

# Oromo Indigenous Parental Values, Practices and Child Behavioural Outcomes

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## Abstract

*Oromo indigenous parenting practices have a significant role in influencing children's behaviour and subsequent personality development. The main objective of this study is to investigate the role of Oromo Indigenous Parental Values, Practices, on Child Behavioural Outcomes. The study investigates the characteristics of Oromo Indigenous Parenting (parental values and practices) and their impact on child behaviour. The research follows qualitative approach. Data were qualitatively collected and organized from primary sources through interview and Focus Group discussion. Finding shows that in Oromo culture, parenting is not solely the responsibility of the biological family; it also involves extended family members, neighbours, and the community. Parents desire for their children to be confident, cooperative, socially conscious, and self-controlled. Children are encouraged to participate in age-appropriate activities and are expected to be disciplined. 'Safuu' disciplines and protects children from exploitation, forced labor, and physical punishment, among other things. As a result, Oromo people's child-rearing approaches are supportive rather than punitive. There are several indigenous knowledge practices within family to support positive parenting, promote children's physical, social and cognitive development. For instance, folktales like *diraamaa ijoollee* and *durdurii* (children's folktales), *mammaaksa* (proverbs), *Hibboo* (riddles), and *Hibboonteeete* all contribute to the development of parental skills and behaviors. Interventions are needed to preserve and promote the Oromo positive parenting values and practices.*

**Keywords:** Parenting practices; values; child behavioural outcomes

## Introduction

'Parenting' can be referred to as activities aimed at ensuring the survival and development of children. It is the process of raising and educating a child from birth to adulthood, taking into account the physical, emotional, social, and cognitive capacities of the child. Throughout life time, parenting is the process of encouraging and supporting a person's survival and development (Martin, 2000). Hence, parenting is a lifetime interaction between children, parents, other family members and the communities.

Though the notion of African Parenting has been ignored in the past, professionals are now

working hard to rejuvenate it. Dependency, expectations, substantial community involvement, extended family membership, sibling interdependence where the old guide and rear the young, and the involvement of neighbours in child upbringing are all characteristics of parenting in Africa. Interdependence and cooperation are major elements of an African lifestyle that reflect an African worldview as holistic, according to several reviews of African literature (Tefera, 2008; Nobles, 1978; White and Parham, 1990). As a result, parenting in Africa is not solely the job of individual parents; it is also a social, moral, and spiritual task of broader society. African Parenting has a distinct purpose of instilling in children a sense of responsibility,

emotional intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, and social intelligence.

One of the prototypes of African parenting is the extended family, which provides emotional needs, economic, social, and psychological security to all connected individuals. Similarly, Oromo Indigenous parenting entails children's involvement in an extended family, where they develop a strong sense of social obligation, as well as respect, responsibility, and support. The Oromo ethnic group is indigenous to Ethiopia's Oromia region and some areas of northern Kenya. They speak the Oromo language, also known as Afaan Oromoo, which is a member of the Cushitic branch of the Afroasiatic language family. Oromo is one of Ethiopia's largest ethnic groups in Ethiopia. The Gadaa system was historically the main system of government employed by the Oromo people.

In Oromo society, parenting is defined by interdependence, cooperation, respect, and hard effort among family members. For example, elder siblings may train younger siblings, and younger siblings may train older siblings. The parenting process involves extended families and communities. The entire community is responsible for the marriage process and child-rearing activities. This reveals that parenting begins in childhood and continues throughout life for the Oromo of Ethiopia.

The Oromo have indigenous societal norms that support positive parenting. Age-segregated respect for elderly citizens is a cross-cutting value asset shared by all Ethiopians. For instance, it is a norm in society that when family members debate anything, the oldest person normally speaks first, followed by the next in order in the family. When it is their turn, children are also permitted to express themselves. This is a societal value that has existed in societies for a long time.

