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Traditional Hunting Associated Oral Literature and its Environmental Impacts in Southwestern EthiopiaMulu Getachew Mengistu¹, Lemma Nigatu Tarekegn^{2*}

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Abstract

The main objective of this study was to investigate traditional hunting associated with oral literature and its environmental impacts in four selected districts of southwestern Ethiopia. The study used a cross-sectional descriptive survey research design. For this reason, key informant interviews, FGD, and questionnaire were used to collect the data. Quota, purposive, and snowball sampling techniques were used to select 129 participants to fill up the questionnaire, 24 interviewees, and 23 FGD participants respectively. Data analysis techniques included thematic analysis, content analysis, and simple descriptive statistics like frequencies and percentages. The results of the study showed that the social honors given to hunters on the one hand and undermining of the non-hunters on the other were found to be major causes of traditional hunting. The communities have been using various poems to praise hunters but to humiliate the non-hunters that both reinforce the continuity of traditional hunting. This continuity of traditional hunting definitely leads to a decline in the absolute number of wild animals (maybe to the extent of local extinction), migration to neighboring countries, and prey-predator imbalances. Hence, to align this deep-rooted cultural practice with environmental conservation, continuous orientation, and teaching of the local community on the communities' long-standing indigenous system of environmental and ecosystem stewardship should be promoted.

Keywords: /Environment/ Hunting/Impact/ Oral literature/Poem/

1. Introduction

People used to harness the gift of nature in its native setting by hunting and gathering throughout nearly the first 99 percent of human history (Sumner, 2004). The hunters and gatherers, also called foragers, just lived off the land without any significant change on the natural ecosystem (Yadav & Sinha, 2000). However, the situations began to change with the emergence of humans' ability to make modern tools. The technological advancement in food and firearm production and modern transport system generally brought rising burden on this life-sustaining planet (Wildlife, 2008). The changes of hunting weapons from traditional to modern ones have greatly accelerated the depletion of wild animals in different parts of the world (Mena et al., 2000).

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In the early 20th century, at the zenith of European colonialism, hunter naturalists and conservation activists feared that some game animals were being pushed to the verge of extinction in Africa and South Asia. As a result, these groups urged colonial governments to devise restrictive hunting laws and delimit protected areas like national parks and game reserves. In the second half of the 20th century, scientists progressively recognized the tragedy of species extinction as a global problem (Kitchin & Thrift, 2009).

Ethiopia is, therefore, not an exceptional country to this global challenge. Indeed, it has also a very long history of delimiting areas and protecting wildlife. It is even the home of Africa's oldest recorded protected area called Menagesha Suba which was established during the reign of Emperor Zerea Yacob in the 15th century (Young, 2012; Alemneh, 2015). In the modern periods, some of the early established protected areas of Ethiopia were Awash National Park (1958), Semien Mountains National Park (1959), Omo National Park (1959), Bale Mountains National Park (1962), Abijata Shala National Park (1963), Babilie Elephant Sanctuary (1962), and Sinkele Swayne's Hartebeest Sanctuary (1964) (Alemneh, 2015).

Nevertheless, despite the existence of such national parks and protected areas, wildlife populations are facing a constant threat in Ethiopia. Over the last several decades, deforestation, farm land expansion, animal husbandry and illegal hunting were prevalent and ranked in order of severity from the most severe to the least severe (Melaku, 2011). Hunting without permit has been considered illegal since the time of Minilik II's Hunting Regulation in 1908 (Wolde-Meskel, 1970). The local people in the Lower Omo and individuals from other regions had indisputably been hunting without any license during the entire period of the previous century (Tadie & Fischer, 2013).

The use of wildlife can either be for consumptive or non-consumptive purposes. Wild meat is one of the major consumptive uses of hunting. Another increasingly important consumptive reason for hunting wild animals is making money. The prices of rhino horn and ivory have ever more boosted hunting of African rhinoceroses and elephants. A flourishing underground market trade demands rhino horn and ivory more than narcotics, small armaments and other regularly trafficked-goods (Anderson & Jooste, 2014).

Furthermore, the hunting of big game animals is seen as a socially significant activity. Among the people of Bashada, Kara and Hamar in Southern Ethiopia, hunting of such game animals is connected with manhood and bravery. During the festivity of successful hunting, anyone who had not killed a wild animal before was not admitted to participate in the festival. This prohibition of the non-hunters in the occasion of festivity of successful hunter usually appeared to have encouraged the youth to go to the forest for hunting (Tadie & Fischer, 2013).

