

# The Progress and Identification of Cultural Sport of Dawuro and Their Contribution to Social Interaction and Fitness

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**Abstract:** The study focuses on identification of Dawro cultural sports, types, purposes and their contribution to social interaction, health and fitness. In addition to this, the study also focuses on factors affecting the development of cultural sports of Dawuro. Data were collected from two woredas (Tercha and Tocha) through one of the non-probability sampling techniques called purposive sampling. The participants of this study were ten (10) sport professionals, eight (8) elders and twelve (12) youngsters. Thematic analysis was used to analyze data collected through observation, questionnaires and document analysis. The major finding of this study was the cultural sports of Dawuro practiced by most Dawuro society and contributed for multiple health and social benefits related with daily life. But currently these cultural sports are dominated by modern sports, not included in all Dawro games, and they are at the edge of disappearing, to improve the development of cultural sports of Dawuro, the informants are recommended as the three stakeholders (elders, sport experts and youths) should be together and discuss on the Dawuro cultural sports and preparing training places to transfer their experiences for youth and competition should be conducted inside each woreda among woredas which participate all youths to let adults based on the cultural sports criteria.

**Keywords:** Cultural Sport, Social Interaction, Fitness

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## 1. Introduction

Culture is the set of unique spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional traits of society. It comprises the entirety of people's way of living, traditions and norms and values that are important for socio cultural development. People have long been involved in keeping their cultures, traditions and conservation and preservation of valued objects. Zerihun Doda [6]. As Inglis [7]. Shows sport also provides some of the cultural histories and stories that are told and retold, so becoming part of a legend.

All the aspects of human culture should be analyzed in the interconnection they have in life and this could be possible based on team organization and deeper investigation through the application of holistic approach, which would give the method and its full value. Bekele W/mariam 2010:

12 [8].

Sport as a significant socio-cultural phenomenon becomes an increasingly more visible part of people's lives, both on the level of the ever increasing professionalization and spectacular commercialization as well as everyday leisure activities of mass population Telama, 2007[11]. The relationship of sport and society, often contradictory but definitely highly stimulating for sociology, reflects the variability of basic worldviews, values, political attitudes or ideological background. Suomi, 2004[15].

The study of sport, culture and society is no longer a young and naive area of academic study and research. Generation after generation of sociologists and historians have raised classical sociological and historical questions in

relation to sport's organization, its distribution and the part it has played in the allocation and exercise of power. Jarvie, G., [1].

Sport and culture are widely perceived to generate social impacts. There is a long history of academic and evaluation research into the social impacts of sport and culture, including extensive studies into the social impacts of outdoor recreation amenities in the USA from the 1960s onwards; Coalter, Long & Duffield, 1986 [14];

The significance of sport is not any more at issue. To be an effective citizen requires that one has an understanding of the culture in which one exists and operates, and sport is an integral part of that culture. Therefore one's knowledge of one's culture is greatly enriched by knowledge of sport. This knowledge of and about sport also extends to the ability to take part in sport of some kind thus indicating physical and kinesthetic development. Not only does it pervade our culture, but it has an important place in a multitude of other cultures. Donnelly, P. [9].

The potential eclectic coverage of ideas together with a sound grasp of sport itself provide for a stimulating avenue not only to developing sport, but also to analyzing, demystifying it and ultimately attempting to contribute to social change and intervention in the world in which we live in. John, T. Talamini and Charles H. paga [3].

The idea that sport can contribute to different forms of cultural identity has developed alongside the rise of identity politics. In an increasingly impersonal world sport may help different groups of people answer questions like: Who am I? Who is like me? Whom can I trust? In specific discussions of sport and Irish identity, Bradley 1999[10] and of sport, nationalisms and identities, Reid and Jarvie 2000[13], have argued that sport helps different ethnic groups or nationalities develop a sense of cultural identity.

Foucault 1988[12], was concerned with an analysis of power within detailed studies of social practices. This approach to power dealt directly with the antagonistic struggles of social movements, arguing that one of the most important aspects of these struggles in contemporary society was the way in which they challenged subjectification.

The research with the same problem in Dawuro cultural sport is not yet studied, the cultural sports were not included in all Dawuro games & the development of this sport is not observed as other areas of Ethiopia from the researcher observation in the area. As stated by Jay, J. Coakley, Ph.D, [2]. Sport signifies a great deal about us and different ways of living and in so doing contributes to the ongoing production of social life. As a result, the benefits acquired through participation in cultural sports were not achieved by Dawuro societies. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to explore the root causes for the problem and to suggest the possible solutions.