The Oromo social values have been degraded due to a variety of circumstances. Poverty and exposure to Western culture are the most conspicuous among these issues. It has been observed that values such as patience and respect are being lost particularly among diverse sections of Ethiopian youth. Ethnic

prejudices, hostility, and the use of foul language are replacing love among neighbors. Thus, to counteract the destructive values, it is imperative to revitalize indigenous parenting that enhances harmony and respect among individuals through investigating the Oromo indigenous parenting (Parental values, practices) and its role in child behavioural outcomes.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Oromo indigenous cultures have been eroded because of different factors. Currently, in different settings such as in schools, community and the family the number of children who are not exhibiting respectful behaviour and not knowing '*safuu*' (Oromo morality) are increasing. According to Pence & Nsamenang (2008), the diversity of child and parent contexts was being steadily eroded. Globally, children are increasingly homogenous and western-driven with a tone of fabricating a "global child", a "global parent" and "global parenting. Thus, promoting indigenous parental values and activities helps individuals promote social and academic intelligence. Super and Hrkness (2008); Weisner (1997) indicated that African parents promote social intelligence. Nsamenang, (1992) also discussed that Community parenting in Africa helps the child develops a sense of responsibility through gradual engagements in work from early in life (e.g. older children serve as mentors for younger ones.

Weakening of Oromo parental values and activities may lead to producing generation/children who are disobedient, disrespectful of rules, untrustworthy, non-compassionate, immoral, non-religious, and less hard workers who, rather than being solutions, become parts of the different social and political problems that the country is currently facing. Preserving and using indigenous Oromo positive parenting practices could contribute to fostering positive behaviours in children and lay a foundation for societal values for collaboration, peaceful coexistence, stability and development. Thus, this research intended to examine the

characteristics of Oromo indigenous parenting (parental values and practices), and investigate the role of Oromo indigenous parenting (Parental values, practices) in child behavioural outcomes.

## Methods

The study used a qualitative research approach and described the characteristics of Oromo Indigenous parenting (parental values, practices) and their role in children's behavioural outcomes. For this purpose, three community elders from Ambo town, and two academics (one from Ambo University and the other from Addis Ababa University), who have records for studying the Oromo indigenous childcare practices, were interviewed as primary informants for the study. In addition, 24 people were chosen from Ambo town for Focus Group Discussion (FGD) utilizing purposive sampling to ensure that the most resourceful people were included. Accordingly, three FGD with 8 members were carried out. These participants were selected based on their experience in raising children and believed to have a good knowledge about Oromo parenting. Secondary data, on the other hand, was acquired from both published and unpublished sources. The role of Oromo Indigenous parenting (parental values, practices) and its role in child behaviour outcomes were described, interpreted, and understood using thematic analysis. Thus, the qualitative data were coded, analysed and categorized into themes to produce a final report.

## Results and discussions

In this part the organized data were presented and discussed.

### Oromo Indigenous Parental Values and Practices

#### Family Establishment: Marriage Practices and Values

Parenting in Oromo society begins with the formation of a family. One of the most

important practices in Oromo culture is marriage, which serves as the foundation for family formation. Oromo people talk about three things that are added to or taken away from an individual in a lifetime. These are birth, marriage, and death. Marriage is highly regarded and respected in Oromo culture, with mothers, fathers, and relatives preparing their children for marriage in order to form a stable family. Thus, Oromo indigenous parenting prepares the children for marriage which in turn plays a great role in forming successful parenting. Concerning this issue, an informant elder living in Ambo town pointed out that:

*"A family does not form overnight; rather, it takes time for parents to counsel their children on marriage at a young age. They teach their children how to deal with their marriages and how to coexist with their partners. The Oromo mother gives her daughter instructions on how to start a healthy family, engage with her husband, respect his parents, and conserve resources, among other things. Safuu is taught to youngsters by their mothers and fathers (Oromo Morality). Parents also provide their son guidance on a variety of topics. A son is supposed to uphold his father's name by honoring his family, working hard, adhering to community standards and beliefs (learning Safuu, for example), and so on." Ilmi utubaa Abbaa qabata," an Oromo proverb says, "means son will take over father's livelihood."*

In Oromo culture families prepare their children for marriage because marriage holds a special place in the hearts of Oromo people, as it is a matter of survival. Marriage in Oromo society involves not only the interaction of spouses and their parents but also the interaction of relatives and clans on both sides. The father and mother of the bride will bless them while the bride and groom hold the glass together and say *walitti horaa bulaa*, which means have children, wealth, and all necessities of life and live together, according to Beyene and Tolera, 2006, in Practices of marriage among the Gidda, Wollega Oromo. *Garaan keessanii fi afaan keessan tokko haata'u*: be of the same mentality and attitude. The community also plays its part in preparing children for marriage. Marriage, according to

the Oromo people, is unavoidable for everyone and respected event. The Oromo proverb "*Duutii fi fuuti hin oolu*" backs this up, meaning: Death and marriage are inevitable events.

