



**WOLKITE UNIVERSITY**

**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**THE NEXUS BETWEEN GURAGE SELF-RULE DEMAND AND JEAN  
JACQUES ROUSSEAU'S CONCEPTION OF AUTONOMY AND  
SOVEREIGNTY  
HAWAREYAT SEMU**

**COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES**

**DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

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**ADVISOR: ROBEL FANTU (PH.D.)**

**CO ADVISOR: MAEREG FIKADU (M.A)**

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**The Nexus between Gurage Self-Rule Demand and Jean Jacques  
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**Hawareyat Semu**

**Advisor: Robel Fantu (Ph.D.)**

**Co-Advisor: Maereg Fikadu (M.A)**


**JANUARY, 2024  
Wolkite, Ethiopia**

**WOLKITE UNIVERSITY**  
**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**  
**APPROVAL SHEEET**

We hereby certify that we have read and evaluated this thesis entitled "**The Nexus between Gurage Self-Rule Demand and Jean Jacques Rousseau's Conception of Autonomy and Sovereignty** " prepared under our guidance by Hawareyat Semu Birhanu. We recommend that the thesis be submitted as fulfilling the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Political Science.

1. _____	_____	_____
Major Advisor	Signature	Date
2. _____	_____	_____
Co-Advisor	Signature	Date

As members of the Board of Examiners of the Master of Art Thesis open defense examination, we have read and evaluated this Thesis prepared by **Hawareyat Semu Birhanu** and examined the candidate. We hereby certify that, the thesis is accepted for fulfilling the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Art (M.A) in Political Science.

1. <u>Idris Yeba (PhD)</u>		<u>15/01/2024</u>
External examiner	Signature	Date
2. _____	_____	_____
Internal examiner	Signature	Date
3. _____	_____	_____
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## **Declaration**

I, Hawareyat Semu, The work entitled "The nexus between Gurage People self-determination demand and Rousseau concept of Sovereignty and Autonomy" is a work submitted by myself to Wolkite University, College of Social Sciences, Department of Political Science and Development Studies for a master's degree. I declare that this research is my own original work, and all the sources of work I have used are properly cited. Also, I confirm that, this research has not been presented in any university.

Hawareyat Semu Birhanu

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Wolkite University, Wolkite Ethiopia

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## **ACRONYM'S**

EC: Ethiopian Calendar

EPRDF: Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front

FDRE: Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

GOGOT: Gurage Unity and Justice Party

HoF: House of Federation

ICCPR: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

SNNPRS: Southern Nation Nationalities and Peoples Regional State

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## **Abstract**

*As the FDRE constitution testifies that, if they meet the necessary conditions people have the right to self-determination or to be autonomous. In addition, the philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau argues that the worst and most difficult thing for human beings is to live under the will of others. As a result, the Gurage people have been fighting for their self-autonomous rule since 1987, but they have not received a positive response from either the federal or the regional government. The concerned bodies standing for the people and the intellectuals of Gurage are actively asking the question of self-determination based on the problems observed in the society. The main purpose of this study is to assess the legitimacy of the Gurage people's demand for self-determination in terms of scientific and philosophical support, and assert whether the quest is strengthened by Rousseau's idea of sovereignty and autonomy or not. The researcher used a qualitative research approach. To obtain research data, the researcher used both primary and secondary data collection method. The collected data is also properly and thoroughly analyzed. The tools used to collect data were interviews, FGD and document analysis. Regarding to the findings, although the Constitution of the Federal Republic states that nations, nationalities, and peoples have the right to self-determination, it has not been used for more than paper value.*

*Based on the evaluation conducted in the study, it has been shown that the question of self-determination is a question that needs to be properly answered in order to protect and promote the Gurage people's language, culture and history at the world level, and it is a question that is accepted by the majority of the people of the community and outsiders. Finally, as the researcher confirmed, the Gurage people demand for self-determination is logical and constitutional, so the regional and federal government should respond accordingly.*

