

Blessings and Curses as Social Controlling Mechanism in Ethiopia: The Case of Amhara, Oromo and Gurage Communities

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Abstract

The study was based on the social harmonization of blessings and curses in oral narrative by Ethiopians. The main object of the study was to study the role of blessings and curses and to show how and when they are used. Thus, the study could be a baseline as a preliminary idea for researcher who desires to study about the people, scrutinize the relations between blessings and curses; and to study the sequence of narrative as well as a thorough and in-depth look at the community's reaction to the theme. Both primary and secondary data sources were reflected. The obtainable data were examined by a functionalism approach. The finding indicated that blessings and curses have been used to nurture the moral law of the society and to shape the generation with kindness and integrities. The finding also confirmed that blessings and curses are used by the people to reflect and influence human emotions such as anxiety, fear, dismay, joy, and sadness.

Key words: Blessing, curse, social control, social cohesion

1.1 Introduction

The notions of blessing and curse, being incorporated into human speech, have a fabulous effect on human life. Most of the time, people recognize that these oral narratives carry spiritual and cultural power and values. The blessings and curses in the oral narratives are great importance for society for understanding how social milieus, world view points and cultural values are preserved and passed to next generations. The elder communities are responsible for their new generations in maintaining good social cohesion and societal interaction. Blessing and cursing, which are loaded in cultural and religious content, have been used to shape people's behavior and belief. Blessing and curse are used by the people to maintain the value of social milieu and cultural value in certain community for the coming generations, though each of these genres can be employed for its own specific purpose. In addition to respecting the values that the community believes and approves, blessing and cursing use customary laws which contribute to mutual benefit and security in mutual relations.

Though both terms have a positive and a negative connotation in which they are used in traditional practice to maintain the existing status-qua of societal socio-cultural traditions.

Blessings and curses are parts of the oral narratives which have been passed from generation to generation verbally. Blessing promotes social cohesion in many parts of the society by embedding shared beliefs, establishing moral values and providing moral basis. Leslaw (1973) described it “act or words of one who bless a special favor, mercy or benefit, a favor or gift best cowed by God there by bringing happiness. And the evoking of God’s favor upon a person etc.” (p.158). From this idea, it is possible to say that the words of someone who wants to bless has a special gift from God which creates the source of happiness. A prayer wants to send good desire and conveys good will and also shows good conduct in the society. For instance, in Ethiopia, the people have to say that “your lineage becomes blessed” which means that a person’s relatives, children or any human beings whom they are his intimate may be blessed, fruitful and multiplied. People face many challenges in their life: they want good things of the past to come back and bad things to disappear forever, respectively according to their blessing or curse by elders or religious leaders. Thus, they demand all their distresses be turned into decent that they would have cured; they would like to have a filled, satisfying, and happy marriage, must not divorce, and need health and longevity. Hence, when they bless, they express their wish for life, prosperity, wedding, affection, and harmony to somebody. Therefore, the blessing is the prize that a human being obtains for their good manners, reactions or acts in life. Mc Dowell stated that, by blessing, some mean that one wish for good things to come to him or us. He described this idea as “the blessing describes a condition in which everything in a person life is fruitful, prosperous, healthy reproductive, victorious and uplifted” (2000, p.6). On the contrary, by saying, “Your lineage becomes cursed”, they mean that you may not get healthy children, relatives or intimate friends at all.

Apart from the above, if a person in a particular social norm may do in opposite ways but he/she is not expected to do or doesn’t make what he/she is expected to do in the society, he/she will be cursed and become against of the will of society. Cursing comes from unpleasant disgust and mischievousness; when loves fade out, hatred comes from the soul realm. So, a curse is a way of articulating the evil wishes upon the cursed person in diverse ways. Busk (1957) stated that the meaning of a curse, "the expression of a wish that main future, evil doom befall on another; a

formula of charm intended to cause such misfortune to another” (p.11). On the other hand, Matisoff (1979) stated the following about the nature of curses. He said that a curse is an appeal or request for injury or harm to come upon one; a cause of great disadvantage, trouble and cursed in words in anger or annoyance; to demand upon divine or supernatural power to send damage upon; be pass great wicked upon, affect. He defined curse as *a wish in which bad luck, disaster, and harm come upon somebody*. However, curse is not used to harm anyone arbitrarily, rather to harm rude or crooked one.