There are some related researches done on various aspects of wildlife and wildlife hunting in Ethiopia. These include status and conservation of endemic large wild animals in Ethiopia (Melaku, 2011); roles of women in bush meat hunting in Tanzania and Ethiopia (Lowassa et al., 2012); hunting, social structures, and human-nature relationships in Lower Omo, Ethiopia (Tadie & Fischer, 2013); wildlife resources of Ethiopia and ecotourism (Alemneh, 2015); and protected areas as contested spaces, the case of Nech Sar National Park (Kelboro & Stellmacher, 2015). However, there is little or no research done so far about traditional hunting, the interrelationship between oral literature and traditional hunting and the environmental impacts of traditional hunting.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to investigate the nature of traditional hunting associated with oral literature and its environmental impacts in southwestern Ethiopia.

Specifically, the study intended to:

- Identify the environmental impacts of traditional hunting in the study area;
- Identify the effects of oral literature on traditional hunting practices and its implications on environmental wellbeing in the study area;
- Suggest possible program interventions needed for policy makers/implementers to overcome the adverse impacts of the traditional hunting practice in southwestern Ethiopia.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Study Areas

The study districts selected for this research are found in Oromia Regional State. These are Sokoru district from Jimma Zone; Kiremu and Guduru districts from East Wollega and Horo Guduru Wollega Zone, respectively and Bure district from Ilubabor Zone (See Figure 1).

