CHAPTER III
MATERIALS, METHODS AND FIELDWORK EXPERIENCES

Materials
A) Sampling Techniques

This study was conducted in Horro Guduru. Three sample districts, namely, Abee Dongoro, Horro, and Jaardagaa Jaartee were selected for the study. These three sample districts were selected (out of a total of nine districts of the site) on the basis of purposive and cluster sampling methods. Purposive sampling was found relevant because almost all the entire forest remains of Horro Guduru are found in these districts. The purposive sampling decision was made in line with the nature of the research which was essentially qualitative. In this kind of research, sampling decisions are often taken on a substantial, concrete level rather than on an abstract and formal level. Advocators of qualitative or ethnographic research suggest purposeful decision for a specific case rather than random sampling (Rabinow 1984, Flick 2006, Barbour 2008). This is important for reliable understanding of specific case so that valid data would be procured.

Relevant government officers and key informants as well as their networks were selected by snow ball sampling method. But to generate data from extraordinarily scattered peasant households, the three representative forest districts were clustered into nine vicinities. Therefore, the researcher has got three categories to determine the sample size through purposive sampling: the final sample sites or gandas (vicinities) inhabiting representative forest areas, relevant local experts and authorities, and key informants along with their networks. By means of this purposive sampling, 77 informants (local experts and authorities) were selected from relevant local government institutions and 8 key informants were selected from Horro and Abee Dongoro districts. Besides, nine representative gandas were selected from the three districts purposively.

Since each gandas have an average of 144 peasant households, the researcher utilised another strategy to select informants from a crude total of 1304 peasant households of the nine purposively sampled gandas. It was here that cluster sampling method has become a pertinent strategy to make use of to select the final sample size of peasant households.

In the cluster sampling strategy, the researcher employed anthropological techniques as demonstrated by H. Russell Bernard (2006). Bernard defines, “Cluster sampling is a way to sample populations for which there are no convenient lists or frames”. He further elaborates that
Cluster sampling is also a way to minimise travel time in reaching scattered units of data collection. According to Bernard, cluster sampling is based on the fact that people act out their lives in more or less natural groups, or clusters. He is of the opinion that people live in geographic areas like countries, states, districts, and so on; participate in activities of varied institutions—both informal and formal institutions. For Bernard, even if there are no convenient lists of people whom one wants to study or screen for data generation, one can sample areas or institutions and locate a sample within those clusters.

There were no ganda or household lists convenient for the present study in Horro Guduru. But they could be clustered based on geographic grid references. There were sets of gandas or households within some interval distance geographic grids across districts alongside target forest areas. So, it was possible to take a sample and then select informants from each ganda or household. The idea is, cluster sampling is to narrow the sampling field down from large, heterogeneous chunks to small, homogeneous ones that are relatively easy to sample directly. Sometimes, though, the researcher has to create the initial sampling frame on his own. Keeping this in mind, the researcher followed a kind of “spoiling down strategy” or multistage sampling to finally select research informants from the nine gandas to generate ethnographic materials.

The general geographic grid reference used to frame representative gandas is roughly located between $9^\circ35'62"$ North to $9^\circ45'15"$ North latitude and $36^\circ55'57"$ East to $37^\circ10'10"$ East longitude. This geographic grid reference was adopted from and determined based on available [watershed] maps for Tulluu Waayyyuu of Abee Dongoro district (EMA 1982) and Shaambu of Horro district (EMA 1983), as produced by the Ethiopian Mapping Agency (EMA) in these two years for these districts. Latest data source which could serve this purpose was unavailable.

There lie roughly nine gandas and about 1304 households within this general geographic grid frame. From this crude list of households within this geographic grid reference the researcher has randomly selected 260 peasant households as the final sample size by using five interval calculation and administered semi-structured interviews.

The 260 peasant households were again clustered into nine categories for interview expediency. These entail four clusters round Caato sacred forest (Dachaa Caabirra, Bonee
Abuuna, Daargee Kooticha and Dabbisii clusters); three clusters round Qonge forest ecozone (Odaa Bulluq, Akkaajji Sabbat and Daaddoo clusters); and two clusters along Tulluu Laaftoo forest (Goortee and Tulluu Mootii clusters).