There is no agreement on such a notion as the power of the word who are using for the purpose of social harmonization. Some scholars hold to the view of so- called ‘automatic fulfillment’ of a particular blessing or curse utterance. This means that the word itself has the power to fulfill what it conveys. Therefore, this study focused on the social harmonization of blessings and curses and how they are functional and valuable in Ethiopian people. The researcher chosen the study areas because of the unique blessings and curses performed by the studied communities. The researcher has not got a regional or national report on the social harmonization and benefits of blessings and curses which are performed by Ethiopian people. The filled such a gap and reflected a unique perspective in the study areas.

1.2 Statement of the Study

Although blessing and curse are used as cultural values and religious practice, they can also be widely used as genres of Folklore. It comprises of the spiritual and physical resources of a society. These resources have been studied by sub divisions of folklore such as material, culture, oral literature and ethnography practical skills. This study emphasized how social harmonization happens because blessings and curses which are part of social controlling mechanism and governing principle of the people in different parts the country. They are used in day to day interaction in the society. In Ethiopia, blessing and curse have played major role and continues effects in the society's existence and success widely. The concepts of blessing and curse have not been studied widely in the country although it has remarkable social harmonization effects in the society.

Blessings and curses are frequent manifestation in Ethiopia. As has been designated above, the Ethiopian people have a very rich oral practice although not well studied in terms of its functional value as literary studies.

The lack of such studies might have also added to the misunderstanding about the ease of the forms claimed by researchers mentioned earlier. Hence, critical reviews of these verbal arts offer a worthwhile literary skill, and add sign to evidences so far thought by many scholars on the misunderstanding relating to the verbal arts. This study was an effort to reveal this satisfying skill by taking the case of Ethiopian blessing and curse.

Like other African verbal arts, blessings and curses have been containing verbally rewarding values which are used for maintaining social cohesion and controlling mechanism. These lead to social stability; avoid social grievance and solve social injustice, which are resources of opportunities in the area of week modern justices and legal systems.

Despite the generality in the context of narrating of Ethiopian blessing and curse, it seems to be unacknowledged. Mainly, the narrative features continuing in its expressions have not gained enough attention so far. Blessing and curse expressions show expressive quality worthing a functional study, but there are no works that addressed the context prominent in them. Thus, this study tries to fill the gap by showing a functional analysis of the blessing and curse expressions aiming mainly at narrating features dominantly recognized in the blessing and curse expressions. Alongside, the study pursued arguing on the literary worth of the Ethiopian blessing and expressions based on the narrative features in them.

1.3 Objectives

- to examine the social controlling mechanism of the blessing and curse expressions;
- to identify the functional value of blessing/curse held in the studying areas;
- to describe how blessing and curse are used as cross-cultural phenomena in Ethiopia

1.4 Delimitation of the Study

As part of the oral art of the people, Ethiopian blessings and curses can be studied from different angles. This study, however, is delineated to a functional analysis of the expressions used through focusing on the oral narrative of blessing and curse which are in three selected studied areas among three language speakers: Amhara, Oromia and Gurage. The study also includes a context review of the principal concerns of the blessings and curses together with the functional values. Yet, all functional features are not studied in this article for the sake of social controlling mechanism. Therefore, the concerns that become stress in this study are vital features like functional values. Blessing and curse are achieved at each specific Ethiopian culture; however,

the data which are used in this study does not address all as it is selected from only three weredas (one wereda from each community).

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is important as it sheds light on the blessing and curse which are involved in Ethiopian societies. As has been discussed in the introduction section, blessing and curse narratives among the Ethiopians have got little scholarly attention. Though the functional analysis is studied with contextual method with literary virtues, they have not acquired attention similar to other genres of oral art the people in Ethiopia. Thus, it is significant to tackle the aim of this article by attempting to show the rich, dynamic and adaptable social harmonization in the societies. It is the belief of the researcher that such oral traditions widen the scope and enrich the appreciation of Ethiopian oral values if a high attention is given to such genres. Accordingly, the functional analysis directed in the study would pledge an additional research to be conducted in the genre.