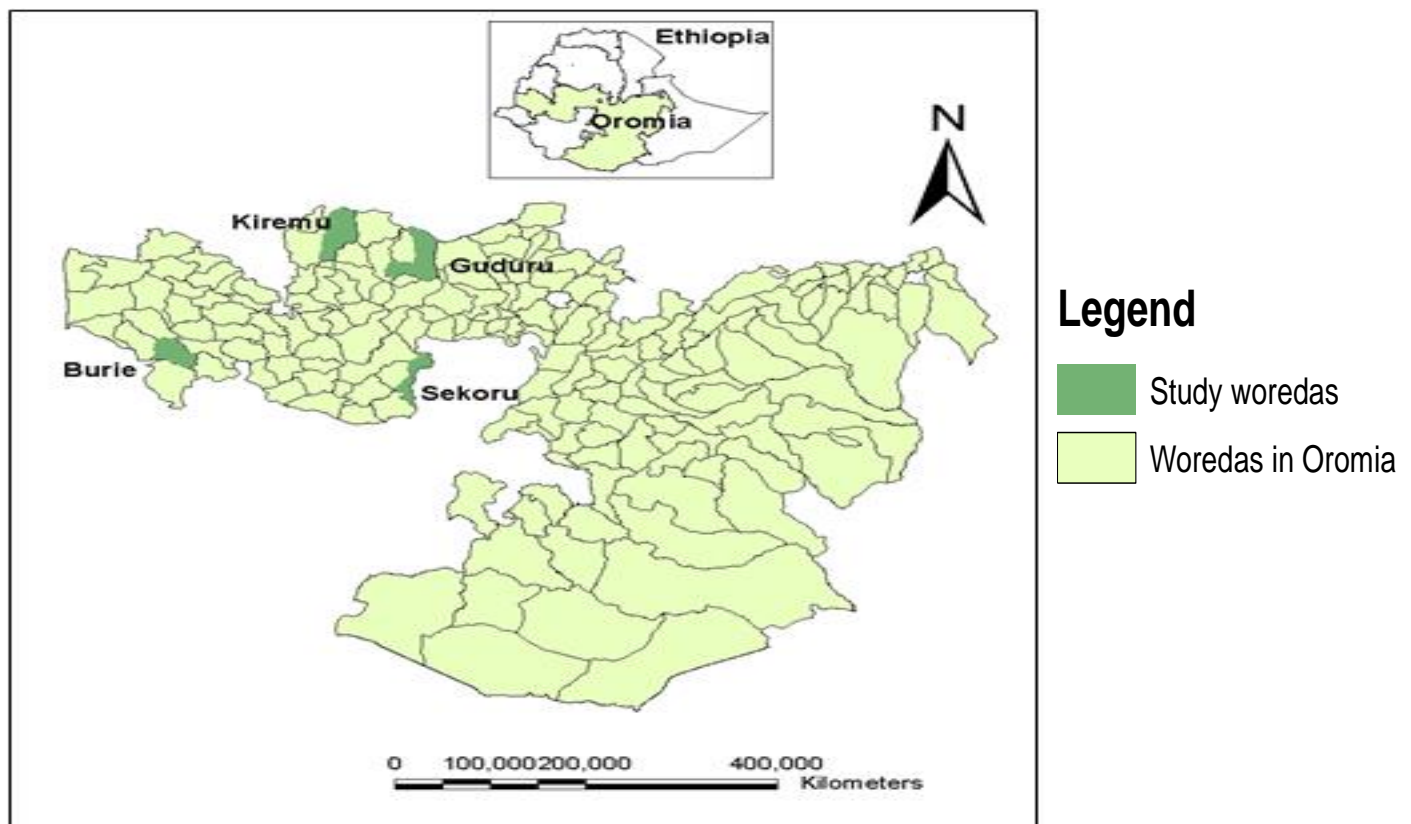


Figure 1: Location map of the study districts in Oromia regional state

2.2. Study Design

The research design used for this study was a cross-sectional descriptive survey type. Data were collected at a time; the study involved describing cases, phenomena, rituals and symbolic objects of hunters. It also involved interpreting oral literature recited at various steps and periods of hunting in connection with environmental issues.

2.3. Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

The study involved purposive, snowball, and quota sampling techniques. Purposive sampling was employed to select both focus group discussants and key informants. Snowball sampling technique was used to select individuals involved in traditional hunting, hunters' family members who have got some social honors for being members, and elders from the non-hunters who have superior knowledge and some exposures about traditional hunting and their environment. Quota sampling technique was employed to select those respondents involved in answering the semi-structured questionnaire.

The total numbers of key informant interviews and focus group discussions were twenty-four and twenty-three, respectively. The key informant interviewees included four experts from Cultural and Tourism Offices - one from each district; four experts from Environmental Protection Offices - one from each district; eight hunters' family members - two from each district and eight hunters - two from each district. Besides, four group discussions, one in each study district, were conducted.

The total sampled units involved in responding to the semi-structured questionnaire were 129. Of these sampled units, (33, 31, 34 and 31) were taken from Sokoru, Bure, Kiremu and Guduru districts, respectively. With sample size of thirty or more units, violating normality assumptions could not cause a significant problem. It is possible to apply parametric procedures for data that are not normally distributed (Elliott & Woodward, 2007; Julie, 2011). Thus, the result of this study would not be generalized to the wider community; rather, it would be self-explanatory.

2.4. Methods of Data Collection

The use of multiple data sources helps to triangulate the data (Daymon & Holloway, 2010; Ritchie, B.W., Burns, P., & Palmer, C., 2005). Thus, the methods of primary data collection employed in this study were key informant interview, focus group discussion, and semi-structured questionnaire.

Key Informant Interview: Checklists were prepared and used for key informant interviews. Key informant interviews involved hunters, hunters' family members, and experts at Cultural and Tourism Offices and Environmental Protection Offices. Data gathered using this instrument include: knowledge and exposures about traditional hunting, objectives of traditional hunting, social honor gained through successful hunting, specific species/sex/age groups of wild animals hunted and not hunted, available oral literature in connection with hunting, trophy hunting, and current status of traditional hunting.

Focus Group Discussions: Checklists were also prepared and used for focus group discussions. The optimum size for a focus group discussion ranges from six to eight members (Bloor et al. 2001; Finch & Lewis 2003). Accordingly, five to eight focus group discussants were involved in a group. Data collected with this instrument included: past and current status of traditional hunting, social honor gained through traditional hunting and its current status, oral literature used to honor and dishonor successful and unsuccessful hunters, types of wild animals targeted in traditional hunting and the reasons behind, and existence of endangered, extinct or migrated wild animal species in connection with traditional hunting.

Semi-Structured Questionnaire: The semi-structured questionnaire was another instrument used to collect qualitative and quantitative data. Following the preparation of the instrument, it was translated into Afan Oromo. Data collected using this method included: demographic characteristics of the sample households,

status over years of traditional hunting and current status of traditional hunting, changes in the social statuses of hunters, dishonoring of unsuccessful hunters, and use of oral literature to praise successful hunters and to disgrace unsuccessful ones; hunters' ranks by the type of wild animal hunted, type of wild animals allowed and not allowed to be hunted culturally, and impacts of traditional hunting on the environment as a whole.

