Primal Religion of Wolaitta in African Context

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Abstract: This article is intended to analyze primal religion of Wolaitta in African context. It has unique ritual characteristics which is overlooked by most of the the current community members. In order to investigate the primal religion of Wolaitta in African context, oral and written sources were used. The sources are intensively used to validate the concept of primal religion of Wolaitta in African context. The concept of theism in primal religion of Wolaitta is masked by the domination of Christianity since the 20th century. The religious practices and belief is known as eqqa. Primal religion of Wolaitta believes that Tossa (God) is the Supreme Being, and humans live in their own life-circle known as qadda (fate) and the rest creations going in their own phases as of the knowledge of Tossa (God). The primal religion of Wolaitta believe that morality and ethics as core issues which emanates from Tossa (God). Spirit in the primal religion of Wolaitta emanates from Tossa (God), mereta (nature), and the ancestral spirit of respective clans. The sacrifice (yariyshuwa) is a basic ritual practice in primal religion of Wolaitta in African context. Therefore, this article describes the indigenous wisdom of primal religion of Wolaitta to understand the material and spiritual world.

Keywords: Primal religion, God, spirit, divination, Wolaitta, African context

I. INTRODUCTION

African primal religion was dependent on the belief of supernatural power and its diviners in each society. As elsewhere in the world, religion was a source for moral values, and moral values regulated and harmonized human life. Up to present, there is no a particular founder for the primal religion of Africa (Mbiti, 1989, 1991). Each tribe or ethnic group had its own way of belief, understanding and practices to religious matters due to the cultural variations. The primal religion of Africa had the continuous participation of myths and rituals from generation to generation. African primal religion believed in Supreme Being, and the rituals in spirit and divination. It also had a belief of the cult of ancestors, practice of magic and spiritual powers. Even though primal African religion had no unifying element, the belief in Supreme Being, the activities of spirits and the practice of diviners were similar. It has moral code for human life. It has a belief of Supreme Being (god or God), the ancestors, and any spirits and power was invisible world. The inhabitants of invisible world was force of life. Supreme Being provided force of life. However, the immoral life and evil activities threatened the life force (Turaki, 2000; Beyers, 2010).

II. METHODOLOGY

The ethnographic survey is used in Wolaitta zone (sub-province) which have 15 districts. Wolaitta is found in the South Ethiopia (Ethiopia is found in east Africa). The study used both written primary and oral sources. Since this study mainly focused on ethnographic approach, it used community elders who have basic knowledge about Wolaitta past. The key informants were selected based on accumulated experiences and their consent. The written sources or documents were collected from Wolaitta Religious centers, Wolaitta Zone Culture, Tourism and Government Communication department, and various libraries and cultural centers in Wolaitta Soddo and national museum as well as libraries in Addis Ababa. The data collection method used include interview, focus group discussion, document-analyses and observations on Primal religion of Wolaitta.
After collecting the necessary data, qualitative interpretation was employed to explain the primal religion of Wolaitta form the African context.

III. COSMOLOGY OF PRIMAL RELIGION OF WOLAITTA AND ITS PRACTICES

The theism of Primal Religion of Wolaitta was/is God (Tossa). God (Tossa) is the source for all religious rituals. According to Primal Religion of Wolaitta, morality and ethics emanates from God (Tossa), and next to Tossa (God) or medha (creator), ayana (spirit) plays a vital role. The ayana (spirit) is manifested by the divination of mala and/or Sharechuwa (witchcraft or magician) who served as a mediator. Wolaitta believed that all spirits emanates from Tossa, and Tossa provided all things to human being. The early Wolaitta believed that the merreta (creation) in the salo-guffantua (universe) are beyond their control and it is fearful. The beginning of religion in Wolaitta was related with the belief of supernatural power and fear to creations in the universe. For this reason, ancient people of Wolaitta believed and accepted the concept that there was the controller of the universe in general and human being in particular.

