a particular nature in urban areas. There are people who are able to work but unable and make their livings simply by abusing their social capital, in a sense that entirely dependent on the help of others. The thing is quite different in pastoral and agro-pastoral communities, where social capital is in many respects is used productively. The interdependences of rural households is a key resource that helps them escape risks of food shortage, among others.”

*Hussein, resident of Jigjiga city*

### 6.4.1. Tendency to Abuse Socio-Cultural Institutions

One aspect of simple life style is institutional set-ups of communalities in relation to its impact to promote their well-beings by promoting behaviors and s value systems like sense of cooperation and trust; also by promoting social harmony, reduce economic inequality. In rural communities of eastern Ethiopia, socio-cultural institutions and prevailing norms, values and rules that has kept communities from economic inequalities, shielded from risks of economic resources and food shortage. Moreover, these institutions are crucial in defending vulnerable groups like women, children, disabled people and the elderly from whatever injustices and abuses. For

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

instance, as a result of those institutional set-ups, in Somali communities in particular, women gets better alienated from domestic violence or rape, the two dominant forms of social maladies that women suffers from in many other communities in Ethiopia.

The issue has quite a different look in the urban areas, where misuse of socio-cultural institutional are growing phenomenon. Those moves to exploit those institutions of mutual help and cooperation are getting mediums of rent-seeking behaviors developed, weaken the trusts and courage among people, hence a variant of worth to blame. Socio-cultural institutions and value system shape the behavior of people through the following channels:

- Affecting the structure of formal economic and social set-ups
- Polluting the socio-cultural institutions that complement socio-economic progress
- Changing the behaviors of people in a way of retrogressive to economic well-being of communities.

Socio-cultural institutions apparent in eastern Ethiopian communities like the functionality of clan based arrangements, not only limited to the pastoral Somali communities, but also their effects trans-pass to urbanites, whether belong to clan system of organization or not.

In relation to some characterizations of simple life style, whether clan system is getting abused by some to promote such behaviors like traits of over-interdependence, hence implicated into avoidance behavior by people the minimal exertions it takes to challenge their economic problems by themselves. As a result of that, if clan system is making people to give low regard to planning resources like money and time should be questioned. Moreover, whether the institution deprive the personal power of people involving in it so that they don't have minimal individualism needed to make decisions that implicate into their well-beings should be investigated, as it has implications in depriving the psychological (emotional) well-being of people.

#### **6.4.2. Pastoralism and its Behavioral Implications**

Pastoralism is mainstay of considerable size of rural population in eastern Ethiopia. Though different forms of pastoralism are prevalent, nomadic pastoralism which is characterized by mobility of herders in search of water and grazing yards for their herds is a typical feature. While attempting to model the behavior (motives) and structures of institutions on such communities, it takes to looking on possible behavioral implications of the main livelihood system, i.e. pastoralism.

Urban communities of eastern Ethiopia too can't escape from those possible behavioral implications of pastoralism as possible behavioral implication of pastoralism also spills over. Such behavioral deduction from the livelihood system is in the realm of psychology and behavioral sciences in general. Indeed, the topic can be a good area of study in the field of social psychology.

In order to make possible behavioral and/or institutional implications of pastoralism, the author reviewed theoretical evidences on the make-ups of the pastoral way of life. Hence, after a careful look into the essence, nature and workings of the pastoral livelihood system, the author made behavioral and/or institutional characterizations.



To make similar inferences, discussions with individuals and scholars who traces their background from pastoral communities was key.

Fieldwork experience of the author to pastoral communities, particularly the Somali pastoralists, is also another line of inference, all as depicted in the paragraphs hereunder.

As detailed in subsequent paragraphs, pastoral way of life is likely to have behavioral manifestations that go in line with some behavioral characterizations of simple life style like: impatience to look at the possible pros and cons comes with decisions people make; value to live for today; tendencies to develop values as passive or reactive (rather than being active or proactive) when they faced with a particular problem in life.