1.6 Research Methods and Design of the Study

The objectives of the study were accomplished by primary and secondary data sources. After the objective and the research questions of the study were considered, various published and unpublished material and resources connected to the subject were reviewed thoroughly. Observation and interviews of key informants were used as primary data sources. The data were examined by a functionalism approach. The data examination relied on functional values of blessings and curses performed on social harmonization of the people in the study areas.

The study areas were selected from three regions in which blessing and curse are used widely in the societies: Bereket from North Shoa, Amhara Region; Boset, from East Shoa, Oromia Region and Abeshighe from Gurege, Central Region of Ethiopia. The researcher had two main study purposes to achieve in the present study. The first is to define the phenomenon of social harmonization as presented through the blessing and curse of the Ethiopians. The second purpose is to analyze and interpret contexts when, how and for what purpose blessing and curse are used in Ethiopian societies particularly in the study areas.

This study presented an argument on the social harmonization of blessing and curse of the Ethiopia societies through conducting a functional analysis. To this end, it tried to define the social harmonization issues of the blessing and curse expressions, and studied the functional analysis employed. Thus, the study is understood as a contextual and functional approach. The sources of the data for the study were both primary and secondary. Fieldwork were conducted among the three areas where oral art have been narrated through interview of key informants. The secondary sources were used by reviewing published and unpublished materials of blessing and curse expressions. Data relating to the narrative processes and contexts were gained through in-depth interview with key informants; the data required for the analysis are translated into English by each language speakers. But, only data required to this study were used.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Origin of Blessing and Curse

This section deals with an overview of the social harmonization of the blessing and curse. The oral art is rich for different part of societies for blessing and cursing which, however, have different contexts.

The blessing is a vital influence happened in God as his Wisdom by means of which God made the entire Universe and which He gives to all existing lives in the act of formation so as to give them power to produce and succeed. He stated that “the curse means everything what is bad and harmful, everything what does not agree with the normal relationships, the negation of life” (Gen, 13).

Skulkina (2013) outlined the origins of the blessing and curse to the pre-Israelite magic rites and he saw echo of this in the Jacob blessing narrative (Gen, 48:14). He recognized a power of a verbal word to blessing and curse, which deeds freely after being marked. As a matter of fact, the history of the blessing and curse scholarship indicates the close inter-connection concerning the social milieu and cultural value of Ethiopian people.

Acting ethically by pleasing the outlooks of own for societies leads to blessing; a sign of inclusion, which can be diverse or shared in its way of execution. Blessings are a universal occurrence though they vary from one society to another in terms of verbal word arts and way of customary use. The societal harmonization milieus are folk’s concepts. It means that it happens when group fixes well in exercising its role to the desire of and in the sign of the society as an

entire or to those inside the instant circumstance of the individual or group in question (Baye, 1998). Besides, a blessing is somewhat that is welled with people's belief and that is somewhat people wish to happen on their or other's time from God or moral accepted life created from the actuality so that they believe it as God's relief and protection. Besides, a blessing is the appealing of kindness upon a person. It desires somewhat well up on somebody. It is a discourse acts connected to some future actions. Blessings frequently function as narratives, which when expressed alters some issues of matters in the world (Eba & Ashenafi, 2017).

Cursing, like all other forms of narrative, has its own set of conditions to happen, such as anger, suffering, wrong, hatred, dread, and so on. The New Catholic Encyclopedia stated that "The occasion for the curse may be anger and fear, but it may also be hate and envy" (p.25). Hence, cursing is an occurrence that happens in the spirit of fury, anxiety, hatred, and distrust. The phenomenon of the curse develops shady and unhappy. The incident of the curses is misfortune, and there is no optimistic hope for time. Just a certain degree, it indicates fault. The prospects may be out of control. Since the oral narratives, people may lose their courage after they become cursed; they ruin their heart; they knees were shaking. They practice a demanding life on earth.

On the contrary, blessing takes place on a variety of junctures when there are decent and good actions, joy and hope, serenity and love. Hence, both curses and blessings are present in any society, and both have motives (occurrences) for events. James Hosting underlines that blessing and curse are created in all races. The blessing are recited by thought and by words of mouth. Remarkably, the blessing by words of mouth is more powerful, but the curse by supposed is more influential in the people. According to his narration, blessing and curse are found in all people and are practiced both in told and in thought.