2.5 Data Analysis

The study employed qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques. To analyze the qualitative data, thematic and content analysis techniques were used. To analyze the quantitative data, simple descriptive statistics such as averages and percentages were primarily utilized. A systematically selected, evaluated, and synthesized secondary sources of data (electronic, printed, published or unpublished resources) were used so as to complement, supplement, or triangulate the primary sources of data. Tables, graphs, and figures were also employed to vividly present information as needed.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1. Current Status Of Traditional Hunting Practices In The Study Sites

Table 1: The status of traditional hunting practices over years by the sample hunting localities in (%)

Response	Sokoru		Kiremu		Gudru		Bure		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Halted	31	93.9%	1	2.9%	2	6.5%	18	58.1%	52	40.3%
Decreasing	2	6.15%	3	8.8%	1	3.2%	11	35.5%	17	13.2%
remains the same	0	0.0%	28	82.4%	23	74.2%	1	3.2%	52	40.3%
increasing	0	0.0%	1	2.9%	1	3.2%	0	0.0%	2	1.55%
not sure	0	0.0%	1	2.9%	4	12.9%	1	3.2%	6	4.65%

The sample household heads were first requested to rate the levels of their knowledge on traditional hunting. Accordingly, 95.35% of the respondents reported they have at least some knowledge about traditional hunting while the remaining 4.65% said they have no knowledge about it. When asked to evaluate the current status of traditional hunting relative to the past, 1.55% said it increases, 40.3% of the respondents reported it remains unchanged, 13.2% said it decreases, and the remaining 40.3% reported it is totally halted. Thus, more than half of the sample respondents (55.05%) indicated that hunting is still practiced in the sample districts (Table 1).

Based on a key informant (interviewee three) in Gudru district, there are two types of hunting practiced still today in the district: hunting for food and hunting for social honors. When annual holidays like Easter approach, people in group go out to the nearby forests and hunt any culturally edible wild animals; but they stop after the holiday. Those people who need social honors have to travel to other remote areas to hunt. In support of the former, Milner-Gulland *et al.* (2003) pointed out that extensive overhunting of wild animals for meat across the humid tropical areas is currently causing local extinction of plentiful species.

Group discussants in Kiremu district (*April 3, 2018*), also indicated that during the Dergue regime men who hunted and attempted to hunt wild animals used to be arrested and punished to the extent of appropriation of their whole property. However, since the coming of the present regime in 1991, the door for hunting has been opened. Specifically, in the early periods of this regime, many people used to go in groups and became successful hunters. It is only recently that hunting is being forbidden. Here, one can note that government transitional periods are likely to create fertile grounds to carry out traditional hunting as freely as needed with little or no legal control. In this case, Nishizaki (2004) reported that following the establishment of Senkelle Swayne's Hartebeests Sanctuary in 1976, grazing, hunting, and gathering beneficial plants were stringently

banned. In May 1991, with the overthrow of the Dergue regime, the surrounding people destroyed the offices, houses, and the vehicles in the sanctuary, plundered the equipment, poached the Swayne's Hartebeests in few days after change of the regime.

Hence, owing to the great honor given to hunters, Oromo men tried their best and get success. One of the members in the group discussants said, "First my father killed a lion, then my elder brother followed and killed a lion too. Then after, I killed a buffalo and now my son goes to hunting area every time though not yet successful" (FGD1, Kiremu district, April 9, 2018).

A similar question was raised to the sample household heads to check whether there is a traditional hunting practice at present. Accordingly, 55% of the respondents said there is traditional hunting till today and the remaining 45% said it is stopped today. The latter respondents were further enquired to justify their idea that traditional hunting is still being active. Hence, the justifications given include the following:

- knowing some individuals who still practice it;
- knowing individuals who have been accused of illegal hunting and punished legally (data from semi structured questioner April 2018)

3.2 What Motivates Traditional Hunting?

The honors given to hunters in the community is one of the greatest motivating factors pushing people to be hunters. Figure 2 shows that 79.8% of the sample respondents replied the primary factor motivating people to engage in traditional hunting was the social honor gained through successful hunting. Even the remaining 14.0% thought that to get relief from the existing social pressure on the non-hunters, people are morally obliged to go for hunting. This finding is corroborated by other study (Wolde-Meskel, 1970) which states that hunters commonly suffer and sometimes face death risks in the hunting areas while hunting. The reason was not only to use and be happy with the skins, teeth, horns and tails acquired but depending on the number and type of wild animals killed, the hunters used to be given high social honors in the palace and in the communities. The key informant interviewees also believed that the single most important factor which motivates people to struggle with and hunt the fiercest wild animals was the social honor attained following successful hunting (KI #2², Kiremu; KI#3 Guduru and KI#1 Bure distracts, April 4, 17 and 28, 2018, respectively).