**Key Words:** self-determination, Gurage People, Autonomy, Sovereignty

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Background of the Study

In the modern world the concept of autonomy and self-determination demand is a critical issue. However, the study focused on the nexus between Gurage people self-determination quest and Jean Jacques Rousseau's conception of autonomy and sovereignty. Before evaluating the Gurage people demand for regional self-determination, the study considered some relevant points about Rousseau's idea of autonomy and sovereignty; because, such concept of Rousseau is relevant to asses for the fulfillment of Gurage people's right to self-determination.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau was a major eighteenth-century theorist of popular sovereignty and nationalism. Rousseau developed a theory of society based on cultural homogeneity and participation, and distinguished between culture and nationalism to establish a political culture; it also shows that, as necessary it spans a long time with an entire political class (Qvortrup, 2003). This implies, According to Qvortrup (2003), it was Rousseau who invented the concept of federalism. He recognized that the only solution to the fundamental problem of a modern state was a federal system combining the interests of large and small states.

The formation of such state is in terms of giving autonomy to administer the people by the sub-federal government. The concept of autonomy that is spreading in the modern world is a reflection of the West; it originates from the political philosophy of Rousseau. If a given nation is autonomous, then it got a capability of self-determination. The purpose of self-determination is to promote the interests of citizens by enacting laws that reflect consensus. According to Rousseau, autonomy is only possible when citizens surrender certain rights and see their social membership as a necessary safeguard for their identity (Neuhouser, 2011).

Since, human beings are not dependent on material and property, their existence is based on their freedom and natural rights, Rousseau believes that the freedom and rights of human beings come before all the pursuit of profit and wealth. In the Russeaun state, citizens are free only if they flourish together, but a necessary condition for collective flourishing is that each individual be granted rights arising from his own autonomy. The chief goal of human

happiness and the central human good is called emancipation, as Rousseau wrote, no man can think of true happiness for anybody outside of “general will” (constitution) (Kelly, 2022)

However, in the modern Ethiopian political thought and implementation system, the desire to take away the sovereignty of the people gradually penetrated. Surprisingly, the usurpers of the people's sovereignty are the rulers who were elected by the people themselves to represent them. In fact, the society needs the government to protect its social unity, personal will, peace, interests, freedom, rights, identity and property (Reporter news, 2022). As Rousseau argued, the individual should surrender their power and free will to the entity called the government. In order to establish a government, it is necessary to identify the type and nature of the contract first. For him, the primary duty of the government is to protect the rights and freedoms of society. They had the truth that a peaceful society can be achieved if the security of the society as well as freedom and rights can be protected by the governmental structure (Qvortrup, 2003).

Contemporary interpretations suggest that, for Rousseau autonomy is a central concept in understanding the legitimacy of government. Rousseau's government is legitimate insofar as it allows individuals to obey only their own desires and be free. His views on the role of the state in achieving collective happiness through political society cannot be adequately captured by definitions of autonomy (Neuhouser, 2011). The legitimacy of Rousseau's government is related to the question of the self-determination of the Gurage people as it allows for a harmonious relationship between the self-rule of the Gurage people and the happiness of participation in the political community (Addis Maleda News, 2022). In many African countries, ethnic identity has been considered a political threat. In the past, Ethiopia was synonymous with ethnic conflict; however, since (EPRDF) came to power Ethiopia has taken a new approach to managing ethnic diversity (Henry & Wendel, 2002). A new regional power is emerging from the long isolated areas in southern Ethiopia where the people are living oppressed by nature. It is the homeland of more than fifty-six nationalities with a total population of over 13 million (Fisha, 2009).

During the transition period the region that is now known as the Southern Nations and People's Region had five different regions called seven, eight, nine, ten and eleven. However,

since then, all five states have merged into one. As the region is divided into ethnically based zones and special districts, the regional structures show many differences in terms of identity and self-rule claims. As the Gurage zone embraces other ethnic minorities, the name refers to an ethnic group, and this has led to the desire to establish separate zones and special districts for these ethnic minorities. The natives of Gurage raise a demand for secession from the SNNPS to be autonomous. In the early days of federalism, especially in the southern region, the EPRDF focused on administrative integration despite the commitment and permission given to ethnic groups to organize and operate independently (Beza Dessalegn & Nigussie Afesha, 209).

The Gurage' people are the people who played an important role in shaping the background of Ethiopian history, culture, politics and religion. Like that of other nation, they are a community with a strong belief and position in the idea of national unity. With this mentality, by interacting with the entire Ethiopian people and by moving in different sub-states they sketch to the country development. This society has built such a mentality through its previous ethnic identity (Dinberu & Fikre, 1987).

