

The Economic Implications of Wolaita Proverbs: Functional Analysis

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to collect and analyze some selected Wolaita proverbs for their implications of Wolaita's economic realm of life. The subjects used for the current study were 100 theme-relevant proverbs collected by interviewing systematically selected 24 elders and through conducting participant-based observation being part of social interactions taking place in different villages. The descriptive research design was used to conduct this study using the qualitative method of data analysis. The result indicated that Wolaita proverbs embody Wolaita's economic realm of life such as scarcity of resources and how Wolaitas manage it, unwise and wise use of resources, sources of wealth and economic inequality among people. Based on these findings, therefore, deep and series studies that promote the frequent use of Wolaita proverbs reflecting Wolaita's economic realm of life in all adequate contexts of interaction, awareness enhancement training for young generations of Wolaita for effective use of those proverbs in the proper interactional situations, making proverbs as part of language curriculum in all levels of education and maintenance of Wolaita proverbs as vehicles of transferring indigenous wisdom to the next generation are recommended to be implemented by the all concerned bodies across the nation.

Index terms— wolaita proverbs, indigenous wisdom, economic realm of life, social interactions.

1 Introduction

olaita is one among Southern Nations and Nationalities of Ethiopia. The people of Wolaita lived independent being organized in sociopolitical and economic realm of life starting from the Stone Age (C.H. Stinger, 1910). Wolaita people have owned indigenous culture, beliefs, traditions, rituals, civilization and social identities that define them and make them distinct from other people in Ethiopia. These socio-political, economic and cultural realities of Wolaita have been transferred from generation to generation solely through oral tradition (Hailegabriel, 2007). Among those oral traditions, proverbs remain a veritable tool in depicting the overall values of Wolaita people. For instance, Wolaitas use their proverbs as a form of literary expressions to encourage, admonish, mock, advise, consol and generally to establish the verbal convention that is significant to their economic situations, social order and historical circumstances.

Among other facets of life, Wolaita's economic realm of life is highly embodied in their proverbs. For instance, using their proverbs, Wolaitas reflect the way how individuals or a group solve their basic economic problems of scarcity, the specific techniques people use for maximum production, the guiding principles for saving properties and ways of making choices being opt to the given item than the other. Supporting this theme, Girardi (2012) states that proverbs may be a source of knowledge about human behavior, primarily the economic behavior which is not probably mainstreamed in the mere assumptions of economics. As to the same author (Girardi, 2012), proverbs can shed light on the complicated human behavior of economic thinking without scientifically analyzing primary or secondary data. However, the base for such the thinking is from accumulated human wisdom; that

11 ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF WOLAITA PROVERBS A) SCARCITY OF RESOURCES

43 is directly or indirectly reflected through proverbial wisdom. That is why the authors of the current study were
44 initiated to collect and analyze some selected proverbs of Wolaita for their economic implications and publish
45 them as an article for transferring indigenous wisdom and other social realities of Wolaita to the next generation.

46 2 II.

47 3 Methodology of the Study a) Design of the Study

48 The descriptive research design was used for this study. This is because; it is suitable to describe the existing
49 economic realities of life embodied in Wolaita proverbs. For the analysis, 100 proverbs were selected as sample
50 based on their thematic relevance to the current study. For collection of those 100 relevant proverbs, two tools of
51 data collection were used: interview and observation. Then the proverbs collected were analyzed using qualitative
52 method of data analysis.

53 4 b) Description of the Research Setting

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

59 5 c) Subject of the Study

60 The major population of this study is all Wolaita proverbs reflecting their economic realm of life. However, for the
61 manageability and thematic relevance, the sample of 100 proverbs were drawn from the sea of many thousands
62 of Wolaita proverbs reflecting their economic life.

63 6 d) Sampling Procedure

64 For this study the researchers used purposive sampling procedure to come up with 100 proverbs having thematic
65 reflection of Wolaita economic realm of life. From the total sample of 100 proverbs, two-third (67) were collected
66 through interviewing systematically selected 24 elders from various groups of Wolaita communities based on their
67 deep knowledge of Wolaita socio-economic realities of life. For collecting the remained one-third (33) of the entire
68 sample, the researchers went to the remote villages of Wolaita and conducted participant-based observation being
69 part of social occasions taking place in those villages.

70 7 e) Tools of Data Collection

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

74 8 f) Data Analysis

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

78 9 III.