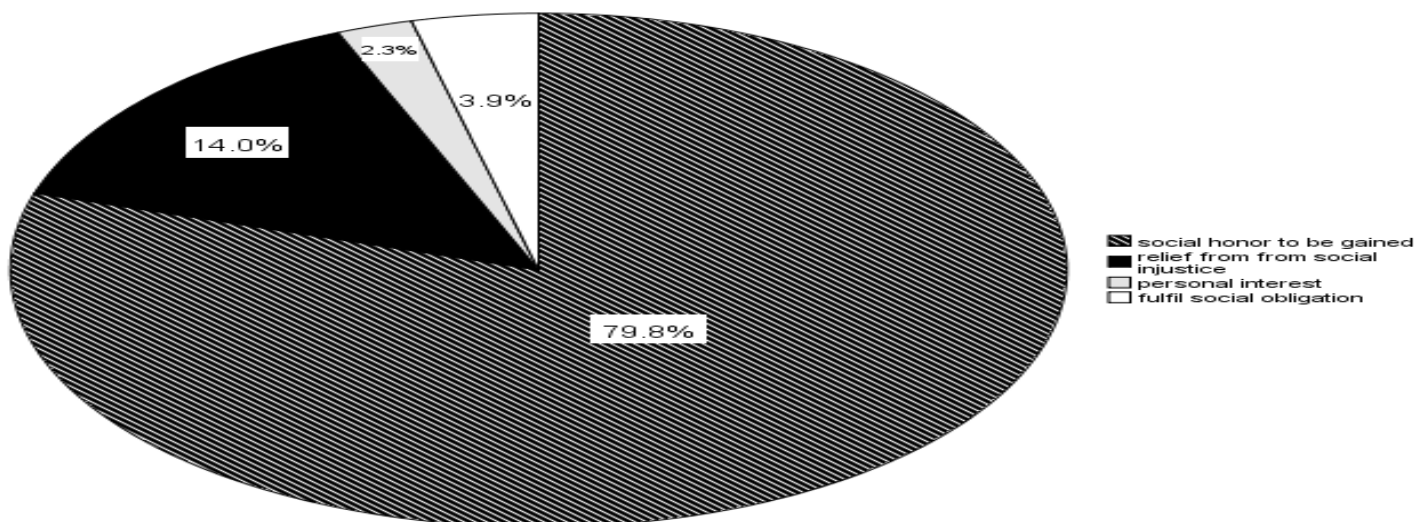


Figure 2: Factors motivating people to go for traditional hunting in the study sites

² KI: Key informant; #2: the number given to the interviewee

A successful hunter is always served with chosen utensils, sits at the top in any community gathering, speaks first, and is given priority to speak in the community. He is in the front line all the time. If a hunter boasts over the non-hunter, the only chance for the non-hunter is to go and kill and boast like him. Hunters' dressing style is unique. Their hair is never cut. They anoint their hair with butter (Kiremu KI #1, April 3, 2018).

Furthermore, the hunters are made to walk in the market for recognition. This is because hunters are highly honored and their names are renowned. Whereas the non-hunters are less esteemed in the communities which out-rightly push the non-hunters to go to hunting and get such honors (Taye, 2008).

3.4. The Environmental Impacts of Traditional Hunting in the Sample Study Districts

The sample household heads were requested to evaluate the impacts of traditional hunting practices on wild animals as a whole in their localities. Accordingly, 46.5%, 31.8%, and 14.0% of the respondents perceived that traditional hunting practices primarily led to migration of wild animals to other areas, near species extinction, and prey-predator imbalance, respectively (Figure 3). In this regard, Benítez-López *et al.* (2017) pointed out that hunting is a principal driver of biodiversity reduction and decline of wildlife population. The abundance of wild animals in the natural ecosystems is more closely linked to the degree of hunting than to any other factors like the type of forest, nature of the habitat, or the status of habitat protection. Similarly, Wyler and Sheikh (2013) stated that in some parts of Africa, overhunting leads to substantial reductions of wildlife population, loss of biodiversity, and dysfunctional ecosystems.