Human being faced great challenge from the environment on which they lived and frightened them. Among the challenges natural calamities such as rain, erosion, landslide, death, disease, wind, rivers, lakes, waterfalls, hill, hole, thunder and the like enabled humans to think, to trust and to believe on it as their saver from these calamities. They also feared the attack of animals. Due to these factors, they sought to worship on supernatural power who controls the entire universe. This super natural power is known as Medha (creator). As informants states that in ancient Wolaitta it was forbidden to call the name of the Medha, and its name is not called here and there because it is a sign of fear and respect. Through gradual process, people begun to call his name as Salo-Tossa (sky God). The concept of Salowa (sky) in Wolaitta tradition is related with the place where creator found above them. For Wolaitta community, Salo-Tossa was the controller of the universe, and to save them from any calamities, they presented gifts and sacrifices to the Salo-Tossa, later they use the word Tossa (God) (Balisky, pp. 2009:70-71).

Tossa (God or one creator) is Supreme Being, and they have a practice in their clan spirit (ayana) next to Tossa. The belief on the practice of religious rituals was and/is known as Eqqa. According to oral tradition and written sources, Wolaitta concept of religion consists of three fundamental elements with different status. They were Tossa, Ayyana and Mala and/or Sharechuwa. Tossa is the Supreme Being of the Wolaita, equivalent to the Almighty God of the Christians or Allah of the Muslims. He was believed to be the creator of all things. It is believed that Tossa punishes if human being break the natural laws and do not obey Tossa. According to Primal religious belief of Wolaitta, Tossa allows natural or social factors for His punishment.

Informants insist that Medha (the creator, God) is preferable than calling Tossa but through the gradual process of time, the community left calling creator as Medha, and customized calling "Tossa." Tossa (God) is highly respected, honored and feared. The name of Tossa (God) is not mentioned or raised for simple cases. His name is above all names and is not allowed to call in all day to day activities. It is believed as balla (mistake) to call "Tossa" for simple cases and he or she has to take maroittta (purification) unless it may lead to gome (curse and punishment) and nagaraa (sin). He lives on sky, knows every thing (omnipotent), and he is above all.

Tossa is believed to be living forever, nobody knows his beginning and end. He is spirit, righteous, just, and good. Wolaitta people believed that He is above all diets and spiritual activities, and community refers him as Saluwa-Tossa (Tossa of the sky) or Bolla-Tossa (the Tossa of the universe). The concept of Tossa (God) in primal religion of Wolaitta is complex and beyond thinking. For this reason, Balisky (2009, p. 71) states that “He (Tossa) remains beyond their (Wolaitta) depiction.” Before the introduction of Christianity, Wolaitta people believed in him who lives in far distance and next to him there are agents to practice religious rituals. It seems for this reason that Balisky (2009, pp. 70-71) states Tossa lives far away from earth because of the sinful and bad behavior of human being.

Furthermore, Tossi–Erro (God know it) is the oath that is final oath in Wolaitta culture. Everybody expresses his/her wishes of good will of creator which is said to be Tossi-giko (if it is the will of God) is their common saying because they believed that knows, sees and hears whatsoever at any time. It is accepted belief that only any thing happen when the will of creator prevail over it. Balisky (2009: 70-71) states the concept of Tossa in indigenous belief of Wolaita as “the highest level is where the Wolaita high God Tossa dwells. He is the creator God who lives high above his creation and his greatly feared by all…Tossa is also all knowing.” The notion indicates primal religion of Wolaita accepts Tossa as the only Supreme Being despite denying people has belief in various spirits.