2.2 Types of Blessing and Cursing

Blessing category varies across the globe as people have various socio-cultural values. First, there is a divine interference event that has authority beyond what is likely for a person can do blessing finished to all living beings. For example, Holy Bible in Genesis (chapter 1: verses 22, 28) indicated that God blessed creatures as well as man after He created them saying be productive, reproduce, and replenish the earth and calm it. Besides, people consider that God for Himself is sacred as of his supremacy of defending people from their rivals (Genesis, chap. 14: ver.20). In the other event, anyone who has been admired for the esteem of pride in a certain

people can bless others. For instance, elders of a tribe, the community elders, aged people in a family or esteemed person in the community can bless others like the beloved, courageous, hard worker, helper of the poor, helper of the family, new married couple, etc. people. Elders might have a full order to bless others as they are reflected as elegant people by the charm that they obtain from God. In Sidama, according to Luter and Mathewos (2019), leaders have the superior hand and improved effect in dealing with matters that have variety from family to wider societal concerns. So, the above discussion may give a lot to the theme which the researcher had nominated to study.

Regarding the roots of blessing and curse, the researchers who studied the growth of non-religious people say that humankind in their life practices face natural adversities and encounters due to many struggles among themselves. Later, to succeed and get relief from these devastations, they possibly praised the natural events like moon, stars, sun, light, trees, and darkness, rivers and hills, etc. They also appreciated for powers primarily from figures made by them up to the life shaped in their thoughts. Consequently, they considered that there is no rule other than these powers, and because of this certainty, they ask God to give them the good actions they do and abolish the bad ones. So they thought that the blessing and the curse originated from these sources (James A. Matisoff, 2000, 4; John H. M CDowell, 2003).

It has been established challenging to point out the precise time when the blessing and the curse began. Still, as it has been described so far, records show that it took place when progress and the spread of different views as well as the creating of human beings.

2.3. Blessing and Cursing as Mechanisms of Social Controlling

Situations for *blessing* and *cursing*, like all other forms of narratives, have their own set of circumstances to occur, such as anger, trouble, injustice, hatred, fear, and so on. The New Catholic Encyclopedia states that "the occasion for the course may be anger and fear, but it may also be hate and envy." Hence, cursing is a phenomenon that occurs in the spirit of anger, fear, hatred, and jealousy. The phenomenon of the curse and the atmosphere is dark and gloomy. The occasion of the curses is bad luck, and there is no bright hope for life. To a certain extent, it signifies weakness. The possibilities are out of control. From the ancient Scriptures, Adam had lost his courage after he got cursed. He had broken heart, his knees were shaking. He experienced a stressful life on earth.

On the contrary, blessing takes place on a variety of occasions when there is good deeds, happiness and hope, contentment and love. Hence, both curses and blessings are present in any society, and both have reasons (occasions) for occurrences. James Hosting commented on this idea and said that “blessing and curse are found in all races. The blessing told by thought and by words. Notably, the blessing by words is more powerful, but the curse by thought is more powerful than that by words.” According to his narration, curse and blessing are found in all societies and are practiced both in speech and in thought.

2.4 Blessings and Curses as Mechanisms of Maintaining Social Cohesion

When we are talking about, it is clear that one is the conflicting of the other. The main idea to recall in blessings and curses is that, according to Matisoff, how people recognize the connection of the words, how the connection is founded between good and bad effects, how people accompany blessing with a curse, and why they narrate these issues together. According to the Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics (2000, p.367), although the two issues are opposing to each other, they are mutually exclusive and should be studied side by side. "Cursing and blessing are perfect opposites, and are therefore, appropriately taken together for analysis and description". Therefore, it is possible to say that people have to explore the role of blessings and curses together.

When someone gets blessed for his/her good manners, his/her opponents will become cursed at the same time. For instance, someone who proposals the blessing could say that “let your rival’s eyes become gloomy and incapable to see, and their legs bend down.” Thus, they blessed someone for his/her good actions and his/her enemies become cursed instantaneously. Therefore, the telling supports the fact that these two things are inseparable.