In pastoral communities life is such a spontaneous that people are always on standby to move from one place to the other in search of water points and grazing yards. Indeed it takes for pastoralists to wander in their minds on what to act and/or react to the possible shortages of water or grazing lands to their cattle. Hence, people making pastoral way of livelihood are not only move from one place to the other, but their life style triggers them lose their calmness, which may manifests itself in robbing their patience and hence their ability and willingness to deal with the pros and cons that a particular circumstance requires before making decisions.

While moving from one place to the other, pastoralists hold little material possession. The behavioral deduction from this would be pastoral way of life has little to do with tomorrow, making people develop such traits to live for today with little regards for tomorrow.

As pastoral way of life is defined on the benevolence of nature. When nature is to their side, life is norms; and when nature turns its side against them, life would be in misery which to the worst case they may get their cattle die of drought and plague. What their livelihood entails is that they are often at the defensive position. The behavioral deductions from that is people likely develop such norms as reactive not proactive to problems.

Some other aspects of behavioral implications of pastoral ways of life are depicted under the case studies of five and six.

## CASE STUDY FIVE

### “PASTORALISM IS MOBILITY, MOBILITY IS PASTORALISM”

#### (A STORY OF A NEWLY WED PASTORAL WOMAN)

As proverb from Borana Oromo goes, “Pastoralism is mobility, mobility is pastoralism”. I believe the following story tells the inherent meaning of this proverb. In one of my recent field works, I met a man in the city of Kebridahar, roughly 350 KMs away from Jigjiga, capital of the Ethiopian Somali regional State (ESRS). As I asked him about the social fabrics around the city, he was quick to reply me that pastoral way of life explain virtually every aspect of life. What I was really fascinated about was the story of a woman belonging to the woman to Kebridahar, who started a life with her new husband in city of Jigjiga. As her husband is a close friend of the man, he told me what he observed in his frequent visits to the new brides. Virtually in all of his visits, he saw new design or arrangements of the home, with locations of home furniture changing frequently. He ascribes as to why so to the behavioral manifestation of pastoralism, as the wife belongs to pastoral community, where she grow up in a mobile settings shifting from place to place. Sedentary life is a new happening in her life, and she may keep on moving perhaps till she accustom with her new life

## CASE STUDY SIX

### BEHAVIORAL IMPLICATIONS OF PASTORALISM IN RELATION TO POWER RELATIONS

Jamal is originally from *Afdem* area, one of predominantly pastoralist communities within eastern Ethiopia. He has a rich accounts of the very essence of pastoral way of living, and prevailing customs and traditions among pastoral communities. He explained me that the behavioral manifestations of pastoralism is highly related to on how power is defined, and this is related to in pastoral system a man has to pass series of stages to assume a title of master of herdsmen. A young boy starts herding as a goat and sheep keeper. Through time, he is promoted to herding cows and oxen. The last stage goes to camel herding, where he passes on through two stages, first as aide to master of herd, then promoted to status of a master of herders, the highest rank as a herder. The interesting thing is its behavioral implications, which likely implicates into one`s family or social business. That may be rigidity to accept conventional rules and procedures, defiant of power hierarchy or denial of bosses.

## 6.5. GEO-POLITICAL AND GEOGRAPHIC CHARACTERIZATION OF SIMPLE LIFESTYLE

How can one explain the importance of geographical and geo-political elements in relation to why people develop the philosophy of easy lifestyle? According to Devreux (2011,P 68) International geopolitics have always impinged directly and significantly on livelihoods in the Horn of Africa, whose impact is largely felt in eastern part of Ethiopia in particular<sup>13</sup>. Hence, the geographical and geo-political elements are largely to blame for all sorts of uncertainties be it economic, environmental and/or security that has been a threat for eastern Ethiopia communities for long, even to date.