The concept of primal religion of Wolaita was ayyana (spirit). According to Wolaitta tradition, God was not represented by any symbol anything else. Ayyana (spirit) had manifested as either God (Tossa) or the devil. According to Chiatti (1984, p.70) God was believed to be “existing forever, and is omnipresent and omnipotent.” Ayyana was/is the replacing or representing matter of either Tossa or Talahiya. There were/ are two ayyana. These were tilo-ayana (benevolent spirit) and ita-ayana (malevolent spirit). It was believed that tilo-ayana assist every good doings and right achievements of the community where as ita-ayana is responsible for all bad and wrong actions. It is believed that the source for tilo-ayana is Tossa and the source for ita-ayana is Talahiya (Davis, 1966; Belete, 2000). They believe that it could affect a person if he was a murderer, thief, adulterer or who failed to respect his parents and so on.

After introduction of Christianity, the concept of Talahiya (devil) became the big deal in Wolaitta in primal religion. Wolaitta people believed that Talahiya had power to destruct the community. It is also believed that the spirit of Talahiya is present and living in cima (depression/deep
hole), around mitta (big trees), kaka (precipice or cliff), abba (lakes), shaafu (rivers) and dura (dense forest). The big rivers such as Uma (Omo), Deme, Bilate, Mane’isa and the like were considered active places of Tañaliya. People feared Tañaliya and worshiped to it in order to escape from all evil or wrong fortunes it may impose on them. For instance, poverty, famine, disease, death, physical attack on some of the body part and other evil circumstances were believed to be imposed by Tañaliya. Gormotya (sorcerer). There is a belief by the society that the Tañaliya didn’t touch if there is slaughtering of goat and cattle or animal to it as sacrifice mostly a nearby river, lake, mountain, big trees and so on. Apart from this, the evil spirit was believed to be manifested on some individuals as goromotiya or higisha (sorcerer).

Some of the specific places were honored according to primal religion. These are makana (cemetary or burying ground), gutara (sociocultural meeting place), gurauwa (palace), mita (port, boundary) and the like. Thus, grasses, trees, animals, birds and the like in this places weren’t hunted. In some times people even put food in this areas as a symbol of sacrifice and honor to it. In the same manner people sacrifice and honor ita-ayana (Dea, 2005; Meleku, 2007; Lambebo, 2016). This because people feel that ita-ayana may cause disaster. It was for this reason that Kaplan (1984) argued that Ethiopian society worshiped for devil when they face a challenge, and Wolaitta society also had such experience when they were destroyed by calamities. The division of spirits into tilo-ayana (good spirit), ita-ayana (evil spirit) and awa-ossua (ancestral spirits) probably appeared after the introduction of Christianity.

After, Christianity, primal religion believed that Tañaliya has given power from Tossa (God) to control its agents, and Tossa (God) permitted for Tañaliya to do what ever it like on its adherents. Contrary, Tilo-ayana (good spirit) is always doing good and all good things were created by Tossa (God) through Tilo-ayana (good spirit) (Lambebo, 2016).

Thus, some clans of the Wolaitta worshiped their ancestral spirits called Awa-Tossa. It is said that the ancestral spirits had the power and authority to prevent them distraction. For instance some of the selected clans such as Adda, Agarshowa, Gada and the like believed in spirit of wolqanta (Lightening) and dada (Thunder); Agawu, Amara, Angotiya, Badaditiya, Badigadala, Fatagara, Mashu, Maraqwuwa and the like believed in spirit of giorgissa (syncretism of the Saint George); Angotiya Zatuwa, Zatuwa, Warareta and the like believed in spirit of Abboroda; Aysarsuwa, Qosiggga, Hirayituwa and the like believed in spirit of kitosa (syncretism of the Christ after influence of Christianity); Babula believed in spirit of Muluqusha; Dohaya, Damoia, Masreya, Womogira and the like believed in spirit of Hamibazza; and Ganziya believed in spirit of Haalla.