### 1.1. Research Questions

What are the common cultural sports of Dawuro society?

What are the factors that hinder the development of cultural sports of Dawuro zone?

Does cultural sports of Dawuro benefits to health, fitness and social relations among societies?

### 1.2. General Objective

The general objective of this study was to investigate the development of cultural sports of Dawuro, to identify their roles for health, fitness & social interactions, and to assess the current status and prospects of cultural sports of Dawuro.

Up on this general objective, the study focuses:

1. To investigate the development of cultural sports of Dawuro society
2. To describe the factors that hinders the development of cultural sports in Dawuro zone
3. To identify the benefits of cultural sports up on health, fitness and social relations among societies.

### 1.3. Significance

Thus, this study may serve as a springboard for further study so as to develop and grasp knowledge about the cultural sports of Dawuro. The researcher also strongly believes that the study will provide valuable information about the values of cultural sports for social relations, health and fitness. In addition, this study will hopefully provide important information and direction for Dawuro zone sport commission for the development of Dawuro cultural sports.

Limitation: Inadequacy of available relevant research materials is one of the limitations encountered in this study. In addition, shortage of transportation during data collection, shortage of money and the scarcity of sufficient books and literature in the area of study were the major short coming that the researcher encountered during the execution of the study.

## 2. Methodology

Design and study area: To achieve the purpose of the study, the researcher used the qualitative way of research in the study area, the method was used with the assumption that it would help to identify the cultural sports of Dawuro society and their real contribution to health, fitness and for healthy social relations. This study was conducted in 2013/14, Dawuro, in the south western part of Ethiopia.

Source of data: The population of this study was all habitants in five wardas of Dawuro zone namely, Isera bale, Tocha, Loma, Terecha and Gena wordas. Thus, all who live in the above five mentioned wordas were considered as a source of data.

Sampling procedure and sample size: Thirty (30) informants participated in this study as a sample from which ten (10) are sport professionals, eight (8) are elders; two of them are women and twelve (12) are young. The researcher employed non- probability sampling method called purposive sampling. The informants were purposively selected based on their age, sex, experience, occupation, one who assumed to have good knowledge about the issues, availability, and willingness to participate in the study.

Method of data analysis: The collected data from primary sources were transcribed after repeated listening, reading and watching of the recorded data. The data gathered through different tools was matched and categorized to define the research questions according to the similarity and difference of the idea, opinions, and belief toward the concerned issues.

### 3. Result

The general objective of this study was to investigate the cultural sports of Dawuro, to identify their roles for health, fitness & social interactions, and to assess the current status and prospects of cultural sports of Dawuro. Interview and document analysis were used to collect data from elders, sport professionals and young peoples.

*The first objective of the study was to assess the cultural sports Dawuro and its values to societies.*

Document analysis indicated that there are a number of cultural games and play activities practiced by Dawuro societies. Among them the most common cultural sports are Lamiaa (Gebeta), Geno kassa (Christmas game/yegenachewata), Baxiia (tegel), Gayilia (corbo) and Paraa toga (horse race).

According to the Dawro elders, these cultural games were practiced since early existence of the kingdom of Dawro. As stated in Coakley 1998, sociologists often refer sports as cultural practices. Like other cultural practices, sports are human creations that come into being as people struggle to decide what is important and how things should be done in their groups and societies. In the same way, the cultural sports of Dawro are parts of a cultural practice.

These cultural games were practiced throughout Dawro societies up to today except the disappearance of Geno kassa, Para toga and Baxxeya for Dawro young generation. The main reasons for the disappearance of some Dawro cultural sports according to elder informants the absence of cultural sports in the school curriculum and the establishment of schools that brings together with modern sports as football and volley ball. The seasons where a Dawro cultural sport takes place were during wudeyahenta (Keeping of cattle), bulacha (wedding ceremonies) and special occasions as holiday (Balla). Among Dawro societies cultural sports/games are believed as a way to promote social relations and contribute for good health. Most of Dawro cultural sport competitions are not open for girls and women but it is possible for girls and women's as elder informants. The following cultural games of Dawro were dominant in the area.