**B) The Informants**

i) Local Authorities and Experts, and Peasants

Informants were selected from cross-sectional setups. They have been categorised into three sets according to the sampling technique employed and the depths of interviews conducted. The three groups entail: group of local authorities and experts (selected purposively for their relevance to the study), group of peasant households (selected through geographic grid referenced cluster sampling as they were found quite scattered and suitable census on peasant households residing in or beside forest ecozones was lacking), and group of key informants (who were aged or most experienced informants believed to know both the past and present situations in relation to the study). A focus on age and experience of the key informants was sought to close up possible knowledge gaps which might arise when important research questions have been addressed. This latter group was thus selected purposively based on their experience confirmed through their social status and preliminary queries.

Moreover, some informants were interviewed through three separate FGDs and some other ‘opportunite’ ones were also considered for interviews. For all, the preceding strategies were found more pertinent and fruitful to the context of this study.

Tables 3.1 and 3.2 would treat the details of information about informants selected from formal institutions and peasant households respectively. Table 3.1 is all about those informants from both governmental and non-governmental institutions. Table 3.2 describes details of information about the peasants selected from sample peasant households for the study. The details of information about the key informants were provided in textual form accompanying the details of information about the foregoing two informant categories.
Table 3.1: Information about informants selected from formal institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Educational level</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Religion</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>65+</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
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<tr>
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<td>--</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>9</td>
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</tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
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<td>--</td>
<td>72</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3.9</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>93.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2: Details of information about peasant informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Marital life</th>
<th>Educational level</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Religion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-44</td>
<td>45-65</td>
<td>65+</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Unmarried</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>--</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per cent</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>59.2</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>98.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OFWE=Oromia Forest and Wildlife Enterprise, LECO=Land and Environmental Conservation Office, EFDA=Education for Development Association, CT=Culture and Tourism, CJP=Court, Justice and Police
Table 3.1 depicts that a total of 8 formal institutions were chosen, out of which a total of 77 informants were selected for semi-structured interviews. About 96.1 per cent of these informants were within the age range of 15-45, while the remaining informants (3.9 per cent) were within the age group of 45-65. About 93.5 per cent of these informants were males whereas about 6.5 per cent were females. About 87 per cent of these informants were married while the remaining ones (12 per cent) were unmarried—not married at all. The educational level of these informants indicates that about 67.5 per cent, 23.3 per cent, 3.9 per cent, and 1.3 per cent of them have reached or earned undergraduate degree, secondary level, primary level, and postgraduate degree respectively. The entire informants (100 per cent) were from the Oromo ethnic group, as the area is predominately inhabited by this ethnic group and most formal institutions were equipped with personnel from this people, perhaps on account of the official language of the area known as Afaan Oromo. Religious status of these informants display that about 58.4 per cent and 33.8 per cent belong to Protestantism and Orthodox Tewahido Christianity respectively. Waaqeffannaa (Oromo religion), Islamic and Catholic Christianity religious followers constituted about 3.9 per cent, 2.6 per cent, and 1.3 per cent respectively.

Table 3.2 shows that about 59.2 per cent, 24.6 per cent, and 16.2 per cent of the peasant informant were within the age group of 45-65, above 65, and 15-44 respectively. About 98.5 per cent of these peasant informants were males while females comprised of only 1.5 per cent. About 96.2 per cent of the peasant informants were from the Oromo ethnic group while the rest (about 3.8 per cent) were from non-Oromo ethnic groups. The latter were mixed groups of Oromo and Amhara (either the husband was from Amhara while the wife was from Oromo or vice versa). But they were “Oromised” (immersed in Oromo culture) peasant households as a result of unprecedented supreme recognition given to Oromo linguistic identity in Oromia regional state ever since 1991.

Peasants informants from the Protestant religion constituted about 50.2 per cent while the remaining percentage belongs to different religious groups—Orthodox Tewahido Christianity (about 41.5 per cent), Islam (about 4.6 per cent) and Waaqeffannaa (about 3.1 per cent). All (100 per cent) of the peasant informants were living marital life—it was witnessed that the average family size for these peasant informants was 10, i.e. 4 at the minimum and 16 at the maximum. About 45.4 per cent of the peasants did not earn any educational level though about 29.2 per cent
of them were literate—they could read and write Amharic language which was the result of compulsory adult education provided to rural peasants during the military regime. Finally, about 13.9 per cent and 11.5 per cent of these peasant informants have reached secondary and primary educational levels respectively.