Parents prepare their children for marriage to occur with the permission of both the girl and the male rather than by force. Instead of arranging marriages for their offspring, the Oromo negotiate. During this negotiation, the boy's family requests that the girl's family give her to their son. Giving the daughter away to a man she does not wish to marry is 'Safuu' (immoral) throughout the marriage process. As the boy approaches marriageable age, his relatives and families, as well as the boy himself, look for girls for him. In relation to this informant, the elder from Ambo town stated:

*"In the past, when an Oromo male would reach marriageable age, he and his parents used to speak with relatives to choose a suitable bride.*

*They look for a girl who respects 'Safuu', values and norms, and comes from a large family. When they find a girl who meets the boy's requirements, they set up a meeting where they communicate and agree to marry. Following the girls' and boys' agreement to marry, the boy informs his parents to send elders with fresh grass and a note to the girl's family. The family of the girl requests that they be given additional time to respond to their request. The girl's family then inquires if she knows him and agrees to marry him."*

The Oromo parenting practices have shaped and guided the indigenous Gada system. The Gada system regulates political stability, economic progress, social activities, cultural obligations, moral responsibility, and the society's ideology of religious order. Individual duties and obligations are recognized under this system. *Gada* plays a prominent role in keeping social order and maintaining positive family functioning through the elimination of social evil and unfairness. The *Gada* system requires each family member and all society members to fulfil their obligations and enjoy privileges at the appropriate times. Girls of three *Gadaa* periods (twenty-four years old) and males of

four *Gadaa* periods and higher (over 32 years) would be allowed to marry under the 'rakoo' (marriage rule). Because they were serving in the military, males from the three *Gadaa* periods would not be allowed to marry or have children. This is due to the worry that if they died in battle, their family would be put in jeopardy (Legesse, 1973). This demonstrates that the Oromo people are aware of and can predict the impact of today's decisions on future generations.

Today, especially in urban areas, parents' roles and Gada's guidance are declining and are not in existence. Individuals themselves inform their parents, as well as the church or mosque, once they choose someone to marry, especially in urban areas.

For the Oromo adolescent boy or girl, having sexual intercourse before marriage is outlawed and prohibited. Rape and drinking addiction were also strictly prohibited. Before getting married, a lady should not lose her virginity. For her parents and community, the lady's virginity is a source of pride. She and her family will be shunned in the community if she loses her virginity before marriage. Thus, families safeguard and counsel their children to instil respect for 'Safuu', refrain from having sexual relations before marriage, refrain from harming others or raping other girls, and refrain from using drugs.

### **Parental Values of bearing children**

Parenting practices, goals, roles, and behaviours that parents value in their children are socially constructed rather than universal. Children's future development is influenced by their cultural, social, environmental, and physical environments. In Oromo Culture, children and childbirth are highly appreciated. Oromo people felt that marrying a woman was primarily to have a child and extend the family's existence in the future. Bearing offspring was highly treasured by the Oromo people, and it might be considered one of the most significant aspects of human life. According to Legesse (1973), the Borana woman desires children more than anything else in the world. Women who are capable of

bearing children are valued and respected in society. This belief was described in the Oromo proverb as follows:

*Waaqaroobuu fi dubartii deessuraa waa argatu:* A wet sky and a fertile lady provide something.

People in Oromo culture pay all necessary expenses to nurture their offspring. In Oromo, there is a saying that states, "*Dhalaa fi qoonqootu saree nama godha,*" which means "It is a baby and a throat that makes you a dog." The proverb demonstrates that parents are extremely concerned about their children and will go to any distance to raise them. Parents are having a difficult time raising their children.