Lamiaa (Gebeta): It was known elders are the primary sources of Data about cultural games, as they defined usually "Lamiaa" or Gebeta was one of the oldest cultural or traditional games of the Dawuro society that had begins During (around the 18th century) in the time of KawoHallala (one of the king of Dawuro), the Lamiaa had played by two individuals who were came from different villages and assumed as experienced and good skill in the game, should be played by men and women's the game was taken place in

front of the king and most of the time it had happened during leisure time such as holly days, meskelbeal etc.

The purpose of the game were mainly to enjoy the king, to become mentally alert to, celebrate the holly day, to enjoy the leisure time after a hard working, especially labor working, to enjoy both the players and the observants who were acting as referee and playing turn by turn with winner. Finally the prize or reward is given by the king. The rewards could be motivation like brabo, clapping hands and finally the local drinks like borda were given by the king.

Geno kassa: Geno kassa (yegenachewata) is a team game /which looks a little bit similar to hockey/ played during Christmas (Ganoo) by young boys and men's. Geno kassa, the oldest and popular cultural sport among Dawuro societies were used to celebrate the birth day of Jesus Christ.

According to Solomon,[4], Geno kassa (Ye-genachewata), the game which looks a little bit similar to hockey, has been played for centuries according to ancient manuscripts and is played by using a crude hockey stick, 'Gena', and some kind of a small wooden ball, 'enkura'.

In the same way, Geno kassa was played by using the small ball made of solid wood called Churqqa and a crude hockey stick used to kick or move the ball called Genoomitta (gena) according to elder informants. The ball was made of the local wood called churqqa (churqqakosiaa) and the stick was made of a strong wood called Xawaya or suketa which was strong & durable. Geno kassa was played by young boys and men from the eve of Christmas up to 20 or 30 days after the holidays in a leveled play fields with narrow goals fixed at the end of the court. The measurement of the field was imaginary and its size depends up on a field.

Geno kassa game was played by two teams; each might have eight (8) to ten (10) members, more or less including Goal keeper. The Objective of the game was to score the wooden ball through an opponent narrow goal.

The team which scores more points becomes a winner of the game and a loser team was considered as eater of Echeria (Rate) and give Gaddeya (Known/big/ country). There was no time limitation for a game, but it ends after one of the team becomes tired. In the next game the loser team plays hardly to win and transfer the previous Echeria (Rate) to their opponent's; and the game was continued up to twenty (20) to thirty (30) days after Christmas. There was one referee that comes from another village for the game. But the referee has no more power because they played by mutual understanding. There were no challenges to conflict during or after the game of Geno kassa even if a player damages an opponent player during the game. according to elder informants.

The game of Geno kassa requires good physical qualities including speed, coordination, and endurance in addition to team work. Geno kassa were believed as one of important game to socialize boys and men and helps a lot to keep good health. Currently Geno kassa is not played or practiced by Dawro young generation and is almost endangered and becomes disappearing. The main causes for the disappearance of this game was the establishment of modern schools brings together with modern sports like western

football according to elder informants.

All of the elder informants practiced Geno kassa, as they were young and takes part in village competition with their relatives.

Baxxiya: Baxxiya (tegel/ struggle) is an individual game played by boys and men. It was conducted in front of the King of Dawro, aimed to select a special body guards to the king and later practiced at social work places as mizahenta (Keeping of cattle), and Shanka (hunting) occasions and generally the winners are expected as the protectors of the society from any external forces occasions happened to Dawro societies, according to elder informants.

It is usually conducted on a grass and leveled area to minimize hazards during the competition. During mizahenta (Keeping of cattle), and Shanka /hunting/ places and free times Dawro boys and young men used to compete against each other to taste their strength in front of the King and their relatives. The main objective of this game was to taste a person's physical quality especially strength. Baxxiya is played by two individuals nearly to have equal age, body weight and height. Fight or trying to harm opponent during or after a game is not recommended and the play were peaceful.

According elder informants, Baxxiya was played during mizahenta (Keeping of cattle), and Shanka (hunting) especially in mizahenta (Keeping of cattle, they play against each other on Mattaa (the place where a house covering grasses found) to show their strength to others and to be selected to represent their villages. A man who won his opponent competes against other voluntary spectator until a defeat or becomes a winner of all participants.