ii) The Key Informants

There were eight key informants that this study extensively relied on (Appendix VI). While all of them were from Oromo ethnic group and were males in gender only three were from peasants—key informants WD of Horro district, and DB and BJ of Abee Dongoro district.1 The former was a 77 years old widow living in Saqalaa town. He has lost his two wives—from whom he has got a total of 13 children (6 daughters and 7 sons)—to disease recently. He claims that he is adherent of Waageffannaa religion though the researcher has often times observed him while he used to pay invocation to God through the doctrine of Orthodox Tewahido Christianity. He was accompanying the researcher in his fieldwork in some areas of Horro Guduru. During that intimacy, he used to invoke Orthodox Tewahido Christianity Churches whichever come on the way. So, he has mixed religious identity in this sense. He was the only well off informant the researcher has encountered. This is because, besides agriculture, he used to engage in petty trade. He was literate who could read and write Amharic language without having any sort of educational level.

The second was an 83 years old illiterate peasant living as head of 17 family members in Tulluu Waayyuu town of Abee Dongoro district. His wife was from Amhara ethnic group who has given birth to 15 children—7 sons and 8 daughters. He subsists on agriculture with ever deteriorating output which he claims was because of decrease in soil fertility and frequent death of farm-oxen to recurrent droughts. His religious identity was similar to that of WD. The third peasant key informant was a 76 years old married peasant. He claims that he was a strict follower of Orthodox Tewahido Christianity. He reads and writes Amharic language but had not attained any sort of educational ladder. These three peasant key informants were accessed through snowball method. They appear to have been superior storehouse of the knowledge and experience about the general socio-economic, political, cultural, religious, geographical and environmental conditions of the Horro Guduru.

1 All the block characters used for the key informants in this thesis are adopted for anonymous reason
Five key informants were from formal institutions—four from government institutions and one from local NGO. One of the government employee key informants (BG) was from LECO of Abee Dongoro district. He was 37 and has been serving the office since September 2010. He was a married Oromo and Orthodox Tewahido Christian having a son and a wife as family members. He has earned a diploma in natural resources management and was currently pursuing his undergraduate degree in management. He was selected as key informant based on his experience as resident of the district and concerns he has been witnessing as environmentalist for the past five years in the area. That is, though the institution he has currently been serving was very young, he has been involving in environmental issues in the district four years ahead of coming to this institution.

The other employee key informants were from Horro district. One (TH) was aged 32, unmarried and serving the institution of LECO in Horro district with undergraduate degree in natural resources management. He claims to have been a devoted follower of Protestantism. Another key informant was GT—aged 55. He claims that he has been devoted attendant of the Waaqeffannaa religion. He was head of nine household members and holder of undergraduate degree in history. He was one of the most cooperative, analytical and experienced key informants the researcher had encountered during his fieldwork.

The other equally analytical and experienced key informant was OG. Aged 74, adherent of Orthodox Tewahido Christianity, head of 7 household members, he has got diploma in geography. He has been engaging in government offices as district administrator and coordinator of educational offices in Horro Guduru. Another key informant from employees was TJ; aged 42, devoted Protestant, head of six family members. He was holder of undergraduate degree in agricultural extension. Currently, he has been serving as director of the overall agricultural institution of Horro Guduru. In general, these eight key informants were accessed based on their social status which did confirm their relatively better knowledge and experience about the conditions of forest resources in Horro Guduru over years.

**Methods**

The researcher has applied some pertinent strategies to generate data. He has employed archival examination, observations (both participant and non-participant), and case studies which
were conducted both within and without the areas enclosed within the general geographic grid reference. The researcher has also applied three kinds of interviews. These entail semi-structured interviews with local experts and peasant households, in-depth interviews with the key informants, informal interviews with ‘opportunite’ informants and FGDs with some peasants and Caato sacred forest guards.

The number of participants in the semi-structured interviews was relatively large—77 local authorities and experts and 260 peasant households. But the questions administered to them were relatively very short and partially structured. The number of participants in the in-depth interviews and informal interviews was quite small—8 key informants and some few ‘opportune’ ones. However, interview questions administered to them were rather exhaustive. FGDs were made at three sets: one with eight peasants round Qonge forest ecozone, another with six females who subsist on firewood collection and sale emanating from Qonge forest ecozone and still another with six guards of Caato sacred forest.