Besides, Golla, Herigera and Hili-Malla were believed in spirit of Aulachuwa; Guririmala believed in spirit of Ashelo; Hirayituwa believed in spirit of Homboba; Larosuwa believed in spirit of Kama/Womba; Maka believed in spirit of Maqera; Moghiya believed in spirit of Aljanuwa; Wolaitta-Malla believed in spirit of Boshasha; Womanaaqa believed in spirit of Dumbubu; Woshesha believed in spirit of Ingilala; Wucha believed in spirit of Yaferro; Yagayiya believed in spirit of Dosha; Zantala believed in spirit of Andiya; Zambocha believed in spirit of Haazuula; Zaminiya believed in spirit of Gamanu; Zagotadinya believed in spirit of Landiya, Argama believed in Awa-Kada and so on. In Wolaitta oral history this spirits were believed to be very active until the coming of Protestant Christianity religion to the area (Chiatti, 1984; Gutulo, 2003; Amado, 2003; Geramo, 2009; Babanto, 1979). In Wolaitta oral history this spirits were believed to be very active until the coming of Christianity religion in the 20th century to the area (Walelu, 1956; Wakasa, 2008; Balisky, 2009; Geramo, 2009).

Majority of clans also believed on spirits of some natural creations and resources such as Awa (sun), Agina (moon), Tolinitiya (star), dembu (plain), deriya (hill), Dada/Wolqanta (Thunder and Lightening), Mitta (big trees), shuchcha (stone), mizza (cattle), zula (rainbow), kaffiuwa (birds), paliyabaita (insects), medosata (some animals) and dozata (plants). Besides, some clans commonly believed on spirits of creations. For instance, clans such as Agura, Arachia, Kawuka and Qalicha believed on the spirit of geleshuwa (monkey), clans such as Kanchachiliya, Lonto-Malla, Maka and others believed on the spirit of Etta (Sycamore Fig) tree, clans such as Boshiya, Tigriya and Gollo-malla believed on the spirit of Awa (sun), clans such as Martoqa and Mugareta believed on the spirit of mizziyo (cow), clans such as Bohaliya and Wageshuwa believed on the spirit of Worqa (Gold), clans such as Gajja and Wojiwu believed on the spirit of deriya (hill), Agawu clan believed on the spirit of shuchcha (stone), Awirareta clan believed on the spirit of sa’a (land), Ganziya clan believed on the spirit of dureata (prosperity), Gonduwa clan believed on the spirit of zula (rainbow), Gawurarwu clan believed on the spirit of aba (lake), Gisha clan believed on the spirit of lehiya (pumpkin), Mayiliya clan believed on the spirit of kana (dog), Qogo-Malla clan believed on the spirit of korasiya (crow), Qessiga clan believed on the spirit of sosuwa (waterfall), Kominya clan believed on the spirit of shararatoyta (spider), and rest clans had believed on different spirits (Abate, 1980, Ali, 1990, Wagesho, 1994, Meja, 2008; Balisky, 2009). Informants list these ancestral spirit, and they stated many other spirits might have been forgotten in the social memory. Moreover, some objects, places and creations which had spiritual or soul essence to living things. As stated in this paper, Wolaitta traditional religion had believed on the influence of spirits and/ power of some plants, animals, rivers, mountains, rocks, other natural creations such as thunder, lightening, hurricane, snow-rainfall and so on. Besides, Wolaitta community had believed that after the death, the soul of living things especially human-being had influenced the world. For this reason, they had the belief and sacrifice to the ancestral spirits such as moyitiya (died spirit) and makana (burial place). The ayana was believed to be emanated from Tossa, Tañaliya, ancestor and various creations. Hence, ayana was the main issue of Wolaitta traditional religion and the concept ayana in Wolaitta was almost similar to speaking of God.

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The third concept in Wolaitta was the concept of divination of spirit mediums of sharechuwa (witchcraft) and/or mala (the magician). According to informants, it was impossible to directly contact with either the creator, and hence, creator is reached via the agents or spirit of mediums known as sharechuwa (witchcraft) and/or mala (the magician). Both terms possessed power and authority from ayana, and they serve as agents for it. The sharechuwa had no interaction and connection with the people in social way of life. This was because it was believed that the spirits weren’t active if the sharechuwa didn’t keep him self from such interaction and he didn’t shake the hand or body of others. Thus, he was appearing in common place and social occasions everywhere. He didn’t cut and remove his hair form his body.