79 10 Results and Discussions

80 11 Economic Implications of Wolaita Proverbs a) Scarcity of 81 Resources

82 As common to all other generations in the world, there is a scarcity of resources in Wolaita. Whenever people
83 get demanding situation in their interaction, they frequently use proverbs that imply the scarcity of resources to
84 strengthen their ideas and easily convince their interlocutors. For instance, they say "Abbaa pinttiya wozanay
85 de'ishin abee son ashees," "How much wise a person is, he/she can't go further in any activity/business without
86 his/her economic capacity". This proverb implies that resources; financial or material play a key role for the
87 accomplishment of any action in human life. On the other hand, this proverb also implies that the wisdom of an
88 individual can't work if it is not accompanied by his/her economic capacity.

89 With similar theme, Wolaitas also say "Ikka uuttee ikka guuttee!," "Is it enset and smaller in amount?". This
90 proverb is most frequently used when Wolaitas encounter the situation of handing (receiving) smaller amount or
91 number of any non-precious item. Here 'enset' is a food item in Wolaita which is not liked by majority when
92 it is presented merely cooked (not as its other processed food items: 'muchchoo', shenderaa, 'goddeeta'). By

93 similar talking, Wolaitas also say "Ixeetay gixetuwa garxxissees," "Scarcity enforces one to borrow unsuitable
94 clothe items". Both of these proverbs depict how much powerful scarcity is to fully close the door of one's choice
95 and give the proverbial meaning "Godaree namisettidi bari uawaa anhaa mees, "The hyena eats the carcass of
96 its father when it is in hunger" to mean one loses his/her usual positive quality when he/she become enforced by
97 scarcity.

98 There are also additional proverbs that imply the power of scarcity in closing the doors of choice. For instance,
99 "Saa'ay ixinni shareechchoy deeshaa mees" "When he/she encounters scarcity, the magician eats flesh of a goat".
100 This proverb indicates that there exists serious traditional law in Wolaita that bounds magicians not to eat flesh
101 of goat. However, if magicians face scarcity, they break their traditional law and eat flesh of goat. Similar to this,
102 Wolaitas also say "Sa'ay iitin sa'aappe maxeettees," "It is scarcity that makes one collect items of consumption
103 from garbage". This proverb is used when people get someone doing something without his/her choice to mean
104 one doesn't get any opportunity to differentiate good and bad when he/she is in scarcity.

105 Similar to the above proverbs, Wolaitas also use proverbs like "Koshay bashiyappe poonissees; saamoy shafiya
106 xunxxissees," "Hunger imposes one to eat the food with incomplete cooking process and to drink unclean water
107 from ground". Wolaitas proverbially reason out why one fails in the down trajectory of life without his/her choice
108 due to scarcity saying, "Qumi mal"o gidenna, namisi mal"o," "Delicious is not the food one enjoys rather it is
109 scarcity that makes any food delicious". Thus scarcity doesn't allow one to exercise the life style he/she chooses
110 rather it enforce him/her to run what is actually in hand.

111 Regarding the unavoidability and continuity of scarcity throughout human life, Wolaitas also have proverbs.
112 For instance, they say "Mishiriya gidin gimana giishin wodee wurees," "A woman can lose a chance of being
113 culturally respected by her property expecting total avoidance of scarcity". Wolaita people use this proverb when
114 they get a person (either male or female) trying to fulfill all his/her wants. That is why, one of the respondents
115 in face-to-face interview responded "We can never fulfill all we want even all in our life span as life is a process
116 coming up with different and better needs day-after-day".

117 The same respondent argued "When you get one food item, you couldn't have another food item to be eaten
118 with". This proverb implies that it is challenging for human being to fulfill all he/she wants at the same time.

119 In line with the above point, Wolaitas believe that scarcity reduces comforts (peace) of human mind when
120 thought critically. Thus they say "Yuushshi qoopin hiitta miyee yashshees," "When one thinks critically the
121 scarcity of resources, it frightens his/her life". This does not mean that Wolaitas frustrate and quit their effort to
122 change their economic life. Reversely, for the relevant effort needed to change one's economic life, they proverbially
123 argue "Shemppissiyaagee duufo," "One gets full rest when he/she dies," which is similar to the core economic
124 principle of the world, "Consistent and relevant effort is needed to survive in a competitive human world having
125 serious scarcity of resources".

126 Generally speaking, Wolaitas believe that scarcity is common to every nation in all corners of the glob and exert
127 their effort to handle it. They proverbially confirm that the way how they handle scarcity saying "Garttee gattees;
128 tal"ee ayssees" to mean "Borrowing from each other makes one to survive till his/her economic independence".
129 The implication is that due to scarce nature of resources, people of Wolaita help each other through borrowing
130 materials and money. According to one of the elders interviewed, borrowing materials and money from each
131 other and turning them back to the owner trustfully is a long-rooted culture in Wolaita. The elder suggests
132 "When people borrow from each other, it strengthens social cohesion among individuals in the community as
133 well as it reduces illegal acts of taking (stealing, robbing, cheating...) each other's properties". This is because,
134 proverbially the elder adds, "Issi kahuwa xayoy kaysuwawu efees" to mean "A person can commit an act of
135 stealing for oneround dinner".