Geographical and geo-political factors are largely to blame for two interrelated elements to evolve and flourish that breeds uncertainties: Contraband and War. Geographic and geo-political factors in relation to contraband is well stated in the literature<sup>14</sup>. Recurrent war in parts of eastern Ethiopia is also a direct outcome of the geo-political elements. Foreign countries and elements having vested interest in Ethiopia have for long been using the area where they make direct inflictions and or make proxy wars against the Ethiopian rule<sup>15</sup>. By creating uncertainties in socio-economic and emotional life of people, contraband and war are to blame for people to cherish 'simple life style'. According to the findings of the study, contraband erodes essentials qualities of labor, often resulting in traits that contradicts the requirements of formal employment like ill work ethics & discipline, tastes that can't fit with formal employment like, a culture of easy money. Those mentioned traits, in turn, implies to the behaviour of people & prevailing institutional setups. In this regard, people develop less regard to rules and principles; mismanage their resources like money, time, knowledge, expertise and/or experience, It also adversely affect the incentive system by evoking people develop a mentality of easy money in their endeavors;

### 6.5.1. War and Simple Life Style

Since the formation of modern Ethiopian state, a time that remarks the integration of considerable part of eastern Ethiopia to include Harar and Ethiopian Somali region, war has been a recurrent phenomenon in the area. Particularly since the end of post-British and post-Italian rule over Somalia various armed groups who lifted arm against the central Ethiopian government emerged. In this regard, fight against Ogden Liberation Front (OLF), West Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) and Ogden National Liberation Front (ONLF) since the early 1960`s is worth considering.

One important aspect of the recurrent instability in Eastern part of Ethiopia was the geo-political issue, where the area has been point for infiltrations of foreign elements that attacked the country at different times. As a result of continuous wars, the socio-economic progress of communities impeded. The consequences of war not only limited by claiming lives and destroying physical infrastructure, but also has social

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<sup>13</sup> Stephen Devreux (2006), Vulnerable Livelihoods in Somali Region, Ethiopia, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, England

<sup>14</sup> See Devreux (2006); Habtamu and Wubeshet (2016).

<sup>15</sup> The Gulf Countries, mainly spear headed by Saudi Arabia has been sided with forces that fought the central rule of Ethiopia in the Imperial era of Haile Selassie I (ruled between 1916 and 1974) and the military government or Dergue rule (1974-1991), and even in the early years of the current regime (EPRDF rule).

effects as it damages institutions by creating political instability, destroying the social fabric and/or endangering civil liberties

One of the social effects of war is its destructive impact on the institution of family and marriage. This is mainly through detaching families, widowing wives and orphaning children. Out of prolonged conflict, norms & values key for stability of families eroded. For instance, the sexual behaviors would change where sex work thrives, adultery behaviors takes rampant, all having a destructive effect on the well-functioning of the marriage market and family values (see case study seven).

All in all, the prolonged instability in east Ethiopia has stressed people and communities, whose consequences far reaching to affect their eudemonic wellbeing. Those behavioral impacts of war on people is well depicted in sociology, one of which is Post-Traumatic Disorder Hypothesis. Accordingly, war affects the evaluative capacity of people, make lose their rationality while making decision in their social transactions.

#### CASE STUDY SEVEN

##### HOW WAR DESTRUCTS THE INSTITUTION OF FAMILY

To understand how war destructs the family structure, one has to give a light look on the social fabrics of the major urban communities of eastern Ethiopia. Before the war broke against Somalia in 1960's and 70's, those urban centers were largely occupied by households established by settlers largely engaged in non-military sectors, and their main stays were agriculture, trade, education & religious services and/or serving the bureaucracy, among others. The thing has got quite a different shape after the war broke with Somalia in 1976, resulting in dramatic change in socio-economic and demographic composition in the area, where the military sector dominates the civil sector, in turn redefining the family structure and social fabrics influenced by the military sector. For instance, many non-Somali residents born and grow up in city of Jigjiga in the age limit below 35 or so belong to families having military background. The peculiar feature of such families were half-parenthood, with many of them lost their fathers in war or don't know the whereabouts of their father, hence raised under the sole care of their mothers or the relatives of their mothers. For obvious reasons, such grow-up deprives essential virtues that promote the health of a family institution. As one reflection of that is the decision making behavior of those involved in the marriage market with tendency of disregarding the role and importance of selecting one's mate, where good conducts, virtues of paternal responsibility and other essential traits key to establishment of healthy families getting little importance being a growing reality among communities in eastern Ethiopia today. Readers can fetch on a detail look on the implication of war on family institution from chapter nine (sub-section 9.3) section 10.2 of chapter ten.