In Wolaitta, sharechuwa and/or mala is mostly male and isolate himself from community. Though the practice of sharechuwa and/or mala, he had interaction with social occasions and other way of life. It was believed that both sharechuwa and/or mala could have power to bless and bring curse on individuals life; what ever he say might happened on an individual. It was believed that mala and/or sharechuwa had the ability to differentiate the nature of spirits and had power to an individual. Sharechuwa and/or mala was known in to different names and functions include Borrodiyaga, Maraichiya-tiliyaga, Shucha-qoryaga, Muruniyaga, Qalicha and the like.

The sharechuwa and/or mala of Borrodiyaga was a man who could speak in strange languages or tell prophetic words that would come against individuals. He didn’t cut and remove his hair. He didn’t shake hand and body of others. Thus, he was appearing in common place and social occasions everywhere. He didn’t cut and remove his hair form his body.

The development of complex-social environment enabled Wolaitta people to use spirit mediums to give yarishuwa (sacrifice) to the creator. Before the existence of the spirit mediums people presented sacrifice around big trees, rivers, mountains, forests and the like. The practitioners of the spirit mediums claimed that they had right and responsibility to connect the traditional religious practice of Wolaitta people with the creator (Chiatti, 1984; Awato, Banjawan, Shiferew and Anebo, 1991; Mojoa, 2007; Balisky, 2009; Dea, 2005). The sacrifices of the Wolaitta traditional religion was to escape the calamities and to give thank. The primary concern of the belief was first to save themselves in from danger, and the sacrifice was offered. The other purpose of traditional religion were to secure all matters of the material world and eternal life; i.e life after death. As it was in ancient Egypt and other parts of the ancient world, Wolaitta believed on the fate of life after death.

Informants asserted that moral doings on the earth determines the scenario of life after death. The practices of morally right doing during life time was the basic principle to achieve safe life after death. If the one had died in Wolaitta, the community expressed their wish to be his/her soul in rest in the following phrase; “Tossay shempuwa marroo” meaning May God give mercy for his soul (May God put his/her soul in peace. After the death of somebody, community members pray for pardon of his/her soul of any wrong doings which he/she might have committed when he/she was alive. The community believed that creator would heard their pray. This expression confirms that Wolaitta believed that there was/is life after death, and indicates primal religion was/is consciousness about the life after death and every moral doings were associated with life after death. For this reason, primal religion of Wolaitta believes on the principle that states morally right doing would make safe life, after death. On the other hand, wrong doings would led to punishment of life after death, however, the primal religion do not define what kind punishment it may wrong doings cause after death.

Moral wrong doings would lead to the punishments and curse from Tossa, and due to this, Wolaitta community was extremely depended on moral guides. This was because no written script found in Wolaitta traditional religion. The wrong activities may lead to gome (similar to the word curse) and nagara (sin that leads to punishment from creator). Wolaitta people practice a praying ceremony known wossa either individually or in group. For instance, if there is no rain they pray “iwe woze” meaning they were in need of rain, and they believed that the disobedience to creator led to lack of rain in harvest season. For this reason, they ask pardon from creator by saying “Toosso maara” meaning May God allow your mercy on us. This was one of the traditional praying way of Wolaitta to Tossa for his forgiveness unto sins or any punishment which was believed to be sent by creator. As the sign of submission and reconciliation with creator, Wolaitta people conduct yarishuwa (sacrifice). It is mostly done by giving the elder bull, goat, sheep and the like which must be symbolic and genuine. Thus, it was believed that at the end the ceremony of yarishuwa, sin would be canceled and either individual or group would make oath not to conduct it again. Thus, gome (curse and punishment) and nagaraa (sin) would be erased and a person who had under this circumstances were believed to be free after offering the yarishuwa.