136 **12 b) Unwise and Wise Use of Resources i. Unwise use of** 137 **resources**

138 As a general fact it needs wise use of economic resources as resources are scarce by their nature across the
139 nation (which is discussed in the above section). This is generally accepted major economic principle that
140 confirms better life is the result of wise use of economic resources. However, there occurs unwise use of economic
141 resources by some individuals or groups all over the world. This unwise use of economic resources, for the current
142 research, encompasses misconception of time as economic resource, procrastination and its consequences, losing
143 opportunities at hand, desire of life betterment without exerting effort, over utilization of resources, running life
144 being in credit and taking uncalculated risk. For all these kinds of situations, Wolaita people use proverbs during
145 their interactions.

146 Time is one of primary economic resources that everyone has gifted equally without any difference in share.
147 However, there is misconception and unwise use of time in Wolaita. For such unwise use, Wolaitas say, "Eeyya
148 asi gallassi zin'ees," "The idle sleeps at day time". This proverb has two major implications: first, it implies that
149 an idle person misses his/her bright and golden age of production without appropriate use of it. Secondly, it
150 implies that day is a bright time that people make use of it to run their business and should take rest at night
151 time. Wolaitas proverbially assert the consequence of such unwise use of time (bright and production age) saying,
152 "Gallasii utti pe'iday omarssi wuusawu bees," "The one passed day idle, go for stealing at night," which implies

12 B) UNWISE AND WISE USE OF RESOURCES I. UNWISE USE OF RESOURCES

153 that people joked over their bright and production age do different types of illegal acts at their time of old age
154 like stealing.

155 In line with wise use of time as an economic resource, Wolaitas proverbially advise those who commit
156 procrastination. They say, "Wontto maana giishin wori ayssees," "If one procrastinates life for tomorrow, he/she
157 misses it by death". This proverb has the implication of avoiding blindly saving in life; which is just as an
158 advice to manage each day's life with the resource at hand. Similarly, Wolaitas also say, "Beni mishiriya kawo
159 gelana gaydda mule geennan attawusu," "Expecting a king to marry her, a lady totally misses her marriage
160 opportunity". As similar to the proverb indicated above, this proverb has the implication of the unsuitable use
161 of resources (at hand) in its right time; which is the same in meaning to "Malaamo godaa ixidaaraa manaamo
162 godaappe shahaarawusu," "A woman refused to marry better husband at right time, becomes pregnant by a
163 layman at the end". We can alternatively use another proverb "Eqqada hemmettaydda minjjennaara yela zin'ada
164 mittaa mawusu," "A woman who hasn't saved resources before her delivery suffers a lot from starvation when
165 she is in bed by delivery".

166 For the consequence of procrastination, Wolaitas proverbially say, "Badhdheesan manddariday zerennan
167 attees," "One who go for long journey at the time of sowing, loses his/her chance of sowing". It is a proverb that
168 indicates time determines the end product of any activity. If one misses the use of time in its vivacity, he/she
169 loses his/her chance of success. In other words, this proverb implies time is an economic resource that needs
170 conscious exploitation. This is because the time used at its appropriate span of life is better than the time one
171 strictly uses at the end during its deadline. Arguing for this, Wolaitas say "Maallado maaxaan manddaridaagaa
172 qolchaaaway gakkenna," "An early journey using pack-horse is better than a delayed journey using fast horse"
173 which is similar to another proverb; "Azallay omarssi waaxxees," "The idle swifts at the deadline". Both of these
174 proverbs have the which reduces or avoids the worthless wafting at the time of old age.

175 In the proverbial advice through endemic wisdom, Wolaitas also discourage losing the chance of using resources
176 at hand. They say, "Geleshshoppe aadhdhidi shaafaa qociyay baawa shin bari kushe meecetti erenna," "Even
177 though monkeys are more exposed to rivers than anybody, they never wash their hands". Naturally monkeys
178 live at the shores of rivers, but they do not wash their hands. The same is true for some people who do not
179 exploit the resources that they are exposed to. Wolaitas count this kind of people as lazy proverbially saying,
180 "Eeyyiya agido zaakkoy de'ishin haatta uyawusu," "A lazy woman drinks water having the drink she prepared at
181 hand". The implication is lazy people are not conscious of resources in their hand and lose their chance of using
182 it. Similarly, in Wolaita there has been said, "Bukkayda bullattay, agaydda sammettay," "Why make your skin
183 tarnish and be thirsty having butter and water at your hand". The implication is that some people suffer from
184 starvation not mainly due to shortage of resources than unconscious use of what they have at hand.