According to James Hosting (1965, p.367), blessings and curses are verbal desires for good or harm upon somebody. Also, anyone can express his/her wishes in the name of God or bad spirit. Therefore, the relations between these matters stress that both have the same power and that there is a state of manifestation of one on the other. Thus in one hand, it is a matter of fate and wish, and in the other, it is of will and fact. The narrator can express in either a positive or negative mode. That is why it is possible to say that they must go together, though they have

paradoxes. These two topics may appear contradictory, but when we put them in balance, both play a role in preserving and sustaining the values of the community.

Blessing and cursing can literally be defined as maintaining and breaking a verbal art taboo with the intent to invoke protect and damage on another person (Almaz, 2021). In general, cursing is a decadent wish for somebody else or for oneself. It is the practice of verbal art by a narrative to cause panic, and projected harm, by the very influence of the language used, to a speaker. This proposed curse can have several functions, depending on socio-cultural settings. Blessing and curse can be made by individual against a group, or by a group against an individual or a group. The supernatural power is attached to gods, deities, and other spirits who may have power to cause harm to the cursed.

So far, there is little literature on blessing and cursing in Ethiopian languages, but it is possible to have referred some works on both blessing and cursing separately that compares blessing and cursing expressions in Ethiopian languages. For instance, Ashenafi and Eba (2017) studied entitled “The Poetics of Oromo Blessing Expressions: A Stylistic Analysis of a Verbal Art Genre” which is mainly focusses on presenting a stylistic analysis of the verbal art genre. Similarly, Eba and Ashenafi (2017) also stated “Blessing in Afan Oromo: Morphosyntactic, Semantic and Pragmatic Aspects” by uncovering great intimacy with the cultural, social, political, economic and spiritual welfares of Oromo people. Luter and Mathewos (2019) discussed Sidama’s society blessing entitled “The Pragmatics of Blessing Expressions in Sidama Culture” how blessing takes place and groupings of blessing associated with morphological study and the portrayals of meaning.

Daniel and Gizaw (2020) studied “The Role of Blessing and Cursing in Traditional Conflict Resolution Mechanism among the Hadiya People, Southern Ethiopia”. They confirmed the value of blessing and cursing in traditional conflict resolving mechanism in the Hadiya society. Again, Almaz (2021) studied the role of both blessing and curse entitled “Socio-Cultural Benefits of Curses and Blessings in South Wollo, Ethiopia”. Her main point became origin of blessings and curses and she demonstrated in detail their benefits and purposes in her study area.

Fekede and Ruth (2016) studied “Social and Pragmatic Rules of Cursing and Other Routine Formulas in Gurage and Norwegian Culture”. Their finding scrutinized the sociolinguistic and practical meanings and the important forms of cursing expressions in the Gurage culture, and

then to assess the expressions with Norwegian cursing by uncovering the universal trends in the procedures and habits of cursing.

Wondwosen (2015) conducted his study entitled “Documentation and Description of Traditional Conflict Resolution of Sebat Bet Gurage: The Case of Chaha Gurage”. His finding became the role of blessing and curse by analyzing traditional conflict resolution mechanism in the community of Sebat Bet Gurage with particular reference to Cheha Gurage. Besides, Baye (1998) discussed the role of curse in four Ethiopian languages such as: Amharic, Oromo, Wolayitta and Nuer, which associate to the Semitic, Cushitic, Omotic and Nilo-Saharan phy-lum, respectively. He disclosed that there are meetings theoretically and linguistically among the four languages’ in which cursing expressions, as well as in the terms of greetings make. Tesfaye (2012) described self-cursing expressions used by women in the Kistane variety of Guragina. He found that self-cursing is used to inspire, appreciate, condole, praise, and definite graciousness in greetings.