Yarishuwa was also offered after the keeping of their material from the attack of humans. Wolaitta community had the belief of giqa (covenant to sacrify for spirit due to its protection of property especially crops from human and animal attacks). In giqa process, covenant to offer various
sacrifices to the ancestral spirit was/is made. For the keeping of properties from human and animal attack for specific time interval, the owner provide sacrifice to its respective ancestral spirit. *Giqa* was symbolized by three and above meters scared stick-wood. *Giqa* scared stick-wood would stand on the middle of crops until it would be collected. After the collection the crop, the owner take the *gatuuwa* (offer) to the practitioner of ancestral spirit. Besides, *yarishua* (sacrifice) was/is offered in household level by the elder of the family or by the chief of the clan. *Yarishua* (sacrifice) was offered for all day today practices but especial sacrifice was offered when the crop or cattle reproduced; increase in trade profit; get fertility of land; normalization of seasons; fertility of the first marriage; new born baby especially, birth of male; constructing new hut; increment in wealth; and any other positive things happens.

The *yarishua* was believed to be precious, must be carefully prepared and acceptable offer by the spirit. This was one of the indication that Wolaitta people believed in assistance supreme God and in various agents. For this reason, Balisky states the following witness on Wolaitta traditional religion sacrifice to the creator:

The primal religion of Wolaita is a living religion that is vitally involved in all aspects of community life like Christian religion; it has a concept of the high God, the need for sacrifice, a code of moral behavior, community dynamics in repentance, a reverence for the cycles of nature, specified ritual in worship, on a strong belief in the power of evil... They (Wolaita) gather together at a designated place and offer an animal as a sacrifice and then repent of their sins, beginning Ṭossa for forgiveness. In the Wolaita language this ritual is called *sigeta*, meaning ‘reconciliation,’ between God and the people (Balisky, 2009, p.80).

All activities of day today either bad or good associated with *ayana* and were believed to be below God. For the reason of the daily activities sacrifices were offered to *ayana*. The days in Wolaita such as *Sagga* (Monday), *Wolila* (Wednesday), *Bizza* (Friday) and *Wogga* (Sunday) were believed to be special days in which any calamities may happen and considered as ritual days. These days were called as *Atuma-Wonata* literary male days, however, the reality is to indicate these days were evil days. The *Tañahiya* was believed to be the source for all bad things. It was manifested by various things. For instance, one of the manifestation was *Mimmintiya* (leviathan) which rise from Lake Abaya and stretches to eat star on the sky. Due to this people frightened for *Mimmintiya*, and other bad spirits from lake Abaya as well as from land. The traditional Wolaitta religion had a belief of good spirit and they offer the sacrifice to it too (Chiatti, 1984). For this reason, Wolaita had different agents of spirit as individuals and deities.

IV. MONOTHEISM CONCEPT OF PRIMAL RELIGION OF WOLAITTA

Wolaitta tradition religion has complex ritual process its concept but it was/is monotheism. It was labelled with deism in sense that Ṭossa (God) created the universe and left it to be operated by natural laws under the general direction of God himself. Primal religion of Wolaitta believed Ṭossa was/is male and father. This was because they associate strengthen with male and father as the head of family. As males rule and govern, the father was a one who controls all things in a given family, and he is the supreme over a given family. For this reason Wolaitta people had the concept to accept God as supreme and father of all thing in the universe. He was also the only super power and the rest were under His control. Thus, primal religion of Wolaitta has the concept of monotheism with the honoring the spirit below Ṭossa God. It seem for this reason that Chatti puts the character of Wolaita tradition God and belief in the following manner: “He Ṭossa can be considered as a ‘deus otiosus’ (‘idle god’)” (Chiatti, 1984, p.73).