185 Wolaitas believe that change in life is the result of exerting one's own significant effort. They have proverbs
186 for advising people living life for its sake without exerting any effort. They label such kind of people as ordinary
187 people and say, "Laafay laataa naagees," "Ordinary people wait for inheritance to fulfill their economic wellbeing".
188 The implication is that ordinary people do not exercise life by exerting effort for its betterment. However, life
189 needs exerting of effort even in its appropriate order. Wolaitas believe that the disorderly way of exerting effort
190 doesn't result in a successful life. That is why they proverbially say, "Azallay gadiya goyyennan kattaa dooriyossa
191 hiixxees," "Before sowing, an idle prepares storage for his/her grain". As alternative to this proverb, Wolaitas use
192 another proverb having similar meaning; namely "Goyyennan gootara essees," "An idle prepares storage for grain
193 before starting cultivation of his/her land". Both of the proverbs reveal the disorderly way of doing activities
194 which ends up with unsuccessful life.

195 On the other hand, Wolaitas do not encourage the over utilization of economic resources; beyond one's economic
196 capacity. From the wider sea of their endemic wisdom, they proverbially advise members of their community to
197 act economically based on one's actual affording capacity rather than imitating others (especially the rich ones).
198 Thus, they say, "Shodhdhe gaammuwadan xaaggana giiddi xuuqqes giida," "When trying to roar like a lion, a
199 frog becomes burst". This proverb mainly indicates the dangerous consequences of imitating riches (by poor)
200 in utilization of resources. Similarly, it has also been said (for the poor), "Bakkani baawa shin asho meennan
201 aqikke gees godare," "Without having a cent, a hyena plans to eat meat". This proverb, most of the time, is used
202 when one exaggerates his/her poor economic capacity and his/her interlocutor wants to re-bounce back the idea
203 oppositely.

204 In similar way of proverbial speech, Wolaitas also criticize those who do not adequately exploit their economic
205 capacity at the existing time. One of the proverbs they use for such kind of people is "Medhdhido miishshaa
206 bayzzidi kon"an miyobaappe ashsho," "It is a surprise when a potter sells materials she crafted and cooks with
207 broken jar". Instead of this proverb, Wolaitas also use "Bawu bukkada balaalatta shokkada uyawusu," "A milk
208 woman drinks watery-milk even though adequate amount of milk is in her hand". These proverbs demonstrate
209 the need to enjoy life with existing economic capacity at hand. For those who do not exercise life in such a
210 way, Wolaitas provide proverbial advice of, "Dirssa miizaa goday guttumaa maana gees, xon'a mirgguwa goday
211 usttannan mike gees," "A rich man having hundreds of cattle likes to consume resources in a saved manner, but
212 the poor exercises life reversely". These proverbs connote negative advice to both category of people.

213 With different dimension but in a similar scenario, Wolaitas proverbially discourage a family member (any
214 one) who tries to exploit resources beyond the economic capacity of the family. Thus, they say, "Aayeessi shayan
215 yegganawu baawa shin na'iya hiixxada uttawusu," "However the mother suffers from lack of clothes to cover her

216 bare body, the daughter puts down her extra clothes on the ground". Changeably, Wolaitas also use "Aayyiya
217 uniya oottawusu, na'iya caammaa shammawusu," "Being her mother an ordinary wage worker, the daughter buys
218 shoes of luxury". Both the proverbs indicate that, in Wolaita, parents give priority in economic utilization to
219 their children, but it has also a negative connotation of discouraging children trying to live beyond the economic
220 capacity of their families. In line with this theme, it has been also said, "Aawaassi miyoy baawa shin machchiya
221 menttiya yelawusu," "A wife gives birth to twins regardless of absolute shortage of food for consumption to the
222 family". This proverb implies the risk that a family should take for unplanned extension of family size.

223 It is also the case in Wolaita that some people aspire to enjoy the standard of life beyond their economic
224 competence. In such kind of encounters Wolaitas use proverbs like, "Uttiyoosi baynnaagee zin'iyooosi anee gees,"
225 "The one who doesn't have a seat requests a bed for laying down". The implication is to reveal ones exaggerated
226 desire to exercise life beyond his/her capacity of affording or accessing it. When similar situation occurs, Wolaitas
227 also use "Saalenay bayinnaraa, eerippanne qum"ees gaawusu," "A woman incapable of having less standard mat
228 worries the discomfort of tradition comfortable skin-rug", or alternatively say "Miizaa haarennaagee asho xallaa
229 maana gees," "A person doesn't have any cattle aspires to eat meat always", or "Bawu kutto marinne baynnaagee
230 baquluwa kooraa shammees," "A person buys a saddle of the mule without having a chick".