People also feel that the sacrifices they make today will pay off in the future. '*Ilmoon itti cabanii guddisan cabaa nama baasti*' is an Oromo saying, which means that "A child who is raised with scarifies brings out the broken". Children, according to the saying, are the future's hope. As a result, in order to be serviced in the future, everyone should raise the child by giving them what they require. People believe that properly protecting and nurturing a child will lead to them being a great person in the future and bringing benefits to the family and community. In Oromo society, this commitment is quite strong.

Having a large family is regarded as a source of pride.

In Oromo, infertile women ('*maseena*') practice *gudifacha* (adoption) to deal with the challenges that arise with infertility. Thus, *Gudifacha* (adoption) is a well-known Oromo practice for promoting positive parenting. Marriage and family formation were likewise considered to be God's work by the Oromo people. Waaqaa provides fertile ladies and their children (God). Having a large family is considered a blessing. The Oromo people say: *Niitii deessuu fi qalbiin kennaa Waaqati*, which translates to: God's gifts are a fruitful bride and a psyche. One informant has stated:

*"Bearing children is seen as a blessing in Oromo culture; no one can have a kid without the assistance of God. The Oromo people want to have a large family. People who have numerous children and a large family would get social stability, economic gain, and dignity, among other things."*

Children are the primary source of economic, social, and physical support in Oromo society. Hence, the Oromo women pray to *Waaqaa* (God) for a son. Belay Tefera and Dawit Solomon (2015) discussed that among Christian Ethiopian dads in Addis Ababa and Nashville, USA, the functional worth of children (psychological, social, and economic) was one of the reasons for childbearing. As a result, the Oromo people place a high emphasis on having a large number of sons. Folktales among the Oromo emphasize the value of having many sons. For example, the following "*geerarsaa*" (an Oromo folktale) expresses the problem of having too few boys.

<i>Bara boqqoolloon bade :</i>	<i>The year the maize disappear</i>
<i>Ijoollee fi sareetu bade :</i>	Children and dogs have ruined
<i>Bara caamni dheerate:</i>	When a drought lasts for a long time
<i>Dullootaafi jabbiitu badee:</i>	<i>The old and the jackals are gone</i>
<i>Bara waraannihammaate:</i>	<i>During the worst of the war</i>
<i>Hadha ilma tokkootu bade:</i>	<i>The mother of a son is missing</i>
<i>Haati mucaa tokkittii:</i>	<i>A mother with a single son</i>

*Gaafa du'aa fokkifti. :*

*She's ugly when she dies.*

The presence of a family in Oromo society is seen to play an important role in child-rearing. Regardless of their socioeconomic situation, Oromo people believe that raising children in the family is the best option. *'Hadha dhabuu mannaa, haadha dhabduu wayyaa,'* according to an Oromo saying, "having a destitute mother is better than not having a mother at all." Another saying states, *"Ijoollee fi barcumni abbaa jalatti tolti,"* which translates to "Children and chair look good with the owner." Children require parental support and care, according to this saying. This is backed up by proponents of family-based child intervention, who highlight the significance of supporting and assisting children through their parents.

Family members play an important role in socializing their children to ensure their future success. Parental behaviour can have a significant impact on their children's future outcomes. For instance, when a young man wishes to marry a girl, he should take into account her entire family's qualities and behaviours. According to an Oromo saying, *"Haadha ilaalii intala fuudhi,"* one should marry the daughter after examining the mother.

### **Parental training in child-rearing**

Parents train their children to form successful parents in the future and competent individuals. For instance, mothers counsel and train their daughters to become skilled wives with self-confidence to lead their family life when married.

In the past, girls are often trained for inside duties (firewood, caring for younger siblings, fetching water, and assisting moms in the kitchen) whereas boys are prepared for outdoor activities (herding cattle and helping fathers with farming activities). Currently, the community, particularly in towns, is not supportive of this trend. According to one female FGD participant;

*"In the past, when boys were observed doing domestic chores like cooking or assisting their mothers in the kitchen,*

*others would have laughed at them. This trend is currently changing; for example, when I am exhausted, both my son and husband help me."*

Even though child-rearing tasks and household chores remained gendered and traditionally defined in the past (Abera, 2014), the pattern is currently shifting. People are considering the importance of gender equality in all activities and want to raise their children in such a way. According to one FGD participant;