However, in terms of right, the Gurage people are misjudged by the federal government. The constitutional rights of self-government are not equally enjoyed by some groups as stipulated in the Federal Constitution and the Southern Regional Constitution. Therefore, the study focused on legitimacy of Gurage people statehood self-determination demand through Rousseau conception of autonomy and sovereignty.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

The concepts of self-determination and autonomy spreading in the contemporary world traced back to the philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau's philosophical ideas about self-government are still useful as a secondary source of information to ensure the common benefit of the people and how to become autonomous administration. Among his ideas; autonomy allows citizens to come together to make laws that reflect their shared understanding of the common good (Neuhouser, 2011). He played an important role in the concept of popular sovereignty in a transnational world; for national borders to be permanent,

relations between states to be highly unified, and millions of dispossessed citizens to rise unilaterally. Indeed; recently, millions of people have fallen victim to nationalistic hatred in the twentieth century. In relation to this Rousseau argues that, nationalism can be an evil force if it leads to ethnic conflict, but it can be a good force if it is used as a tool for cultural interaction (Qvortrup, 2003).

However, the Gurage peoples are peoples who are well known by hardworking habit based on the development of their national unity and contribution of its early philosophical traditions to Ethiopia, Africa and even the world; like, the judicial system (Gordena Shengo), the banking system (Iqub) and other administrative system. The peoples are a society that has many cultures, traditions, languages and mediation systems. But, the values of the communities are threatened by successive governments change. As Rousseau testified, as long as states have the institutional conditions under which general will laws are enacted, they are the conditions that enable the autonomous law of the general will (Qvortrup, 2003).. Also, the area has been subjected to various administrative abuses and has not judged fairly in the SNNPR; to save the in danger of losing philosophical values of the society and to realize good governance ensuring regional self-determination is mandate of the government (Dinberu & Fikre, 1987).

Rousseau argues that, because of the situation of different nations in the state of nature, peoples live their life without the protection of their rights, including their territory. However, Rousseau argues that if states limit the ways in which they interact, it is to create fair environment for different political communities to govern themselves, but not for the limitation and endanger of their sovereignty. He encouraged people to turn their geographical freedom towards political self-determination, and also to take cultural freedom as a basis for separating them from the corruption of the international community (Wraight, 2008). So, from the beginning the Gurage people can pursue their question in order to be autonomous in a legal way, without assassination, and destruction of property; that make them unique in the Country even in Africa; because, understanding freedom as a matter of self-determination helps the people in order to revolt against the government (ethiopinreporter, august 4, 2022).

As Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote, since the social contract is an attempt to save people from being stripped of their natural freedom, man abides by the laws he sets for himself and freedom become the central purchase of a civil states rational self-government (Hasan, 2016). As a result, it is their constitutional right for zones to ask for statehood and to be autonomous. It stipulates that any nation can establish its own autonomy. For this reason, according to Article 47 of the Federal Constitution, legal experts are heard saying that there is a process by which any nation can get a response whenever it raises a question of territoriality. Rousseau reinforces this argument by arguing that, due to the historical interest in constitutionalism, without proper pluralist and balanced governance legitimate power has been transformed into arbitrary power. Political society should be based on common interests and not for the benefit of the few; there should be controller of the leaders, otherwise political difference will grow into social differences and it is clear that the difference between the people and the government will be widen. If the government is tyrannical, it is an illusion to think of ensuring equality, it only serves to keep the inferior people in misery and support the masses in their exploitation (Qvortrup, 2003).

Governments throughout history, like the Gurage, have issued proclamations to achieve the goal of establishing a single polity by endangering the existence of ethnic groups. There are administrations that are standing firm for their right, without fear and selfishness. Rousseau testified it as, “sacrifice is an essential part of labor policy”, but some of them even denied their existence. By setting aside the representation of their community, they try to impose another identity in the community that is the reason why Rousseau emphasized that representative democracy does not represent the rights of all (Simpson, 2006). When unities are created then legislatures shape the institutions. Rousseau advocated the view that rulers should be subject to checks and balances. For this reason, he proposed his own unique solution called democracy and democratic society must be administered by the constitutional rules and regulations (general will) (Qvortrup, 2003).