231 There are a number of proverbs having the same implication to "Uttiyoosi baynnaagee zin'iyooosi anee gees,"
232 "The one who doesn't have a seat requests a bed for laying down". Such the proverbs include "Ubba baynnaara
233 cum'u gini maana gawusu," "An absolutely poor woman says I don't like to eat tasteless food", "Cawaa qucciy
234 zanzzay baynnara alleeqanawu belecaa hamma gawusu," "The one who doesn't have a traditional soft to dry
235 out his/her sweating, worries for a traditional jewelry", "Ayko baynna manqqoy bootta eessaa wottayis gees,
236 "An absolutely poor says let's compete with an item of high quality white honey", "Baaranawu baynnaagee
237 gacoy xuuqqin coomana gees," "The one who has nothing to eat worries for eating much", "Bawu baynnaagee
238 lakkuwaagaa gannees," "The skinny finishes a drink full of a big jar". All of these proverbs depict the implication
239 of unreal-overexaggerated wish and talk of poor people; that are mocked or joked frequently by majority of
240 Wolaitas.

241 Furthermore, proverbially Wolaitas make fun of mere, water un-holding talks and acts of poor people beyond
242 their economic capacity. For instance, they say, "Bariyyo baynnaagee laappun basuwa maana gees," "A person
243 emaciated of starvation desires to eat seven times his/her current capacity", "Issi uuttee goday anggallay anee
244 gees," "A person having only one inset plant requests for the best product of it", "Issi miizzee goday shimppennan
245 usttikke gees," "A person having only one cow declares that he/she doesn't drink milk without its best quality".
246 All of the proverbs listed in this paragraph have the same implication of exercising life beyond one's existing
247 economic capacity which is not recommended in Wolaita and may result in economic crisis.

248 As mentioned in the above lesson of scarcity, there has been a long lived tradition of borrowing from each
249 other in Wolaita. This, the tradition of borrowing from each other in Wolaita, is rooted in the culture of
250 strong trustworthiness among people. However, Wolaitas discourage running of life having a credit (of money
251 or property) of some body. Proverbially they mock "Anzzay de'ishin ashuwa mees azallay," "An idle eats meat
252 (delicious food) being on credit of somebody". This proverb is similar in meaning to "Laafa naati bantta aawaa
253 biittaa bayzzidi ashuwa moosona," "Idle sons of a person sell their father's land and eat meat with such the
254 money". Both of the proverbs indicate that meat is a delicious food in Wolaita but not recommended to be eaten
255 having a credit of somebody. Besides, these proverbs also imply that credit is something given priority before
256 fulfilling other necessities in life.

257 Economically uncalculated way of taking risk is proverbially de-motivated in Wolaita. Thus Wolaitas say
258 "Daana dulliya wuraana afalawu qaaridi uttees," "One seats with a bare buttock for a short-lived clothes". This
259 proverb implies the meaning of calculating the benefit of any business before exerting whatever amount of effort
260 to run it. There are also other proverbs that affirm the same meaning. For instance, it has been said in Wolaita
261 "Boora kessena gadee boora worees," "A small acre of land below the price of an ox kills it," which promotes
262 giving priority to something worthier rather than blindly losing it for an item below its price. This the issue
263 of prioritizing is also reflected with proverbs like "Bollara gullottidi garssara kallottis," "One dresses well above
264 waist being bared below it," which is not supported by the endemic culture of Wolaita.

265 ii. Wise use of resources As has been explained in the above sections, resources are scarce by their very nature
266 and requires wise use. One of such the wise use of resources is the timeliness of accumulating assets. In Wolaita's
267 proverbial wisdom, it has been said that "Aaway de'ishin xee'a, away de'ishin woxxa," "Produce asset while your
268 father is alive and be proactive while the sun is lit". This proverb implies that to have a prosperous life in his/her
269 future, one should start accumulating asset when he/she is dependent of his/her parents. Proverbially, Wolaitas
270 present rationale why it is needed to start accumulating asset early in one's life. i.e., "Hirggay laattees," "The
271 one who thinks of his/her future life early, ends up with good life at the old age;" which is similar to "Maldduwa
272 qoraphphay mees," "One eats sorghum when he/she saves it" a proverb with a saving concept.