#### 6.5.2. Behavioral Effects of Contraband

Apart from its effects on exchequers, there are evidences showing how smuggling of goods makes people develop behaviors (outlooks) that are retrogressive to well-being. Some of those behavioral deductions out of passing through smuggling of goods are in many ways akin to the behavioral and economic characterizations of simple life style.

A study by Habtamu and Wubeshet (2016) specific to eastern Ethiopian communities found out that contraband has behavioral effects.

Accordingly, smuggling spurs informality the rule of the game, rather than defined rules and principles to govern life virtually in every department of life. Contraband also to blame for eroding essentials qualities of labor. In this regard, the smuggling effect contradicts the requirements of formal employment like ill work ethics &

discipline, tastes that can't fit with formal employment like payment modalities and a culture of easy money, among others.

Those mentioned traits, in turn, takes their toll on wellbeing of people & communities implicating into adverse behavioral and institutional elements. Some to mention includes less regard to rules and principles; mismanage economic resources like money, time, knowledge, expertise and/or experience. Contraband also to blame for its adverse effect on the incentive system by promoting easy money and free-rider mentality on people.

### **6.5.3. Climate and Simple Life Style**

Climate is the most important of geographic variables in relation to the behavioral and institutional aspects of simple life style. The consequences of climate on behavior of people may take direct and indirect effects. The direct impact is well documented in behavioral geography. For instance, McClelland (1961) concluded that climatic factors determine the affective status of people and the implied behaviors and traits that people may develop. For instance, people living in hotter climatic zones tend to be less rational, develop values & traits which are often blamed retrogressive.

According to broader depictions of behavioral geography, some of the behavioral manifestations of hot climate is that people value today more than tomorrow, people tend to be risk averse, also localities in those areas are impatient, and also have low appetite towards activities or works that require physical and mental exertions that adds up to their material and spiritual development.

The indirect behavioral effect of climate ascribed to unexpected shocks such as spells of bad weather for farmers. Considerable part of the eastern Ethiopia is climatically arid and semi-desert with limited rainfall, land degradation, all adding risking the livelihood of communities who count on pastoral way of life. Draught have been evoking uncertainties on livelihoods and food security of people and communities of eastern Ethiopia for long. Hence, it takes for people and communities to develop resilient mechanisms to the shocks and uncertainties of life. Indeed, harsh climate and consequences risks of livelihood can be one strand of explanations to the locate the roots of behavioral and institutional aspects of simple life style.

## CASE STUDY EIGHT

### WHY PEOPLE FROM SEMI-DESERT AND DESERT ‘DENIED’ TO STAND A TESTIMONY IN THE COURT OF LAW?

(Notes from the Rulings by Emperor Haile Selassie I (1923-1974))

Emperor Haile Selassie, who ruled Ethiopia for over four decades since early 1920`s, was a king who continued the nation building project started by his predecessors. As part of his long vision of building a centralized rule, the king had tours on every corners of Ethiopia. The king has made Godey town his seat in his frequent tours to communities within the Ogaden area, where he built his palace in the town. The emperor has to meet with community members, elders and clan leaders in his extended stays, which sometimes take weeks and months. Oral accounts tell that Emperor Haile Selassie was surprised by quit strange behaviors of people and communities he met with. In particular, the king observed the decision making behavior of people to have been volatile. The king was wise enough to have ascribed those strange behaviors with the hot climate there. Here is what the king is said to have ordered his close men in the justice corner. The order of the emperor was that anyone who stays at least six months in *bereha* areas would not be eligible to stand as a testimony of the defendant in a court of law.

## 7. SUMMARY AND THE WAY FORWARDS

### 7.1. SUMMARY

Despite diverse socio-cultural and religious backgrounds, if there is a unifying factor among people belonging urban communities of eastern Ethiopia, it is the philosophical construct of the motivations (behaviors) of people and prevailing institutions. The shared values of easterners, manifested mainly in molding their decision making behavior, is termed in the book as a *Philosophy of Simple Life Style in Eastern Ethiopia Settings*.