*"In the past, and still today in rural areas, men did not consider themselves as they perform domestic activities such as assisting their wives in the kitchen, caring for their children, and cleaning. They believe they are only involved in outdoor activities. Both husband and wife assist each other in towns, especially among educated people. For example, my husband and I both work for the government, and he is always willing to assist me with household activities such as caring for and feeding our child, as well as completing unfinished chores. However, there are other activities that I do on my own. I want both daughters and son in such a manner; it enhances a sense of cohesion and love among family members".*

Hence, the value that people place on both girls and boys is equal. In reality, in the past, boys were given higher attention than girls. In relation to this issue, an informed elder added that;

*"In the past, sons were favoured over girls for a variety of reasons, including generational transmission, family reproduction through marriage, protecting his father's property, and inheriting family wealth, and so on... But, currently, things are changing; children are in school, and they have all left home to work. In*

*addition, the government announces that both men and women have an equal right to inherit their family's riches."*

### **Parenting as a collective family and community responsibility**

Parents' approaches to shaping their children's development vary by culture. Cultural context influences parental values, activities, and socialization goals for their children. Religion, age, gender, and place of residence all have an impact on how children live and grow up in Ethiopia (Tamene, 2008). Parental perspectives, expectations, and parental functioning are all influenced by culture (Tamminen, 2006). As a result, various studies divide our society into two wide and rigid parenting groups/cultures: (Individualistic/Independent/Western Vs. Collectivist/interdependent/non-western). The way these groups are seen varies by culture, and what is good in one community may be considered maladaptive in another. Most non-Western cultures, including Ethiopian parenting activities, that employ authoritarian parenting as the normative for rearing their children and promoting optimal development are considered group oriented since individuals are taught to cooperate with the bigger unit (family, community, country).

Parenting activities are culturally appropriate activities that include providing for a child's physical needs, protecting them from harm, and teaching them skills and cultural values. Parental activity to socialize children in Oromo society is multidirectional rather than solely the responsibility of biological parents. As a result, child-rearing activities involve not just biological family members, but also extended family members, relatives, and the community.

As a result, it takes a village to raise a child. In this process parental values; storytelling, folklore, and oral stories helped families and communities teach their children more about the real world. . Parents, friends, and communities have a critical role in nurturing and assisting youngsters to discover their hidden wealth, according to the report. Thus,

every parent and community member bears responsibility for creating a cohesive family based on moral values.

Within the Oromo family structure, there is a division of work among family members based on personal qualities such as talents, gender, age, mental health, and knowledge/wisdom, with one family member responsible for a certain set of responsibilities. In Oromo culture, for example, each family member has distinct tasks and obligations that are determined by the leader.

Oral traditions in Oromo culture assist parents in guiding their children, providing proper control mechanisms, and assisting each family member in performing culturally appropriate actions that are expected of them. Even the implications of poor parental behaviour on subsequent development are described in folktales and proverbs. For example, the Oromo say, "*Intallii haati jajju hin heerumtu,*" which translates to "girls who are always prized by her mother cannot get married." This suggested that permissive parenting can result in subsequent societal problems at individual and societal levels.

### **Oromo Parenting and Child activity**

Children in Oromo culture participate in a variety of activities. Some of the works are gendered in some way. Children are expected to assist with minor household duties and the care of goats and sheep from an early age. Children are expected to look after the cattle as they grow older, as well as assist with farm chores like planting corn and harvesting. Children are also responsible for collecting firewood and water, assisting with cooking and other home chores, and looking after siblings.

Children do not complain about their involvement in various activities; rather, they regard it as a pleasurable activity and an important element of their lives; they regard work as a vital component of their lives and social relationships. Oromo children are currently involved in a variety of activities. They work for their families as well as for themselves. Some youngsters work to support

their own expenses (e.g., educational and clothing fees). Children enjoy participating in various activities and carrying out their obligations.