273 Proverbially, Wolaitas also advise members of the society to run economically appropriate life on the basis
274 of one's affording capacity. They say "Ba soon ba wolqqa keenaa hanettees," "One runs his/her economic life
275 on the basis of his/her affording capacity". This proverb, most of the time, is used to advise people who are
276 extravagant having their limited economic capacity. In other words, economic life of people in a given society
277 is too individual as everybody has different affording capacity. That is why Wolaitas say "Aawu bar penggiya
278 banan likkidi kessees" "One makes his/her door based on his/her height;" which is not exactly about the physical

13 C) SOURCES OF WEALTH

279 door that we use for our houses, rather it implies that how a person expends what he/she has on the basis of
280 his/her affording capacity.

281 On other hand, Wolaitas promote wise use of resources in terms of neglecting the tradition of boasting beyond
282 one's actual economic capacity and giving credit to any small job. For instance, it has been said "Karido kattay
283 kaho ayssees," "The food mocked too small becomes sufficient for supper". This proverb frequently used when
284 one denies to give credit to someone or something thinking that it is too small or too weak. Wolaitas perceive
285 such kind of small personalities/things as a key support at the baseline of one's economic success. That is why
286 they proverbially say "Aaddan amppidi dadan giqees," "Being dependent on magician, one bans his/her property
287 on thunder".

288 Taking the expected citizenship responsibilities of the a government is again another dimension of wise use
289 of resources in Wolaita. One of such the responsibilities is paying government tax on time. As support to this,
290 Wolaitas say "Giiriiddi gilqqay keha," "One who became poor paying government tax is better than those who
291 didn't do that and rich". In line with this, Wolaitas believe that it is a compulsory condition for a citizen to pay
292 a government tax. For un-fulfillment of such a condition, it has been proverbially advised in Wolaita "Kawossi
293 giidobaa Karen ayssa," "Make whatever belongs to a government out of a door". This proverb implies that
294 one should not make the combination of his/her legal property and what expected to be paid or provided to a
295 government; as a wise use of resources.

296 Giving a relevant credit to little resources as a foundation stone of one's economic life is considered as wise
297 use of resources. It is because everything starts from a scratch or something too little. In such cases, Wolaitas
298 proverbially say "Gusiya dorssee goday guppiya paraa shamnees," "Having ownership of a skinny sheep, one
299 can buy a powerful horse through time". Similarly it has been said in Wolaita "Saawenni santtidii geelaiyoo
300 ekkettees," "Being dependant on widow, one marries a girl after a time". Both of these proverbs imply that one
301 should give credit to something little or not that much significant at the foundation status of his/her economic life;
302 which leads him/her to the targeted prosperous life at the end. That is why Wolaitas say "Maallado maaxaanaa
303 toggidi omarssi odolchaa doorees," "One rides pack-horse at his early life but chooses among powerful horses
304 during his prosperity".

305 Wise utilization of resources also incorporates timely action for the production and making use of resources.
306 For instance, in Wolaita proverbially people say "Badalaa miya kanaa zeriidi woreettees," "A dog considered
307 enemy of unripe maize should be killed during the period of sowing". This proverb indicates that there needs
308 taking of timely action for maximum production of resources. In line with this, Wolaitas proverbially advise
309 that "Kaho katta maanaappe laaxa uutta maana," "It is better to eat tasteless food timely than eating very
310 delicious food after adequate time passed;" to show the importance of timeliness in resources' production and
311 consumption.

312 13 c) Sources of Wealth

313 In their long-lived culture, Wolaitas believe that wealth is a result of one's personal effort. They say "Aawu
314 qaxxin baallee qaaxxees," "When one empowers him/herself to be strong, others become mobilized to support
315 him/her". This proverb depicts the value of selfempowerment for having one's intended prosperity in his/her
316 economic life. Similarly there has been said in Wolaita "Duunnee ottin mokkees, ogee hemettin aadhhees," "A
317 hard work makes a hill to produce, a quick walk makes a journey too short". This proverb has a similar meaning to
318 "Daarinchchaa oottay dawullan makes," "One who exerts maximum effort by hard working, gets much production
319 from a small plot of land;" hence can be used alternatively in a demanding situation of interaction. With the
320 same theme, to emphasis the importance of hard working for prosperity, Wolaitas say "Goyyiday tiyaa mees;
321 shukkiday tiriya mees," "A hard working farmer eats unripe cereals, a butcher with similar quality eats liver".

322 On the other hand, people in Wolaita give significant credit to effective exploitation of one's effort at the age
323 of production thinking that it has a prior value for unproductive life at the old age. The say "Gallassi maxido
324 sumbburaa omarssi kuucci baareettees," "The chick-pea collected at day time can be eaten at night".