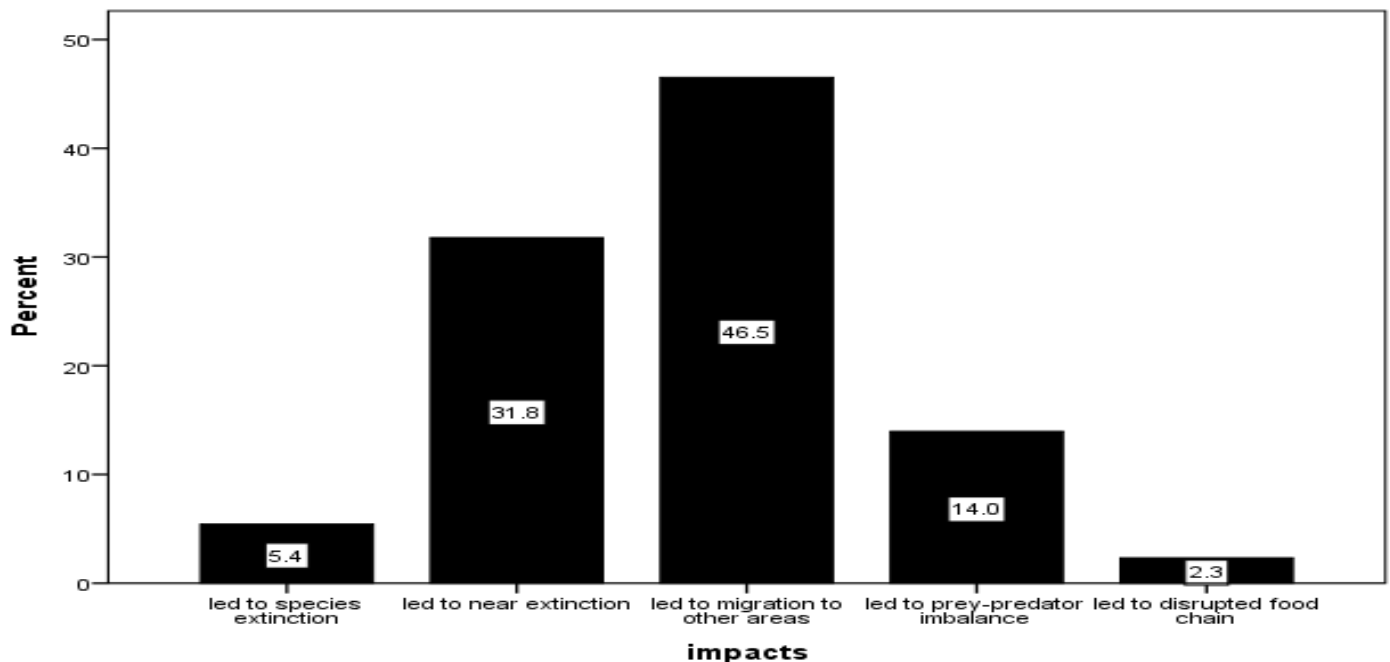


Figure 3: Perceived impacts of traditional hunting on wild animals as a whole

The respondents were also requested to list out the type of wildlife species that have been affected by traditional hunting. Hence, they believed that almost no species of wild animals which escaped the impacts of traditional hunting. Primarily, lion, buffalo, giraffe, elephant, and rhinoceros were mentioned to be the most important wild animals that have been targeted to gain social honor from their hunting. According to Wolde-Meskel (1970), even the honor and the social status of the hunter's increases with the number of wild animals

hunted. When a hunter killed six elephants, it was said he broke “Ilka” (level of honor). At this level he wears a special type of ear ring called “Abbaa Looti” (*Bale Dir*) in Amharic which roughly means ear ringed hero. Similarly, Bartels (1983) stated that as the fertile women never stop to labor, the hunter never halts going to the wilderness. Thus, as honors and status of the hunters rise with the number and kind of wild animals, there is a great competition among hunters to gain and regain superiority over one another which obviously impose higher impacts on the number and survival of wild animals. Hence, as stated in Redford (1992), hunting could lead to an empty forest and reminds that “we must not let a forest full of trees fool us into believing that all is well”.

Secondly, while hunting the aforesaid species of wild animals that have been used in promoting social honors, other unwanted wildlife species were indicated to have been harmed. Some of the negative impacts of traditional hunting on unwanted wild animals as per the respondents included: migration to other areas due to fire and gun noise (41.86%), shortage of food due to fire, death or migration of their prey (31.02%), killing deliberately for hunters’ food (13.95%), habitat destruction due to fire (6.97%), and accidental killing by hunters (6.2%).

When the respondents were asked the existence of specific species, sex, or age group of wild animals that are traditionally forbidden to be hunted, the majority of the respondents (95.3%) said there is. “*Weennii*” (*Colobus Monkey*) wild animal of any age and sex is forbidden to be hunted because it does not eat crops. It doesn’t cause any damage on humans unless it is made angered/disturbed. Nevertheless, as indicated earlier, it does not mean that hunting has no impact on this species of wild animal. Accidental killing, habitat destruction due to gunfire and fire, etc. can adversely affect the species.

As per the key informants, hunters stay in the forest for a couple of weeks to months (Kiremu, KI # 4, April 11, 2018). During these periods, they hunt any culturally edible wild animals for their food. Based on group discussions (Sekoru FGD #1, February 12, 2018), the hunters commonly go to the hunting area for hunting in groups having their own sub groups called fire groups meaning separate dishes. A chairperson is chosen to a group and on his guidance, the group is divided into fire-groups. Each subgroup will have a representative and is identified as somebody’s group by the name of the representative. Each fire group commonly comprises about five members (Kiremu KI #1, April 3, 2018).