2.5 Conceptual Framework for Functional Approach Analysis

Narratives of verbal arts are distinguished from other mode of social interaction by linked approach convention of time, place, and concern. According to Dorson, (1972) functional analysis in contextual approach is bearing in mind its social context. Supporting this belief, Bascom (1965) argued that the form is the same, although the functions varied, one cannot constantly express form only what the related functional analysis with contextual meanings. Finnegan (1977) emphasized that out the narrative of the blessing and curse as truly realized, achieved it a diverse time or to a different audience or a diverse blessing and curse. She further suggested that an oral narrative has no existence or continuity apart from its narrative, the abilities and nature of the narrator the nature and the reaction of the contextual, the audience, and the purpose.

This study emphasized on analyzing prominent narrative features in blessing and cursing expressions of the Amhara, Oromo and Gurage through the framework of functional analysis. Hence, it relies on the method of context analysis. Functional analysis settles on contextual forms revealed their values across societies. The framework of this study associates the points advised by these scholars but emphases on the practice appropriate to oral arts. Again for the sake of

manageability, this study focuses on functional analysis contributing towards the social harmonization which has high influence in the verbal art.

3. Results and Discussions

This section mainly focuses on the blessing and cursing notions in the societies of Ethiopia (Amhara, Oromo and Gurage).

3.1 Blessings in the Three Ethiopian Communities

Among the Ethiopian people, all blessings are believed to come from Almighty God who is portrayed in the folks’ worldview as concerned towards human beings and natural phenomena. Blessing is an omnipresent involvement in the culture performed at almost every life occurrence whether formal or casual. It occurs at various incidents and the matters addressed in the blessing which are showed by the kind of ceremonial or collecting on which it is achieved. This section reflects on the events and milieu of performance. As it is not likely to address all the situations on which the blessings are led, the discussion is confined to only some designated ones. Depending on the situation of their narratives, we may usually categorize Amhara, Oromo and Gurage, who use blessing into two broad categories: general context blessings and special context blessings. In the interest of saving space, few examples of the broad classifications will be used to deliberate on the performance procedures and contexts.

A. Blessings by Amharic Community in Bereket Woreda

!	May all your life time be so happy!
!	May your life be blessed!
!	May God bless you and your family!
!	May God put at what you want to be!
!	May God be with you!

Blessings are narrated easily at any time under any formal or casual occurrence with or without the need to assign the acts to certain group of people at ceremonial situation. These blessings address issues which are appropriate to everybody. Their show may not also want the right folks, physical or situations frequently wanted for a formal type of blessing. These blessings occur in a call-and-response process in which the heads among the members about the expressions, and the audience response to show receiving the blessing. In some areas, people response after blessing

givers using the word ‘amen’, which is reflected by our informants as a copying of other beliefs’ way of getting the blessings.

The occurrence usually creates with the praise of beloved ones, though that portion is amended from the above lines. Protection and peaceful life from the deed of malicious manners and evil doers invent at the top of all the needs. The desire to aspect good things in life and the growth of the little ones to development as well as the request for long life for the matured ones are among the concerns frequently addressed in this blessing. Hence, the matters are not regulated to special occurrences. The issue of who makes the blessing may not be really taken when the circumstance is casual, but from among the aides, it is headed by an elder one. The occurrence of the audience through practice makes the narration of Amhara, Oromo and Gurage blessings are similar to that of other verbal art types.

B. Blessings by Oromo Community in Boset Woreda

Gaariin si hindarbin; hamtuun si hinargin!	May not bad things be with you; may good things be with you!
Milkin si hindhabin; quluu ta’ii mul’adhu!	May success be you with, may you be outshined among others!
Karaa dugda lukkuu siif haa godhu!	May your journey be too short like the back of the hen!
Alagaa fira siif haa qadhu!	May God make distance people good relative for you!
Siree cabsii ka’i!	May you be fat in appearance after giving a birth!

Based on the data acquired from the basic informants, the local people thought that somebody who is blessed is successful in his/her career, successful in life. The blessing will have the happiest life ever. Besides, blessing has created social truth, as well as social, psychological, and moral value.

Narrators have used the above blessings stories to create a good society to satisfy the appetite of their new generations. If elders carefully narrate to their new generations, blessing functions as useful tools of social harmonization. This is an important issue regarding the social harmonization process. People encourage or praise others social values in order to show how something is being needed or showing acceptance by story narrative. As a result, the instructive function of blessing is relevant story in formal and informal controlling system of a traditional

society. Moreover, the above blessing stories are used as a self-contained element about interpreting reality, custom, situation and institution in the modern age. Besides, interpreting blessings based on elders’ interest can give functional value to promote the expected social structure or social relation in a given community.