Relevant archival sources which were found from the offices of the federal government of Ethiopia, Oromia regional state, Horro Guduru zone, and the three sample districts were captured and utilised as the need has arisen. Observation (non-participant) of deforested areas, forest fires, actions and strategies in forest resources protection and utilisation, and ritualised environments were secured. Four relevant rituals—Garanfasa Hagayyaa at Caato sacred forest, Garanfasa Furmaa at Tulluu Corree sacred scene, Gadaa Bacho at Odaa Bulluq sacred scene, and hunting practice at Qonge forest—were studied through participant observation method. Thus, the study has traversed across social sections and different environments in Horro Guduru.

Data generated through these strategies were based on the guiding questions formulated in English at the outset and also reformulated in local language (Afaan Oromo) based on the fieldwork situations while it was in progress. Data generated in local language were transcribed and again set into English language for analysis and writing up of the thesis. Tables, charts, quoting narrations, analysing conversations and texts for case studies were utilised for data analysis.
Fieldwork Experiences

Anthropological fieldwork could envelope both scaring—which often times is traumatic—and insightful—which usually engages easily enjoyable mental template—ethnographic processes. This ironic coexistence in an ethnographic fieldwork process prevails, perhaps at the cost of the researcher. This is because research into human culture needs almost every sort of wisdom and technique through which apparent paradoxes would come out on the way of one’s perceptions and the way he or she could understand things and actions. This in turn is due to the complexity and dynamism of human behaviour that one could seldom exhaust the whole reality at a glance of perceptual spot. Indeed, the more one delves into the depth of cultural layers the greater the complexion and dynamism it becomes and the larger the description it yields. So, a holistically arranged approach appears a second to none strategy to generate data so that all desired ethnographic materials might not remain beyond the frontier of eventual analysis. Nevertheless, the ethnographic efforts made to generate pertinent materials would never come out bereft of unease which sometimes tend to halt the progress. In this sense, it is useful to note some unforgettable scenarios the researcher had experienced during his major fieldwork periods in Horro Guduru, particularly those witnessed in Horro and Abee Dongoro districts from January to June 2011. Some six points are in order.

First, the four weeks of April 2011 were the most unfavourable and unbearable fieldwork periods for the researcher, though he has endured. This time was the third phase of the fieldwork which was mainly conducted in Abee Dongoro district. Apart from lack of accommodation, infrastructure, and traumatic perception of dangerous wild animals in this most forested region of Horro Guduru, the researcher was being terrified by some hear-sayings. It was reported time after time that some illegal settlers in the district have clandestinely used to hunt and shot any person who attempts to investigate deep into the forest of Tulluu Lafftoo “protected” forest. These illegal settlers were armed and have inhabited the western side of this forest. Administrators of the district warned the researcher that he could have no warranty for save return if he makes an attempt to study the illegal settlers’ situation by staying in the district for some considerable time. The administrators retort that they had lost two police in 1992, just in an attempt to withhold the expansion of illegal settlement in and beside the forest and thus they did immediate report to the highest echelon of Oromia regional state. But response has yet to come.
Subsequently, the researcher was forced to leave the district without making detailed investigation about the condition of the illegal settlers and the impact they had been rendering against the “protected” forest environment. This was even because he had got dependable evidence from other sources that these armed people used to shot persons perceived contrary to their expectation to death—their expectation here means anticipation to stay in the district and engage in illegal and untaxed agricultural business through deforestation. For example, two teachers were killed in Bijjiit environs during the initial fieldwork in the district and no reliable evidence was secured about their death hitherto April 29, 2011—the time the researcher left the area. The odd is that only the illegal settlers were armed in the district, which administrators claim that they used to hold firearms in a shrouded manner.

Second, the researcher as an insider should have known most tree names described in local language. However, on account of his life for more than twenty years away from actual rural life of the area he was unable to name even twenty tree species. This has brought considerable problem while collecting the vernacular names of some culturally important plant species because his informants used to remain taken for granted in telling him such names saying, “You know it very well, even kids know this, why do you ask me very simple questions”, despite its complexity for him.