These fire groups used to construct temporal and mobile shelters, use firewood for lighting, heating and frying hunted food all of which can have a great impact on both the wildlife and vegetation cover. Definitely hunting reduces the population of wild animals. The use of wood for construction of temporal shelters to various subgroups in rotated manner, its use for cooking, lighting, and heating can have great impact on the vegetation. Thus, hunting of wild animals for food and honor can impose high impact on the reduction of wildlife population and the migration of wild animals as well as the vegetation cover of the environment.

Indeed, in contrast to this view, Lemessa (2014) stated that the Oromo people have an indigenous knowledge system of protecting the natural forests and the biodiversity within. Among the people, some natural forests, groves, tree species as well as other natural scenes are believed to be sacred and esteemed.

When the hunter passes away, the hunter’s family commonly erect forked olive wood as memory and hung culturally recognized part of a hunted wild animal such as horn, tail, etc. which serves as symbolic to display heroism of the hunters. This forked olive tree display components of wild animals locally called *Facha* (Figure 4). If every successful hunter cuts olive tree for the purpose indicated, it affects the tree species. Indeed, planting trees around erected olive wood to ensure the continued symbolic history of the successful hunters has a positive contribution to the environment.



Figure 4: 'Facha' where symbolic components of hunted wild animals are displayed as memory of a hero-hunter (Gudru, April 25, 2018)

3.5. Effects of Oral Literature on Traditional Hunting and its Implications on the Environment

Oral literature plays various roles in a community. Its primary role is entertainment, but at the same time it is used to encourage, discourage, and praise or insult individual(s) or group(s) in the community (Finnegan, 2012). In the study sites, the communities use various hunting related poems that have their own implications on environmental degradation. Basically, the poems are utilized to:

- encourage men for hunting;
- humiliate and provoke non-hunters and undermine their family members;
- demoralize unsuccessful hunters and express worries of their fruitless tries; and
- praise successful hunters and their family members.

Below are some of the major hunting-related poems recited to transfer different messages and address different objectives.

The existence of moral obligation to follow the footsteps of hunters' fathers and forefathers is well indicted in the poem that follows.

Yaa jaranaa bakka bu'ii bu'ii naan jetta
 Baqqoo Bakkaktu lafaa
 eenyutu hindhaqiin hafa
 ilma abbaa raatu malee,...

O, you people! You urge me to follow the footstep
 Beqo, the cracked land,
 Who should refrain from going there?
 except the silly one.
 (Sekoru, KI # 2, January13, 2018).

The lines above show how hunting which demands men to follow up the footsteps of hunter parents is a deep-rooted culture in the communities. It considers anyone who fails to go for hunting as silly. Thus, it morally forces the people to continue hunting practices. Thus, in the poem hunting is intuitively encouraged

irrespective of the adverse effects it might have on environment. The lines below that the performed recited also questions as to why hunting stops.

Baala geeshee daalattii	Grey, the leaves of buckthorn,
Mirgi sanyiin koo qabu	The victory that my kinsfolk won
Maa nageessee dhaabbatti	Why it stops when my turn to do it comes?

(Kiremu, FGD # 1, April 9, 2018)

The lines above call for the need of sustaining and handing the victory and honor of the family over to the generation that follows. This, in turn, shows the speaker's high level of commitment to continue the aforementioned devastating practice, hunting. Therefore, shockingly enough, hunting is still standing being one of the most notorious causes of wild animals' extinction.

In the study setting where the oral poems collected, the wives of the non-hunters were seen using almost every occasion to provoke their husbands to go for hunting. In this regard, the couplets discussed below are exemplary. While the husband and his wife eat from the communal plate, she mockingly uses the first couplet if he keeps on grabbing food only from his side.

Gamin koo gama baloo miti	The food tray in your front is not the Baloo ³ field,
Ce'iiti cabsadhu!	Take across it!

(Sekoru, KI #2, January 14, 2018.)

In a normal circumstance, hunters go to the forest to hunt crossing the Baloo hunting field. However, the wife seems to be irritated due to the failure of her husband to fit the manly quality that the tradition demands from him. Thus, using the plate symbolically and his failure to reach all the way across her side to grab food as weakness, she urges him to join the heroes, in this case the hunting community.