C. Blessings by Gurage Community Abeshige Woreda

!	May God bless you!
!	May you be big guy!
!	May your parents be blessed!

The above data show the common procedure in the narrating of blessing in Gurage culture. The narrating usually begins with the praise of God though that blessing is cut out from the above lines. What follows after that is the request for harmony and safety for the individuals. Harmony and defense from the action of evil deeds and malicious doers come at the upper of all the wishes. The desire to face good effects in life and the growing of the little ones to adulthood as well as the demand for long life for the mature ones are amongst the fears constantly addressed in this blessing. Therefore, the matters are not limited to distinct occasions. The concern of who does the blessing may not be really taken when the milieu is informal, but from among the aides, it is managed by an eldest one. The partaking of the audience through a call-and-response system marks the narrating of Gurage blessing like to that of other oral art genres.

3.2 Curses in the Three Ethiopian Communities

In controlling a society that encounters moral dilemma, curses play their own significant roles in the process of maintaining the accepted norms, behavior and morally good practices. Curses function as means of reinforcing the social harmony and exercising good behavior, which are socially and culturally accepted in the life of society. Societies use curses to enforce behavior, manners, and practices to fit to the established social and cultural norms by avoiding immoral and unaccepted behavior. In other words, curses are used to pressure individuals' acts and behavior so that they empower source of knowledge which can be accepted as valuable norms by the society. In general, in the above arguments, curses can have stabilizing and instructing roles in the development of any people’s values, traditions, beliefs and customs. The function of curses in a society is promoting conformity to the common norms and ensuring their continuity across generations. Curses are used to inculcate the sense of responsibility of the customs and

ethical standards in the minds of people and provide them with defense mechanism when the institutions and norms are challenged.

A. Curses by Amhara Community in Bereket Woreda

!	Your child may not be obeyed to you!
!	May your age be shorten !
!	You may not reach what you wish to be put yourself!
!	May your womb become bared!
!	May you may not see your eye!
!	May your heredity be cursed at all !
!	May your grave open and you become downgrade!

The above expressions tell us how a person develops a feeling of warring attitude towards others when they do not do good things. Using these expressions, the society seems attempting to create good social values and social relations because creating of these elements in the society are vital issues to maintain good values and develop good moral principles. The stories confirm that an acknowledged conduct is desired for a continuous existence of a person and good social relations. Moreover, the society attempts to discourage the new generations about bad moral principle and the non-reputation of unaccepted deed does not show to its new generations. When anyone has acquired or discovered certain things by using his own effort, it is important to know that someone may snatch or takeover his chances and mischievous behaviors are not reflected.

These curse narratives show that divorce does not happen without any root causes. The narrators also believe that females may not dissolve their marriage without any precondition. Thus, the people are narrating the stories to investigate the root cause of divorcing of a certain marriage in Ethiopia. The above curses represent the beliefs of the society about inconvenient perception towards others. One of its most important functions is that it explains the social-cultural value which broadly clarifies societal practices that instruct people how to know unhealthy outlet once is in tragic situation. The story also explains the problems of unity that are causes of some social disorder. The stories tell us those elders who do not obey to the rules and cultural values and create the problem must be cursed. They are applied to people who made errors to wards other people and create social problems. They function as a teaching mechanism in rural areas because each of them explains how uncharacteristic traits affect the society’s life. The elders have

narrated the above curse stories to teach why some problems happen and how new generations become disillusioned if there are curses.

Curses are very important to teach how proper behavior happen and how social unity is achieved in complex human relations. They are also used to express constructed social behavior because human group requires instruction as possible meaning of the socio-cultural values. The society narrates the above curses stories to teach new generations about certain moral guideline because this explanation has been used with the purpose of uncovering the characteristics of human beings who are morally in dilemma.

B. Cureses by Oromo Community in Boset Woreda

Rabbin wan Badaa Sif Halaatu!	May God give you evil in your life!
Nama Keessaa Gadi Ta'ii!	May God make you below others!
Akki Sivkiaa!	May God make your life full of challenges!
Bookee Si haa qodhu!	May God make you mosquito!
Kan Facaafhe Si hin marqin!	May not you get what you seed on the earth!