Furthermore, primal religion of Wolaitta believes that Ṭossa (God) leave the universe to be regulated by natural law. For this reason people believe various spirits. This was led to the beginning of worshiping on many ancestral clan spirits and belief in spirits. The ancestral clan spirits was/is believed to be operating for their respective clans. In this regard, a small collection of respective ancestral spirits were believed to be powerful for the respective events in the community. Wolaitta people believed in one creator but practice the religious rituals via spirit medians. Through gradual process they begun to respond only to ancestral spirits and spirit medians. Ṭossa was the creator and all spirits are below him. For this fact they honor Awa-Ṭossa (ancestral spirit) in all *eqqa* (faith).

The concept of *Eqqa* is “broadly translated as worshipping or faith” (Dea, 2005, p.4) was/is vital element of Wolaitta traditional religion. It is performing of religious rituals and its ceremony as a mandatory code of conduct in Wolaitta traditional religious life. The primal religion have principles of respect of humanity and nature. It is the performance of religious ritual having the belief that spirit medians had the authority to exercise the power vested by the creator to do so. Through the process of time, Wolaitta community depended and accepted that spirit medians as a short cut to meet with creator and its spirit. Due to this people believed that is near to reach spirit medians than creator and obeyed all thing to spirit medians and each clan associated its ancestral spirit to creations in the universe. The ancestral spirits of clans were associated with some creations such as sun, moon, star, rain, river, lake, soil, mountain, plants, animals and so on. Indeed regard, primal religion has association with animism. Similar to this, Awolalu (1975) stated that African primal religion has animistic nature. As part of Africa, Wolaita primal religion had the animistic character, and the religious spiritual mythology next to Ṭossa (God).

However, this doesn’t mean Wolaitta primal religion had a belief in one creator, and the people believed that these animism were the agents of the creator who were considered as spirit medians. The people believed spirit medians as agents of creator and animism of creation. Though there was no concept of evil spirit in primal religion originally, people associates such spirit with bad coincidences. Thus, the community call such evil spirit as “ita-ayana” which
emanates from Ţalahiya (Devil) as they believe.

In order to escape from such bad coincidences, its believers offered "yarishuwa" (sacrifice) to Ţalahiya. The primal religion in Wolaitta was called as "mayza-eqqa" or mayza-amanuwa (indigenous belief), and its creator was Ţossa or Salo-Ţossa (creator of all). The ritual activities of primal religion in Wolaitta. At present, the practice of primal religion was currently limited to Kindo and Koyisha districts among 12 rural districts of Wolaitta. Currently, majority of Wolaitta are protestant Christians (Dea, 2005; Lambebo, 2016).

V. CONCLUSION

The primal religion of Wolaitta has the concept of theism in which Ţossa, who owns the universe, created all things, knows everything and controls all. He lives permanently in Degara-Saluwa (beyond Blue-Sky) but can appear in everywhere invisible form. Spirit (ayana) and divination of mala and/or sharechuwa (witchcraft or magician) are also integral parts in primal religion of Wolaitta. The concept of monotheism in primal religion of Wolaitta was masked by the domination of Christianity since 20th century. The eqqa (overall ritual practices or belief) in primal religion of Wolaitta is defined from the view point of Ţossa (God). Next to Ţossa (God), ayana (spirit), divination practices of mala and/or sharechuwa (witchcraft or magician) and yarishuwa (sacrifice) are the basic themes of primal religion of Wolaitta, and influence the activities of humans. In Primal religion of Wolaitta, Ţossa and ayana are reachable to the community via mala and/or sharechuwa (witchcraft or magician) or via ancestral spirit of their respective clans. The yarishuwa (sacrifice) is an offered (gatuwa) to honor, to escape gome (curse and punishment), to avoid nagaraa (sin), to accept anjuwa (blessing) and other spirit related obligations in usual business. Primal religion of Wolaitta vital moral and ethical values to humanity and its environment. Its principles emanates from God. Currently, majority of the community in Wolaitta has forgotten the role of primal religion of Wolaitta in spiritual realm due to the domination of Christianity since 20th century.

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