In the Ethiopian constitution article eight, nations, nationalities and peoples are the owners of sovereign power, and sub-article two stipulates that they exercise this power through their representatives. In connection with the issue of effective accommodation of diversity, the

questions of self-determination and political representation and participation are included in various ethnic groups, especially in the multi-ethnic region. Rousseau emphasized the ability and right of people to participate in the political system as full citizens (Wraight, 2008). Therefore, people have the right to raise self-rule demand through the rules and regulation of the constitution, because, as Rousseau added, the sovereign power belongs to the people and no one can take it away (ibid).

The Constitution of Ethiopia stipulates the right of citizens to be sovereign ownership and self-determination. The constitution has clearly stated the process by which any nation can get a response whenever it raises a question of autonomy. Article 47 sub-article 2 of the constitution states that ethnic groups and peoples have the right to establish a regional administration. The Gurage people raised the question of regional administration based on the Constitution. Accordingly, the request to organize the Gurage zone into a region was unanimously approved by the zone council on November 26, 2018. However, the regional council remains silent, when it was supposed to organize a referendum within a year. In addition, in August 2022, the Federal Government's proposal to organize the Gurage Zone into a cluster was rejected by the Gurage Zonal Council by a vote of 52 against to 40 supports. According to this, when a referendum has to be held, the government forcefully approves a cluster in the capital city Wolkite and makes a decision based on political interest instead of upholding constitutional rights. This decision creates violence among the people who lived in peace for a long period of time (Addis Standard, November 25, 2022).

As Rousseau argued, the citizens veto power as a defense against radical changes enacted or proposed by overzealous legislators. Whenever the veto power was exercised by the leaders, the rulers were opposed. The efficiency of this system was the best justification for the popular veto-power as a constitutional safeguard. Due to popular participation a democratic government would increase the will of the people and not be oppressive (Qvortrup, 2003).

In different parts of the country, especially in the southern part of the country, there are many ethnic groups that raise the question of Self-determination who got answer and others rejected. A good example is, allowing Sidama to be regional, rejecting Gurage and others shows that the government does not respect the equality of people and the constitutional law.

In line with this, In one of his unpublished observations Rousseau wrote, inequality is the root of all evil True rulers have the duty to treat and please each citizen equally, arguing that political power is only an exercise, the end being the happiness of the people. The government should hypothesize the idea of a happy nation and establish laws of rights based on their idea (Hasan, 2016).

In general, various challenges have been faced by the Gurage people in the past three decades, and the research has tried to investigate the legitimacy of the Gurage people's demand for self-determination through Rousseau philosophical ideas. Therefore, no research has been undertaken in relation to the legitimacy of Gurage people demand for self-determination through Rousseau's conception of autonomy and sovereignty.

### **1.3. Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.3.1. General objective**

The general objective of the study is evaluating the legitimacy of Gurage people self-rule claim based on Rousseau's perspectives of autonomy and sovereignty.

#### **1.3.2. Specific Objectives**

The following objectives can be considered as the specific objectives of the study:

1. To identify the political philosophy of Jean Jacques Rousseau that underpins the self-rule approach.
2. To understand the nexus between Gurage peoples self-rule claim and Rousseau's concept of autonomy and sovereignty.
3. To analyze the implications of Rousseau's political philosophy to the self-rule approach pursued by the Gurage people.
4. To draw lesson from Rousseau's autonomy and sovereignty argument in order to justify Gurage peoples self-rule claim.

#### **1.4. Research Questions**

In order to answer the main research question, the following auxiliary questions are addressed:-

1. What is the political philosophy of Jean Jacques Rousseau which underpins the self-rule approach?
2. How does Gurage peoples self-rule approach related with Rousseau's notion of autonomy and sovereignty?
3. What are the implications of Rousseau's political philosophy on the self-rule approach followed by the Gurage people?
4. How beneficial or disadvantageous is the self-rule approach used by the Gurage people when evaluated from the perspective of Jean Jacques Rousseau's political philosophy?

#### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

In its academic significance, the findings of this study may help other human rights and freedom fighters to examine theoretical and conceptual frameworks. It also shows that, public interest is the supreme objective in any sphere of public administration. Based on the purpose of the study, it can be used as a method to analyze people's desire and opportunity to express their unique linguistic, historical and cultural values, reducing the understanding of people's characteristic elements. In particular, the study will suggest a basic of process of people's autonomy and sovereignty in relation to Rousseau's politics.

#### **1.6. Scope of the Study**

The study focused only on the natives of the Gurage community within the zone, within and outside Ethiopia. Therefore, in this study, the researcher tried to evaluate the ways of asserting the rights, freedom and sovereignty of the Gurage people. In addition to Rousseau's relevant ideas to examine the validity of the Gurage people's demand for self-determination, the study included the ideas of political elites and philosophers. For this reason, the study only focused on Gurage ethnic group for self-determination demand.

### **1.7. Limitations of the Study**

The validity of the collected data was tested in various ways. In fact, most of the interviews were conducted at a time when the Gurage people's demand for self-determination was risky for the community and serious for the government; as a result, because of fear of abuse, torture and imprisonment it was difficult to find many key participants for the interview. Also, some of the interviewers are refrained from expressing their opinions freely. In order to conduct a balanced research, the researcher has filtered out the ideas that are not necessary for the research. In addition, related to the above reasons, there were some limitations due to the number of participants involved in the study.

### **1.8. Organization of the Study**

The thesis contained five chapters. The first chapter addressed introduction of the study. The second chapter discussed literature and theories that serve as a bench mark to evaluate the relevant concept. Chapter three deal with methodology of the study. The fourth chapter focused on the result and discussion found from the interview. The last chapter of the paper is conclusion and recommendation of the study.

## **2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **2.1 Introduction**

In this chapter some relevant ideas are discussed which consists of two concepts. First, conceptual ideas from national to international level that are important to evaluate the legitimacy of the Gurage people demand; such as concept of self-determination, the essence of self-determination in relation to Ethiopian federalism discussed. Also, Rousseau's conception of autonomy, sovereignty, social contract, and general will are interpreted and discussed. Second, review of empirical Studies expressed as much as possible.

### **2.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK**

#### **2.2.1 Self-Determination**

Self-determination may not conflict with territorial integrity and territorial sovereignty because self-determination does not always entail the secession of the territory of the people who seek self-determination from the nation. Also, even when self-determination leads to secession and the creation of a new independent state, territorial unity typically follows independence. Self-determination can be defined as the act or power of self-rule and political position; or freedom from another person's control. The right to self-determination is a fundamental principle of international law affecting the relations between states and territories and peoples. Rooted in colonial politics, the right to self-government today is supported by groups that support secession, self-government, and democratic participation in many parts of the world. The exercise of the right to self-determination is always complex, involving a careful balancing of fundamental human rights and state interests and the international interest in maintaining territorial integrity and sovereignty. Most international and constitutional practices of self-determination focus on balancing the interests of the state with the rights of the people (Awol, 2018).

Self-determination is the principle that people freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development. It helps determine who should have authority and why, who should have a voice in decision-making, and how to attribute it. Self-

determination means People's right to choose their own political regime and to be free from tyrannical oppression is an integral part of the right to live under a democratic government. Therefore, popular sovereignty is the basis of self-determination. It is the right of the people to choose their own government and participate in the government they choose. It is related to the principle. Internal autonomy includes promoting culture in the state, establishing government institutions and providing representation in government institutions (ibid).

Article 39 (1) of the Federal Constitution states that all nations, ethnic groups and peoples have the unconditional right to self-determination and up to secession. This article is a manifestation of the right to full self-determination for groups in compliance with international legal requirements. In the year in 1913, in the Stalinist declaration of the nation, only the nationalities or peoples had the right to determine their own destiny. The Derg introduced a version of regional autonomy after the adoption of the EFRDF constitution in 1987. This constitution is a system of unequal regional self-governance in which some regions affected by ethnic/regional violence are organized. In five autonomous regions: - Eritrea, Tigray, Dredawa, Ogaden and Asseb. In contrast, the military government divided the rest of the country into 24 administrative regions. However, it is important to note that these measures did not aim at administrative and political autonomy as the military regime and its vanguard party, the Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE), centralized power. Furthermore, these reforms did not include language autonomy. Amharic has been the working language of the government at all levels. This attempt ended after the Derg was defeated in 1991. However, the Federal Constitution did not make such a distinction (Girma, 2011).