According to elder informants, the winner of one village competes against other village and had given a great prize or appreciation by the societies and this man was given a great obligations and acceptance from others. A man who won more participants was considered as a strong man having a strong muscles and good health. This game is practiced usually by boys and young men but girls practice rarely and women do not take part. Currently Baxxiya is not practiced by Dawro boys, is almost on the stage to become disappearing. All of the research informants practiced this game as they were young men and takes part in village competition with their relatives.

Gayiliaa: According to elder informants, Gayiliaa /corbo/ is a game played by using a spear or a stick with sharp point at one end and a wide ring made of tick unbroken wood; in which the spear is thrown for accuracy after a ring has been wheeled by other player. Gayiliaa is the most popular game among children is usually played by boys and girls. Gayilaaya is both an individual and group game.

According to the elder informants this game was played at aiming to make boys to become strong and matured hunter in addition to warrior and patriotic generation. Later it is practiced by boys and girls usually for fun.. According to Charles 1975, Play has the potential for helping human beings to have better relations with each other and to be dynamic social force in society so all men and women need

the opportunity to participate in play activities. This is especially true of children and youth because of educational value of play.

Therefore, Gengo aids a lot for good health and socialize children, boys and girls. All of the informants practiced Gengo at their young age and agreed on its social and health benefits. This game requires good coordination, accuracy, timing, speed and strong throwing arms hence it contributes for health and fitness. Nowadays, this game is rarely practiced by children and is almost dominated by modern sports according to elder informants.

Para toga: It was known elders are the primary sources of Data about cultural games, as they defined usually "Para toga" (horse race) is an individual sport played by riding a four legged large animal called horse. The competition horse (Boora Para) shall be a unique horse and having special running speed and strength. According to elder informants, horse races were practiced mainly for the preparation for war purpose to keep the independent state of Dawro.

According to Solomon Thilahun [5]. One of the main factors influencing Dawro's survival as an independent state for many centuries was its unique defense system, for this purpose horse race contributed a lot.

Horse race is also conducted at any holiday's days between interested individuals. Among Dawro societies horse riding is a common practice. Boys and girls, women and men used horses for transportation purposes and usually practices riding horse. Competition with horse race were not open for women even they practice riding horse because of the culture. The main objective of horse race is to taste the riding ability of the competitor and the power of the horse. Horse race is believed to create positive social interactions among Dawro societies and contributes a lot for good health.

All of the elder informants were practiced and some of them were competed with horse race during young age and prefers or interested to observe this race than modern sports.

According to elder informants, the interested two or three participants after celebrating holiday compete with horse race turn by turn on a leveled road nearly one (1) km long and 15 (fifteen) meter wide. All horse man stayed at the back has competed turn by turn until their horse becomes tired. They did this to avoid hazards during the race; each of them compete three rounds during the day.

*The second objective of the study was assessing factors hindering the development of cultural sports in Dawro zone.*

According to the sport expert informants and from the observation of the researcher, there are a number of factors affecting the development of cultural sports in Dawro zone. Among them, the leading factor is the domination of cultural sports by modern sports as western football, and volleyball. This is based on the fact that young generation of Dawro has totally lost how to play their 'cultural games, even if they do not know about the rule and regulation of the game according to young informants'.

The second factor is that Dawro cultural sports were not yet included except Gayilia (azo) kasa and Lamiia (12 Ola) as part of All Dawro sport festival or competition which was

held at the mid of the year.

As sport experts added, another factor is related with lack of facilities and competition places for conducting cultural sports and lack of skilled professionals with cultural sport. Additionally all woreda have no stadium that is why All Dawro Games/ sport festival were conducted only at Dawuro zone capital Tercha in mid of every year. The distance between woreda is another factor to conduct horse race competition.

The third objective was to identify the current status and prospects of Dawuro Cultural sports.

Dawuro zone sport commission has prepared a plan to include all cultural sports in All Dawuro sport festival conducted one's a year. Cultural sport federation was established, the competition rules were derived from cultural sport federation of Ethiopia and they are striving for the bright future of cultural sports in Dawuro zone. Gayilaaya (azo) kasa and lameya (12 olla) was included in All Dawuro sport festival or competition since 2005 E.C, the rest cultural sports are planned to include as apart of competition in all Dawro games. Lameya (18 olla) and Baxxeya will be started in the coming year according to the Dawuro zone sport commission informants. Stadiums are also planned to be built at all woreda and each woreda would prepare All Dawuro sport festival after they builds stadiums and fulfills the requirement for the competition.