Often times the culture does not appreciate having sexual intercourse during the daytime. However, if a husband is feeling aroused while the wife is not in such a mood, he starts closing the door merely depending on his own patriarchal power. When such kind of blatant sexual offence upsets her, she (the wife) might move onto scolding him using the following couplet:

Maal fuuta cufantaa duubaa	what do you do by the door side?
Hiriyaan kee balooyin duula,	your age mates went to hunt in the wild.

(Kiremu, KI # 4 April 11, 2018.)

The lines above force the non-hunter husband to turn back in indignity; she even lacks the interest to share one of the sweetest moments of life with him. Thus, if he keeps transgressing beyond this limit, he might even face worst insults that diminish his manliness. And if the community around him knows this, he might be suffering severe humiliation.

Non-hunters may encounter some challenges on occasions where hunters and non-hunters come together. In the presence of hunters and non-hunters, women may recite the following lines anonymously. But the message is well understood and can impose its own pressure on the non-hunters.

Isa duuleef ittittuu buusanii	Gave yoghurt to hunters,
Isa hin duulleef dhamayyuu hin buusanii	gave dhama/aguat to non-hunters.

Besides, as portrayed in the poem that follows, the non-hunters can deliberately be provoked and humiliated by women in time of the ritual of successful hunters.

only to use and to be happy with the skins, teeth and horns acquired but they used to be given high social honors in the palace and in the communities.

This study also revealed that traditional hunting practices primarily led to migration of wild animals to other areas, extinction of species, and prey-predator imbalance. This finding coincides with the findings of Benítez-López *et al.* (2017) and Wyler and Sheikh (2013). Benítez-López *et al.* points out that hunting is a principal driving force of biodiversity reduction and decline of wildlife population. Similarly, Wyler and Sheikh (2013) state that in some parts of Africa, overhunting leads to substantial reductions of wildlife population, loss of biodiversity, and dysfunctional ecosystems. However, the result of this study revealed that both the natural forests and the biodiversity within were vulnerable to extinction.

The finding of the study also shows that oral literature on traditional hunting has negative effects on the environment of the study sites. The communities use various hunting related poems that have their own implications on environmental degradation. The poems are utilized to: encourage men for hunting, humiliate and provoke non-hunters and undermine their family members, demoralize unsuccessful hunters and praise successful hunters and their family members. The finding is in line with Finnegan (2012), who states that the oral literature's primary role is entertainment, and at the same time it is used to encourage, discourage, and praise or insult individual(s) or group(s) in the community. The ultimate purpose of discouraging and encouraging of the traditional hunters is to motivate them to take part in the traditional hunting.

5. Conclusions

Though the Oromo people have their own indigenous knowledge and long-lived culture of protecting the natural environment, some admirable native forests were indicated to be lost due to external intruders and internal changes. With the loss of forests, one expects loss of wild animals too.

Hence, the practice of traditional hunting is anticipated to have its own adverse impact on the natural ecosystem through disrupting the prey-predator balance and the food web system. Despite the existence of national hunting rules and regulations since as early as the time of Emperor Minilik II, traditional hunting is still active specifically in three of the study districts: Kiremu, Gudru, and Bure. This continuity of traditional hunting definitely leads the decline in the absolute number of wild animals (maybe to the extent of local extinction), migration to neighboring countries, and prey-predator imbalances.

The impacts of hunting carried out to gain social honors are not limited to those fierce higher wild animals like lions, buffalos, rhinoceros, giraffes, and wolves but also to other type of wildlife. This results in the decline of their numbers; additionally, the bullet sound and accidental firing cause migration and death of other wild animals. Moreover, as hunters normally go out for hunting in groups and construct shelters, they use wood for cooking, lighting, heating, and for presenting sacrifice to their goddesses. All these affect the vegetation cover of the hunting areas.

The honors given to hunters and their family members are one of the greatest motivating factors that push people for hunting. The difference in the level of honors given to hunters, which are based on the number and type of wild animals killed, are likely to cause competitions even among successful hunters. Thus, to get the greatest social rank in the communities, the hunters go for hunting competition one after the other.

6. Recommendations

To align this deep-rooted cultural practice of traditional hunting with environmental conservation, continuous orientation and teaching of the local communities on communities' long-standing indigenous system of environmental and ecosystem stewardship, which involves responsible and sustainable use, and protection of the natural resources should be promoted. Estimating the extent of loss of wild animals by type through traditional hunting requires further research.

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Authors' contributions:

Both authors conducted fieldwork, analyzed data, produced terminal report, and agreed to publish the finding. The coauthor submitted manuscript for publication and incorporated reviewers' comments.

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Consent for publication: We have agreed to submit for Journal of Social Sciences and Language Studies and approved the manuscript for submission. Signature;



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