### **Oromo Indigenous disciplining children**

Parental guidance, sometimes known as discipline, is an important aspect of parenting. Parents want their children to be self-assured, socially responsible, self-controlled, and cooperative. Children in Oromo culture are raised to know 'Safuu' (Oromo Morality) and to support their families and communities. Disciplining a child in Oromo culture is done verbally and/or psychologically rather than physically. Physically punishing children is *safuu* (morally wrong). *Safuu* forbids parents from physically punishing their children. "Oromo people appear to be able to discipline their children using verbal admonitions, threats, and withholding subtler psychological benefits to which the children are accustomed (Legesse, 1973). As a result, *Safuu* disciplines and protects children from exploitation, forced labor, and physical punishment, among other things. As a result, Oromo people's child-rearing approaches are supportive rather than punitive.

Folktales such as *diraamaa ijoollee* and *durdurii* (children's folktales), *mammaaks* (proverbs), *Geerarsa*, *weedduu*, and others are used to pass on indigenous knowledge that promotes parental skills and functions while reducing maladaptive behaviours from generation to generation. Oromo parents teach their children appropriate behaviour, apply social pressure, and exercise social control in order to maintain social stability in general and excellent parenting in particular, using their indigenous wisdom.

### **The function of *Safuu* to foster good parenting**

Oromo people have a holistic and relational worldview that helps them grasp what is wrong and right. The Oromo people's moral code is called *Safuu*, and it is founded on the concepts of distance and respect for all things (Alamayo,

2015). The Oromo show respect for one another and all living things. Between parents and children, as well as between older and younger brothers and sisters, there is *safuu*. Between humans and animals, as well as between humans and plants, there is *safuu*. The Oromo people respect each other. This is a two-way regard in which the younger respects the elders, and children respect their parents and vice versa. Both the father and the mother have mutual respect for their children. Families who do not respect one another are families who do not know of *safuu*. *Safuu* also plays an important role in the functioning of the family by encouraging the husband and wife to stay faithful and listen to each other. They are seen to be breaking *safuu*, or the moral norm, if they oppose and refuse to take advice from each other (Kelbessa, 2005). Thus, *safuu* (Oromo morality) plays an important role in fostering good parenting and disciplining children.

The Oromo society places a high value on respecting and protecting children and women. Failure to protect any child from danger (not just his or her own) is also *safuu* (immoral). A man who does not appreciate a woman with a *siiqee* (Stick) does not understand *safuu* (immoral). If the women stand between the battling parties holding *siiqee*, they will immediately stop fighting; otherwise, it will be *safuu* (immoral). During wartime, the Oromo do not consider their enemies' women and children as adversaries. They say '*Ijoollee fi dubartiin diinummaa hin qabdu*.' This means that women and children are not enemies. During a conflict, it is *safuu* (immoral) to attack women and children.

Generally, the purposes of '*safuu*' (oromo morals) are varied. '*Safuu*' regulates the Oromo world by regulating people's activities (Østebø, 2009). Without *safuu*, we can't imagine Oromo society. When they eat and drink, or when they attend a wedding, they talk about *Safuu*. The *Gadaa* system's laws are formed on *Safuu*'s essential principles. It is impossible to discuss Oromo religion, political system, or social structure without including *Safuu*. The parenting process is shaped and guided by *Safuu* (Abera, 2014). Therefore, *safuu* can direct family functioning and build societal well-being.



## **Oromo Indigenous oral traditions in promoting positive parenting**

The Oromo people have a rich oral tradition through which they make sense of their surroundings and pass along knowledge to their children. Folktales are a device and resource for children in Oromo culture, as well as an instrument for adults to teach and approve social norms and culturally appropriate behaviours.

Oromo parents use proverbs (makmaaksa), sayings (jechama), riddles (hiibboo), folksongs (sirbaaadaa), nursery rhymes (urursaa), religious songs (faaruamantii), and fable stories (oduu durii) to teach culturally appropriate behaviour, communicate their beliefs about how a child should be reared, and educate their children. Through maintaining family stability and socializing children, Oromo folklore has a significant role in promoting effective parenting and social stability. They are used to warn individuals, give counselling, teach morality, and guide people to follow prescribed societal values, mores or ideals. They play important roles in educating and guiding children, encouraging good behaviour and discouraging negative behaviour, fostering social conformity, promoting moral purity, and enhancing cultural belongingness, all of which contribute to healthy parenting.