The Oromo Community is probably similar to use curse narrative like that of Amhara community because what is cursed used today might have been for hatred practices. These curses are also used to express how evil spirits affect who have bad behavior Eastern Shoa Oromo society. The people use these curses to teach their children for creating good relationships among the community in which they believe that the cursed narrators and receivers of cursed may not have good. There may be a risk when elders have more power to impose on deviated person. When curses are imposed on new generations during unwanted behavior develop, curses givers want to impose on those who bring some unaccepted things. During this time, elders threat that bad luck happen upon those persons.

These curse narratives are used to how quarrelsome between two intimate friends begins. This may be because cursed narrative will follow when between two persons having been seen in turmoil situation. Bad communication may destroy cooperative interaction and it can be believed that quarrelsome is explained through curse narratives. The above curse narrative stories apply especially whom wrong doers become calmed down.

Elder puts stress on individual who wants to make troubles by himself if he has no endurance to wait till the furious situation permits; and if he miscarries to respect the ill elderly man whose

curse is so influential and destructive. The oral narrator also argues the meaning of taking care defenses when he is dealing with challenging situations. According to these curse narrators, valuing the elderly people is extremely respected; but the deviation from this traditional standard actually funds to lose societal standing. Hence, to be cursed by the aged people is measured to be a great ruin in one’s life.

Just as the belief in the Almighty God to deter deviance and sanction norm violator help in the maintenance of law and order in societies, curses are also informal social regulator methods for confirming social peace and order. Curse is anything considered bad to be sacred and forbidden not violated. In Oromo community in East Shoa of Ethiopia, a violator of an offensive is instructed to offer expenses to purify the violator of norm and beg for forgiveness for his or her bad behavior.

C. Curses by Gurage Community in Abeshige Woreda

!	May you be border stone !
!	May not be die, may not be disappear, may not get you bad, may you be good at distance!

These curses are narrated on the aim for making of disgrace and challenge in the daily life of the Gurage community. The elder curse any evil workers in the family members who become facing not good spirit in every time and to be successful with good lucks every person demands to a chance for between two opposite. Because, if there is a dissatisfaction in the mentality of elders, the trade, the activity and farming, the family are unchanged all the time and not to see good things by disturbing the peace and stability spirit using curse. The second one narrating curse shows to be not safe from various events. Because of this, the elders narrate the second curse story. The curses of family members are to be acknowledged in protecting through the symbolic access which is extensive open to let the curses in. The view of peace contains an individual when the earth and the sky are at not peace with them. Not peace, not strength, not safety, not power and not ease happen towards cursed person.

For the society to be not decently made and for upholding not sustainability in the upcoming generation, there is a curse ceremony for family members who wish to decrease their children morally and elegantly, teach children for the disadvantage of the non-innocent person. Thus, they said that “....., may you be good at distance.” The narrators have perceived that there are

important curse like “may not be disappear” upon someone with good meanings that make the dishonest person as if she/he sporting the elders.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Blessings and curses have their specific aims and purposes. The blessings and curses practiced by mankind as inducement and harmful moral reins. In this way, the communities used these to defend its societal value and submit to the Creator fairness. Blessing and curse are resulting from the normal law of the community because the blessing and the curse are said to be based on customary social controlling mechanism. Thus, blessings and curses can be used as customary law in order to enforcement which is done by the communities. Hence, elders, local leaders, and local people are using bless and curse for social control mechanism. These people supposed to have the control and ability to seek and relate with the common divine power before acting their function. In the present study, the researcher confirmed that blessings and curses have been valuable for informal social control mechanism.

The elders given to those community orders to bless and curses by the local community are so great and thought to prohibit and sanction on undesired social order.

Based on the outcomes of the study, the researcher recommends that the researchers and policy makers from governmental organizations should allow the informal and formal social control methods to balance each other to certify law and order in various societies the country as a whole. This should contain casual social control processes which do not invade upon the vital law and order mechanism of the people. These informal social control methods should be narrated into the practice of Ethiopian societies.

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