The underlying reasons triggering people to pursue philosophy of simple life style are shared socio-economic structure, system of past governance, socio-cultural institutions; geographic and geo-political variables, among others, are responsible, in one way or the other, risking them of facing emotional and material deprivations. The importance of those variables should be understood in their implications to creating risks and uncertainties on people and their socio-economic and political (governance) structure.

In this regard, Structural problems fermenting and/or nurturing economic uncertainties include unemployment, corrupt trade regime and contraband (smuggling of goods), infrastructural bottlenecks and more importantly poverty. Among geo-political elements are war and contraband, both of which have paramount importance in explaining the underlying psychological, behavioral and socio-economic factors that triggers people pursue simple life style.

As the book tried to make characterizations, simple life style is basically a behavioral and institutional mechanism people and communities developed to shield themselves from deprivations and/or uncertainties in their material and spiritual wellbeing, the nature of simple life style takes ***non-voluntary***.

## 7.2. SIMPLE LIFESTYLE, SCOPE FOR PROGRESS AND WELLBEING

So far, the book glimpsed into the philosophical foundation of institutions, both formal and informal in eastern Ethiopia settings. With that, it also tried to infer on shared values and philosophy of life. The conclusion made was the overall environmental factors, in the past and present, has made life uncertain and risky in many ways. As a response to those threats in life, people and communities had to device defensive mechanisms in order to survive.

From perspectives of an individual, simple life style is a behavioral mechanism people developed to cope up deprivation of negative affect and stress. Communities too establish a resilience mechanism to better withstands various risks posed against the material and spiritual wellbeing of their members. In this regard, the philosophical foundation of individualism and derivative institutions like institutions of consumption and saving are designed principally to safeguard from possible material and spiritual deprivations or risks.

As that may be the case, it is also wise to ask if the life style in turn may go against the intended purpose. of helping people and communities change their life. The quest is if the cherished life style, rather than extricate people from risks, leaves people and communities in a pool of uncertain environment. To that end, the book tried to figure out possible implications of the behavioral and institutional elements of simple life style on the material and spiritual wellbeing in the short and long run. From various realm of social sciences, the book deduced that the cherished life style as in the case of eastern Ethiopia settings is principally to survive crisis times. The relevance of such life style therefore is a transition from volatile and unsettled life to an established and settled life.

The book concludes that prevailing values and norms in the communities of interest has a number of positives, which can be optimized to serve the wider public interests. For instance, in circumstances, activities or interventions that need cooperation and close interactions of people, the essential traits of the cherished life style would better serve its ends. On the contrary, in activities that require independence, merit or personal efforts over mutual support, cooperation or group works, the valued lifestyle in eastern Ethiopia is second best, if not relevant altogether.

The implication of both behavioral and institutional elements of simple life style in terms of its effect on incentive mechanism in activities from private to public life is another issue worth noticing. In this regard, the established fabric provides little incentive or pay-offs for talents, personal efforts or exertions. This in turn makes traits of workmanship, creativity, innovative and entrepreneurial minds scarcer.

Where such is a dominating feature, individuals, no matter how capable they may be, find unleashing their potential pretty difficult. That in turn shapes the prevailing institutions meant for all purpose of private or community interests lack sustainability, change oriented, visionary and progressive. In the face where individuals have little reward, if not disincentives, to reap the fruits of their talents or exertions, it is inevitable that communities are likely to swim in a pool of risky and uncertain environment, even further exacerbating those evils



### 7.3. IMPLICATIONS TO ACADEMIC (RESEARCH) COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC POLICY

The importance of behavioral and institutional elements in relation to socio-economic progress in particular and material and emotional betterment of people and communities has attracted little or no academic and research interest. More specifically, the importance of behaviour & motives of people and socio-cultural institutions in public policies aimed at promoting socio-economic development in communities of eastern Ethiopia has been overlooked. For many reasons as the study attempted to address in previous chapters, virtually any interventions meant to promote the life of people and communities which are unable consider those variables are likely ends up impotent.

#### 7.3.1. Implication to Academic and Research Community

The end goal of academic interventions in endeavors to promote the wellbeing of people and communities is to come up with sound theoretical and empirical evidences so that policy practitioners would be evidenced in their interventions.