Everyone does not play Oromo folklore at the same time. For example, among the various forms of folklore, Oromo youngsters frequently play riddles (*Hibboo*) and "*Hibboontee*" with each other at night, with the help of their elders. Later, they exclusively play riddles at night. At the moment, children are playing at school during the day.

### **Parental Practices and Child Behavioural Outcomes**

Oromo parenting practices are critical in assisting children in achieving basic outcomes in the areas of physical health and safety, as well as social and cognitive capabilities as children engaged in the chores expected of them. Children are expected to be healthy and

perform well at home, school, and in the community by their parents and communities. The Oromo people expect their children to grow up following the Safuu principles such as respect, truthfulness, Trustworthiness, helping, Integrity, etc.

Though parents play an important role in their children's growth, youngsters are expected to help themselves and be more capable than their forefathers. Families want their children to be self-sufficient and capable in all aspects of their lives. In Oromo tradition, there is a blessing for the son (literally stands for both sex), which is said to make him/her competent and capable of carrying out his/her responsibilities. When it comes to this topic, Oromo people often say: *Ilmi walii sadi*; sons can be divided into three categories.

- *Ilma abbaa dhaanu: the son who hit his father.*
- *Ilma abbaa dhaalu fi: the son who inherit his father, and*
- *Ilma abbaa caalu: the son who excels his father*

Oromo people bless their sons and express their expectations by saying: *Ilma abbaa caalu ta'!*, meaning you may be the son who outperforms his father. Concerning the expected outcome of children, one elder informant said that:

*"Oromo people expect his offspring to be lawfulness, honest, hard work, no defensiveness, flexible and respect".*

The Oromo people expected physical, social, and cognitive competence from their children.

**Physical health and safety:** Children in Oromo society participate in a variety of indoor and outdoor games and sports, which help them, improve their performance and minimize their chance of developing chronic diseases like diabetes and obesity later in life.

**Expected Social Outcomes:** It entails the willingness of a child to get along with and respect others including the elderly, siblings, peers, and other members of the community. It

also includes children's to develop prosocial behaviours, such as empathy and concern for others' feelings, cooperation, sharing, and perspective taking, which have been linked to academic and non-academic success. Parents in Oromo communities train their children to adopt culturally acceptable beliefs and practices that allow them to be socially competent and behave as members of a community. The socially competent child demonstrates social skills (e.g., has positive interactions with others, successfully expresses emotions), can form good peer relationships (e.g., is accepted by other children), and possesses particular personal characteristics (e.g., shows capacity to empathize, has coping skills).

Parents can assist their children in developing these skills by allowing them to participate in activities such as chores, caring for siblings, playing with siblings and other children, attending family rituals (e.g., church, *Irreecha*, *Wakenffanna*), and participating in various folktales such as riddles (*hibboo*), *hibbon Teetee*, *Oduu durii* (foltales).

Parents teach their children to respect seniors and others who are older than them. Children respect their elders; the younger sibling respects the older sibling, and the wives of the younger brother respect the wives of the older brother. All these instances can help individual children to model appropriate social skills and emotional development.

**Expected Cognitive Outcomes:** It includes language and communication abilities, as well as problem-solving, reading, writing, and numbers. Children in Oromo communities develop these skills by playing games such as folktales, riddles, and proverbs. These games includes *Hibboo*, *Hibboonteetee*, *Kurutuu*, *oduu durii* and others.

Playing with blocks, puzzles, solving riddles and number games, and playing with fake money can all help a child's cognitive development.

For instance, "TokkoMaali?" is a classic game that youngsters play to help them strengthen their cognitive skills.

- *Tokkeenmaali?* –*tokkee ntokkichuma* : *What is one? – One is one*
- *Lame nmaali?* – *lamaan mucha re'ee* – *What is two? – Two is goat's breast*
- *Sadeen maali?* –*Sadan Sunsumani* - *What is three? – Three is 'Sunsuma'(stone or earthen for holding up cooking vessel in a fire place)*
- *Arfee nmaali?* - *Arfan Mucha sa'aa*- *What is four? – Four is cow's breast*
- *Shaneen maali?* – *shanan quba harkaa*- *what is five? – Five is human's finger*
- *Ja'a maali?*- .....