Third, perhaps contrary to the second point, the more he stayed in the field has enabled the researcher to easily characterise the panoramic view of some sacred groves and trees. During the preliminary fieldwork period of May to August 2010, some informants have taught the researcher the general setup of sacred areas, including mountains, springs, forests, groves and trees. In due course, especially during the second phase of the fieldwork, which was conducted in Horro district from December 2010 to February 2011, the researcher has begun to understand more than five natural grove and tree areas as sacred scenes. This was so because their appearance entirely matches what he has been oriented with regarding such scenes. Such scenes commonly are characterised as having been stood relatively greener and more intact in the midst of denuded landscape. Experiencing their feature in this sense did in fact reduce the cost of exhausting informants who would otherwise unwelcome accompanying the researcher at certain far away setups—from their residence area. Therefore, the researcher has learned that longer stay
in the field would save not only informants’ energy and time but also help to know better about the research setup in a more detailed way.

Fourth, it could either be for witnessing relatively longer time observation and fieldwork based research for the first time or lack of knowledge about anthropology and its research technique, few peasants used to call the researcher, “Look at that journalist, he is coming today also.” The response of the receivers was amusing also as they say, “No, he is not a journalist; he is agricultural expert, he is inspecting the situation of crops being harvested and threshed...” The counter receivers of the conversation reacts, “I know him very well, he is son of Margoo; he did not learn agriculture but teaching, so how dare you say he is inspecting crop fields...?” The point is that except for few journalists who often visit the area to report the status of some projects such as construction of health centres, and agricultural extension workers—who used to live among the peasants with the name Development Agent (DA), peasants in the study area did not know other professional category carrying his or her digital camera, notebook and luggage and staying in the field among them for longer. So, the researcher was still realised either as a journalist or agricultural extension worker within the mental setup of peasants of the study area. This was despite the researcher’s meticulous effort in persistently informing them about his disciplinary background and the objectives as well as methods of his research.

Fifth, the researcher could not forget the situation he has encountered with some two or three pertinent and analytical informants. These informants were located through snowballing. But when solicited for interview, they began to consider the researcher as a political agent, in spite of witnessing him being a bona fide researcher through official letters for permission and certificate of ethical clearance. The researcher has let them discern his rightful research activity by witnessing his legal documents, including those issued from the Department of Anthropology, Panjab University, Chandigarh and those granted from relevant local institutions—Horro Guduru zone administration, and Horro, Abee Dongoro and Jaardagaa Jaartee districts administrations. The formal permissions of all these institutions were of utmost relevance to freely conduct the study.

The problem was that these informants were reportedly suffering from political malfunctioning. One of them has allegedly lost his two children while attempting to escape local cadres who thought him as disobedient to the law of the country. Still, he was a mathematics
teacher at local government high school. One important point the researcher has understood from this encounter was that some analytical informants or “critical thinkers” situated amid unsettled political climate are less likely willing to participate in research scaring that it could be a camouflage which would jeopardise their live. These salient informants were apparently living with such mindset, as almost none had encountered them as researcher wherefrom they might have drawn reservations against utterly concluding researchers as political agents.

Finally, the researcher has narrowly escaped two serious incidences during the last phase of his fieldwork. These events both happened on 21 June 2011. One was at a small rural town of Gatamaa in East Wallagga zone of Oromia regional state. This was while the researcher was returning from his final fieldwork in Horro Guduru to his residence home in Jimma zone (about 440 km to south of Horro Guduru). Two colleagues of him who participated in studying ritual of Gadaa Bacho (eight-yearly Oromo politico-religious ritual in Horro Guduru) compelled him to leave a vehicle which was taken from Jimma University on sharing basis for the purpose of studying and documenting the ritual. Consequently, the researcher was forced to remain unaided and had to return to Naqamte town—more suitable for accommodation and safety than Gatamaa town. In the meantime, he had got a lorry and proceeded his way to Jimma to face the second shocking but quite traumatic event at Jimma town in that day’s mid-night.

Jimma town is located in southwestern Oromia regional state. It has been full of tarnished thieves that one can hardly attempt to travel in the town on single basis in mid-night. Coupled with this, there was heavy rainfall in the town at the time so that ululations (the area’s traditional way of appeal to residents for salvage from danger) for possible rescue from armed thieves could never have been imagined. Being frustrated with this incident, the researcher had to face two thieves on a short road leading to his home. One of the thieves has caught spear and radiant battery and the other was invisible as he has deliberately veiled himself for strategic reason. Thanks to the Almighty God in Jesus’ Name, the researcher has able to narrowly escape them using topographic knowledge of that specific area, he run fast to the extent possible through narrow road amid gardens nearby his home in that heavy shower from above and filthy mud from below till he safely reached his house.