So far in the book, narratives and discussions were not end by themselves, but principally targeted to explore for unique behavioral (motivational) and institutional elements. The objective is to initiate academia and research circle at least not to take for granted the conventional theoretical teachings and empirical evidences, otherwise quest their relevance in explaining the prevailing socio-economic environment. Such a thing will endow the true picture of specific communities concerned and ultimately equip the policy practitioners with relevant and sound evidences that use them in public policy aimed at enhancing the material and spiritual wellbeing of people and communities.

Hence, Higher education institutions working in those communities in particular, have to take contextualizing the conventional theories and empirics their pillar of their teaching and research endeavors. Academicians and researchers of diverse social science specializations: anthropology, economics, psychology, sociology, business management, public administration, law are expected to map out specific contexts in the eastern Ethiopia communities while undertaking research works, hence, showing up the deviations from the conventional theory and empirical evidences.

More importantly, academicians and researchers are expected to identify progressive and retrogressive aspects of the implied norms, values and social capital out of the philosophy of easy life style in relation to socio-economic development. They are also expected to investigate the possible channels that these traits, norms, and values impact the developmental endeavors.

Hence, dealing with the mindsets of people; looking at the overall socio-cultural institutions; consulting customary laws and institution; understanding perceptions and attitudes; evaluating on norms and value systems of communities presupposes practical policy intervention to bring about socio-economic progress. In all those efforts, it is quite important to make inquiry on the underlying philosophy and methodology of conventional theory and practices. Methodologically, it is worth focusing on interdisciplinary approach, where a focus be given to field work research to gather information for analysis and inferences

All in all, studies related to explore the socio-economic problems of communities also to look contextual elements in their endeavors. For instance, researches aimed to address unemployment problem may also find both wise and relevant to investigate on the following: *Whether unemployment is really the problem to people in communities of eastern Ethiopia? If the people who are actually unemployed accept they are really unemployed or they feel they are employed? If unemployment arises really due to lack of economic opportunity? Or if people are ready enough to exploit the opportunities around, like availability of credit, technical trainings and others availed by the government and other developmental agents?*

In studies aimed at addressing the financial sector development in those communities, it would be wise to explore specific contexts on issues related to consumption and saving in Eastern Ethiopia communities. In this context, they may find it important to ask the following: *How saving is perceived by the community? Whether people values of entrepreneurial mentalities: like traits to take risks, value for time and money? If the norms and values that people cherish brings about diligence and innovative mentality*

Though the author of this book mentions some economic and business specific issues for inquiry as depicted in the above paragraphs, academicians and researchers of other fields of specializations may draw similar inferences and quests in their respective specializations and areas of research interest, hence would come up with newer theoretical base, methodologies, approaches and perspectives.

### **7.3.2. Implication to Development Policies and Strategies**

In their endeavors to promote social and economic development in communities of eastern Ethiopia, government and other development partners are ought to give recognition and hence act accordingly of the importance of psychological, attitudinal, and behavioral elements that manifest philosophy of simple life style in their endeavors. As a strategy to promote community well-being is to work at lower level of administrations, making the local authorities to work on schemes that scale up the well-being of their communities.

There are evidences so far supporting those lines. National governments who are speaking of happiness and well-being are emphasizing the local level as the stage wherein they can be realized. For example, the UK government has strongly encouraged local governments to become a lead partner in enhancing well-being the CWB Indicators Project in Australia was launched by the Local Government Association of Queensland, and many CWB measurement projects are managed by local governments (See discussion under chapter two).

Moreover, an integrated and participatory approaches could be pursued in a bid to develop institutions, value systems and ways of life of people having positive outcome in enhancing the emotional and socio-economic wellbeing of people. In this regard, the role of academic and research circle is crucial. Therefore, government and other agents of development should encourage and commit resources towards researches and developments over the issue.

Moreover, while policies that encourage progressive and positive aspects of socio-cultural norms, values and social capital are necessary, deliberate interventions are demanding in purging-out the retrogressive dimensions of these variables, if to

promote collective wellbeing in general, and that of people and communities belonging to eastern Ethiopia in particular.

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