In general, children's physical, cognitive, and social intelligence can be improved by playing with peers in cattle herding grounds, as well as at home with oral tradition through interaction with their parents and siblings.

## Conclusion and Recommendation

### Conclusion and Implication

Parenting represents the quality of parent-child relationships, which varies depending on context and is influenced by cultural beliefs and values. The Oromo people have a unique set of parenting practices. Oromo Indigenous Parental Values, Practices, and Child Behavior Outcomes are outlined in this report. This study aims to revitalise positive parenting, present and advocate the qualities of Oromo Indigenous parenting (parental beliefs, practices, and child behavior outcomes). In Oromo society, parenting is not solely the responsibility of biological families; it also involves extended family members, neighbours, and the community. Furthermore, parenting is a moral, social, and spiritual responsibility shared by the entire community.

The Oromo have amazing oral traditions and folktales that teach, advise, and direct parents on how to institute discipline and socialize values that encourage effective parenting. Folklore, proverbs, story-telling, riddles, and poetry have all been used to transmit these oral traditions and make parental practices successful. Because of many socioeconomic causes, these traditions are eroding. Knowing

and applying this knowledge resulted in a smooth developmental transition from infancy to maturity, rather than a traumatic and unpleasant shift in many circumstances.

The main goal of Oromo communal parenting is to build interdependence, collaboration, care, respect, and hard work among family members and communities in order to improve individuals' physical, social, and cognitive development. It also helps to train the children for marriage and build successful parenting.

Oromo people used folktales to guide and correct children, which are thought to help children become physically, socially and mentally competent, socially responsible, and cooperative. Oromo folklore plays an important part in promoting successful parenting, socializing youngsters, maintaining societal stability, encouraging good behaviour, and resolving conflicts. Children's development can be aided by the practice of telling oral traditions such as folktales and riddles, which can increase their problem-solving skills, conversation and social skills, thinking, and reasoning abilities. Children are also expected to act in accordance with *Safuu* (Oromo Morality).

Oromo society reflects a collectivist worldview and communal culture. Sociability, security, harmony, obligation, family integrity, and obedience are all promoted in Collectivist cultures. As a result, such values must be safeguarded and fostered in order for individuals and communities to achieve effective development and a high quality of life. Because each culture has its own values, customs, and aspirations in terms of parenting style, there is no universally accepted parenting style. It's impossible to judge one parenting method as more effective than others. In Oromo society, for example, collectivist parenting plays an important role in child development. For example, (Abera, 2014) claimed that the majority of Arsi Oromo households foster collectivist authoritarian parenting.

Parental values, activities and outcomes are dynamic. They change overtime depending on

the context because of the socio-economic and political changes that influence the culture of a specific group. Parenting strategies change depending on where parents live, their educational level, and their career. As a result of changes in society's socioeconomic condition and political transformation, parenting habits in Oromo culture are changing.

### **Recommendation and Future Direction**

Although Oromo parenting is a relatively new topic in literature, the practice has a long history in society. Cultural contexts, parents' own experiences throughout childhood, and expectations learned from others, such as family, friends, and community, can all influence parenting values, practices, and child outcomes. As a result, the following recommendations have been suggested in order to improve the notion and conserve Oromo indigenous parenting practices in general, and Oromo parenting in particular:

First, the community needs to be made aware of how Oromo parental values influence children's behavior and later personality development through the media, educational institutions, and governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Second, studies on the role of a family's own childhood experiences in promoting culturally appropriate and positive parenting in their own children are needed.

Third, studies on the function of African parenting in general, and Oromo parenting in particular, are needed to produce competent citizen and address current parenting trends such as a high divorce rate, an increase in the number of single parents, and remarriage. Studies are also needed to see how poverty, neighbourhood, long-term job, and growth in female working affect Oromo parenting.

Fourth, indigenous knowledge must be incorporated into the Ethiopian educational system in general and school activities in particular in order to generate competent generations.

Fifth, Oromo indigenous practices (such as folktales, proverbs, and *safuu*) that are thought to promote effective parenting are not visible in our daily lives and are not taught in school. Thus, special attention should be given to indigenous knowledge promotion in order to maintain positive parenting.

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### Conflict of Interest

The Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest

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