All Dawuro sport festival is prepared for the societies and supported by the societies, so it is planned to participate them and to create social relations among the peoples of Dawuro with cultural sports according to the sport expert informants. All informants are agreed on the positive values of cultural sports among the societies to create social interactions, health and fitness.

*The final objective of the study was to assess the contribution of cultural sport of Dawuro to health, social interaction and fitness.*

According to elder informants in Dawuro, among Dawurosocieties cultural sports/games are believed as a way to promote social relations and contribute for good health.

According to sport experts, the social and health benefits acquired through participation in cultural sports can be achieved by engaging the societies in the cultural sports directly and indirectly including them as part of all Dawuro games. They also added most of the Dawuro cultural games requires good coordination, accuracy, timing, speed and strong throwing arms hence it contributes for health and fitness.

According to Youngest informants, those Dawuro cultural games are not only interesting, but also have health and social benefits. They also are the part of our cultures which show our identities. Currently cultural sports of Dawro and the benefits acquired through participation as competent & spectator were not reflected in Dawuro society

## 4. Conclusions

Based on the major findings of the study, the following

conclusions are drawn;

Among the cultural sports of Ethiopia, Lamia (Gebeta) Geno kassa (Christmas game/, Baxxeya (tegel), Gaylleya (corbo) and Para toga (horse race). are common for Dawuro society. Most of the Dawuro cultural sport takes place during hunting, social work, Cattle keeping and special occasions as holiday. Among Dawuro societies, cultural games are believed as a way to promote social relations and contribute for good health. The Dawuro cultural sport competitions are not open for girls and women even they practices some of cultural sports.

Lamiaa" or Gebeta was one of the oldest cultural or traditional games of the Dawuro society had played by two individuals should be played by men and women's. had happened during leisure time such as holly days, meskelbeal and to make fun king Hallala, it requires good mental alertness which results in dynamic understanding and helps to socialize boys and girls, men and women. Currently this game is not practiced by Dawuro peoples and not given values as other sports like football and volley ball.

Geno kassa, is team game, oldest and popular cultural sport among Dawuro societies were played by young boys and men's to celebrate the birth day of Jesus Christ. This game requires good physical qualities including speed, coordination, and endurance in addition to team work thus it helps to socialize boys and men and helps a lot to develop health & fitness. Recently Geno kassa is not practiced by Dawuro people.

Baxxeya is an individual game played by boys and men. It was conducted in front of the King of Dawuro, aimed to select a special body guards to the king and later practiced at social work places as debo& hunting occasions by Dawuro societies to taste a person's physical quality especially strength. This game develops strength thus it helps to have good health and socialize participants.

Gaylleya, the most popular game among Dawuro youngsters specially it is practiced by Dawuro children, is usually played by boys and girls and is both an individual and group game. It was played at aiming to make boys to become strong and matured hunter in addition to warrior and patriotic generation. Gaylleya helps to have good health and socialize children, boys and girls. It requires good coordination, accuracy, timing, speed and strong throwing arms hence it contributes for health and fitness.

Para toga (horse race) is an individual sport played by riding a fastest horse called Boora para. Horse race was practiced by Dawuro people mainly for the preparation for war to keep the independent state of Dawuro in ancient period. Later on the horse race were conducted during the market days, wedding and holiday celebration especially at the occasion of epiphany. Boys and girls, women and men use horses mainly for transportation purposes and usually practices riding horse. The main objective of horse race is to taste the riding ability of the competitor and the power of the horse. This race requires good balance, coordination, and courage. Therefore, it contributes a lot for good health and helps to create positive social interactions among participants.

The developments of cultural sports of Dawuro were influenced by various factors;

Among them a leading factor is the domination of fashionable sports up on cultural sports. For instance; young generation of Dawuro has totally lost how to play *Geno kasa* (*yegenachewata*) *lamia* (*Gebta*) and *Baxxeya* (*tegl*).

Another factor includes; cultural sports were not yet included as part of all Dawuro sport festival except *Gayliya*, and *Lamia* (12 *ola*) lack of facilities and competition places for cultural sports, and lack of skilled professionals with cultural sport. And the distance between *woreda* is the main factor to conduct horse race competition.

Dawuro zone sport commission has prepared a plan to include all cultural sports in all Dawuro sport festival. Cultural sport federation was established, the competition rules were derived from the cultural sport federation of Ethiopia and they are striving for the bright future of cultural sports in Dawuro society.

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