325 Alternatively, Wolaitas say "Awan oottennay aginan wuuqees," "The one who doesn't work at day time goes
326 for stealing at night". Both of the proverbs indicate the importance of effective exploitation of one's effort at
327 the age of production to have excellent life at the old age. Proverbially Wolaitas rationalize that even a little
328 effort exerted at the age of production has its own impact on ones economic success. i.e., "Iso woraynne kushe
329 singgees," "Let aside others, the one who killed a bug smells his/her hand".

330 Wolaitas do not allow their community members to run life without working. As to them, those who do
331 not work hard can encounter a problems of hunger and are counted as thieves. Thus, Wolaitas say, "Oottay
332 dewuzzees uttay laawwees," "The one who works hard becomes satisfied in life and his/her opposite suffers a lot
333 from hunger;" which may lead the idle to start committing an act of stealing. That is why Wolaitas generalize
334 the non-working idles as thieves saying "Oottenna uri kayso," "The one who doesn't work is labeled as a thief".
335 This proverb reflects the existence of strong and long-lived working culture in Wolaita which may be a guarantee
336 to the economic success of one's life at the old age as has been commented in proverbial wisdom of Wolaita as
337 "Oottobay omarssi otorsees," "Well exerted effort in hard working makes one proud at his/her old age".

338 For successful production and accumulation of wealth, Wolaitas also believe that it needs cooperative or
339 united hands. That is why they proverbially elucidate "Coray cuchchidi wonggiriya kuntees," "However small
340 they contribute, a mass makes much output". This proverb implies that a united hand is a key to produce much.

341 It is a long-lived culture that Wolaitas use different types of grouping for their effective production. The grouping
342 may include grouping for sowing, for harvesting, for collecting, for constructing house... To show ineffectiveness
343 of uncooperative works, Wolaitas say "Issoy ootti pe'o shooqaappe coray kanttosay keha," "A garden crossed by
344 mass is better than the one cultivated by an individual".

345 On the other hand, Wolaitas also give a significant value to cleansing credit as a pre-condition to be wealthy.
346 Here the point is one cannot be wealthy in reality having somebody's or any institutions' credit on him/her.
347 Thus Wolaitas proverbially advise "Acoy baynna manqqoy durre," "A poor person who is free from any credit
348 is a wealthy person". Alternatively Wolaitas use "Acoy baynna manqqoyne hargge baynna gilqqay issuwa," "A
349 poor person who is free from any credit and a slim person who is free from any disease are the same". Both of
350 these proverbs reflect the meaning of purity of credit is a key condition of richness.

351 Exerting of a relevant effort in its appropriate condition is also considered as the source of wealth in Wolaita;
352 as it has been said "Zokkoy ixxin ootay uloy ixxin kalles," "The one who works hard satisfies his/her needs".
353 This proverb reflects the meaning that hard working is a key way to satisfy one's needs. Similarly, Wolaitas
354 say "Paaliiddaa kafiyaa donna fittiinni uttidda kafiyaa uluwaa fittawussu," "The bird that exerted some effort
355 searching of its food itches its beak, but the idle one itches its stomach;" to mean exerting certain effort is a must
356 to get something for one's consumption. Besides, Wolaitas give credit to the relevance of the effort exerted for a
357 given activity saying that "Garaa wodhdhay danggarssa worees," "The one who went to forest area for hunting
358 kills an elephant;" as elephants always live in forest areas.

359 14 d) Economic Inequality among People

360 It is obviously known that there exists economic inequality among people in the whole globe. The ground reality
361 in Wolaita is not different. Even there is a wide economic gap among people in Wolaita. Confirming this,
362 Wolaitas proverbially say "Asi ubbi lagge shin dummaayiyay miishsha," "All human beings are equal, but what
363 makes them different is their economic status". This difference makes people either suffer from shortage of their
364 needs or overact due to excess of what they need. In this regard, Wolaitas say "Issuwa son shendderay pores;
365 issuwa son shemppoy pores," "One suffers a lot from shortage of his/her basic necessities, another suffers a lot
366 from the reverse". This proverb indicates that, in Wolaita, there exists the two extremely positioned people in
367 their economic status.

368 As to the Wolaitas proverbial wisdom, people run their lives based on their economic status. To this end,
369 Wolaitas say "Siine kafiyaa ba qefiyan ankkooyka ba qefiyan pallees," "Either big or small, a bird flies with its own
370 wings". The interpretation of this proverb has directly similar meaning to another Wolaita proverb "De'iyoogee
371 siidhdhidi paahiyo wode, manqqoy mela xanttaa baressesii," "A wealthy person feeds his/her child excess of its
372 need, but a poor one makes his/her child rely on the breast feeding". In Wolaita, both of the proverbs are used
373 when advising individuals to run his/her life according to his/her current economic capacity that can promote
374 prosperity in his/her future life.

375 Wolaitas proverbially mock over those running their lives beyond their current economic (affording) capacity.
376 For instance, they say "Doona duree miishshaa duriya karees," "One who is rich in oratory belittles the person who
377 is rich in property". In reality the reverse may be true and Wolaitas elucidate such kind of situation saying "Achchi
378 baynnaara achchay de'iyooro saxxa bessawusu," "The one without teeth looks down and shows how to bite its
379 counterpart having teeth". This proverb depicts the meaning of the irrelevant and not accepted overconfidence
380 of poor over the riches in their economic status and can be replaced by another proverb having similar meaning.
381 i.e., "Curqaayiya worqqayiyawo karawusu," "The one who dressed well on clothes belittles another who is well
382 dressed on jewelry". Three of the proverbs in this paragraph provides lifestyle-shaping advice to those who act
383 reversely to their capacity.

384 In Wolaita there has been a custom of coupling partners for marriage solely based on the similar social strata;
385 giving less attention to the existing economic inequality. In other words, Wolaitas do not allow their daughters
386 to marry a man from the lower social background regardless of his economic prosperity. Thus, when marriage
387 relation request comes from the lower social background to the higher one, they say "Eceree goobidi gawaraa
388 nayiyo oychchees," "When a mouse becomes economically powerful, it requests the daughter of a cat to marry".
389 This proverb reflects the power of economic success on promoting people from socially lower strata in wishing to
390 make marriage relations with their supreme counterparts. Alternative to this proverb, Wolaitas also say "Eceree
391 kallidi asaara bollotanawu qaaqqatees," "When a mouse becomes overconfident by its prosperity, it wishes to
392 make marriage relations with a human being". Both of these proverbs reflect the existing economic inequality
393 among people in Wolaita regardless of their social capital in the community.

394 In Wolaita, there also has been a persistent mocking of overconfident poor in certain interactional situations
395 when the poor act beyond their existing economic capacity. Wolaitas say "Kanay asaa qulliyawu giyaa gelees,"
396 "A dog comes to market thinking that it is equal to human being". Most of the time, this proverb has been
397 addressed by riches to poor which connotes the internal negative meaning of representing poor with dogs when
398 they try to do certain activities beyond their existing economic capacity in front of riches. Similarly, it has been
399 also said "Kanay asaa qulliyawu dulliyan uttees," "Imitating human beings, a dog sits down using its buttock".
400 As to Wolaitas, this kind of offense from rich people to poor ones is due to the egoistic and unethical thinking of
401 rich people as if they are doers of everything using their money. That is why Wolaitas proverbially say "Kallida
402 uri namissetidabaa erenna," "The rich people do not understand the problems of poor ones".

403 In line with what has been discussed in the above paragraph, people of Wolaita also deny to offer proper care
404 and attention for their poor counterparts. Thus, Wolaitas proverbially say "Hiyyeesay cooyiiddi barkka bari tiara
405 oyqqees," "A poor suffers a lot treating him/herself when vomiting". This proverb shows that people of Wolaita
406 maltreat poor people when they are in need of support from others. Similarly, it has been said "Manqqoy manddi
407 shin dure mi kallees," "When a poor wishes of change in his/her economic life, the rich satisfies his/her overall
408 needs". This proverb shows that the riches do not care about their poor counterparts when the poor are striving
409 for their economic success. However, naturally it needs the adequate support of riches to make the poor to be
410 successful in their economic lives.

411 15 IV. Conclusions and Recommendations a) Conclusions

412 Based on the analysis and discussions of Wolaita proverbs for their economic implications, the following
413 conclusions have been reached: ? Wolaita proverbs embody different domains of economic realm of life as a
414 form of indigenous wisdom of Wolaita people. ? The economic realm of life embodied in Wolaita proverbs
415 include scarcity of resources and how Wolaitas manage it, unwise and wise use of resources, sources of wealth and
416 economic inequality among people.

417 16 b) Recommendations

418 Based on the analysis and interpretation of Wolaita proverbs and conclusions made above, the following
419 recommendations are forwarded: ? There should be deep studies that promote the frequent use of Wolaita
420 proverbs reflecting the economic facet of life in all adequate contexts of interaction. ? Awareness enhancement
421 training should be given for the younger generations of Wolaita for effective use of proverbs in the proper
422 interactional situations. ? Proverbs should be made as part of language curriculum in all levels of education. ?
423 Wolaita proverbs should be maintained to serve the society as vehicles of transferring indigenous wisdom to the
424 next generations. ¹

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