The concept of autonomy falls short of granting complete independence but allows residents of a region to control their economic, social and cultural identity. However, the scope and type of autonomy varies according to the needs and size of the subject group. The main thing is that it does not respond to the demands of nationalities who want to protect and promote their culture, language, religion and history. State federalism guarantees the autonomous exercise of certain powers by the majority in the state. However, due to many reasons, it is

rarely possible to find a uniform nation, culture, language group in a region or province (Gutta, 206).

Regional autonomy, at any level, involves granting separate internal administrative powers to regions with certain ethnic or cultural differences without excluding those areas from government. It can be understood that it gives political and governmental authority over the region to which it is empowered, and it can be understood as freedom of action both internally and locally. Those defined by territory enjoy the right to self-govern by forming their own sub-nations or local governments. For territorial autonomy, the boundaries of geographical entities must be defined as regions or local government (ibid).

### **2.2.2 Federalism in Ethiopia**

The concept of federalism has its origin; it is derived from the Latin *foedus*, which means covenant. Federal relations emphasize partnerships between individuals, groups, and governments. The term federalism is used to describe the joining of different states into a federal polity and generally the permanent division of power within a country and between its constituent governments. Federalism is a system of political association and organization that unites various political organizations into one larger political system, each maintaining its own basic political allegiance. The political principles underpinning federal systems emphasize the primacy of negotiation between multiple centers of power (Alazar, 1995).

Federalism is a system of government with at least two levels. It may be based on state or ethno-linguistic lines. Nowadays, the federation is found to be a means of giving political expression to the differences that arise due to religious, ethnic or linguistic differences to create unity in diversity. Especially in multi-ethnic regions, the federal system of governance is considered as a good way to balance the forces of regional autonomy and national unity. Federalism divides sovereignty between constituent entities and the federal government. That is why it is defined as a type of political association where two or more states form a political union with a common government, but these member states maintain a measure of internal autonomy (Balcha, 206).

The purpose of federalism is to distribute the sovereignty of the government between the center and the states as a form of government. This may be based on state or ethno-linguistic forms. A regional or centralized form of government is preferred to ethno-linguistic federalism to accommodate group differences. The rights of federal units seem to be the main example of internal self-determination. While the federal government governs common principles and interests, those without national implications may be left to the member states to manage at their own discretion. They practice their own language or culture in their respective areas. Ethiopia, which is one of the richest in diversity in Africa, introduced its ethnic federal system in 1991, adopted a constitutional structure in 1995, established multi-ethnic politics, 'nation building' talks and finally entered into 'ethnic identity politics'. The EPRDF, which is the starting point of the exchange, considers identity and self-governance as a solution to the long-standing "nation question". It can be said that the constitution has given an opportunity to the nationalities to express their position according to their needs. The basic principles laid down in the constitution; it ensures the protection of allowing significant rights in the representation and development of the linguistic and cultural identities of nations, nationalities and peoples (Kedir, 2021).

Indeed, according to Article 5 of the Federal Constitution, ethnic groups have the inalienable right to use and develop their own language, while Article 25 confirms that they have the right to equality regardless of requirements such as language. Article 27 provides equal protection and freedom of expression. In the constitution, the right to self-determination and equality of representation is stipulated in Article 39. In the same article, the unconditional right to self-determination up to the point of secession is given to nations, nationalities and peoples. Also, Article 61 gives special rights to all Ethiopian nations, nationalities and peoples in terms of voting and representation in the Federation Council. Therefore, the provisions that grant the rights mentioned above, the recognition of national identity, especially the questions of autonomy, are considered as the constitutional basis and are the main center of the political administration of the federation. The current political discourse of the nation has strengthened the constitutional structure, encouraging different groups to use the ideas of the nation and to believe that the questions and needs of the nation's identity will be met by the federal system (Kedir, 2021).

The current federal system is an administrative division where each population group is politically represented by a nation. Gurage Zone is one of the nine administrative divisions of the Federation under the Southern Nationalities and Peoples Region. In the year in 1991, when the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front took power and the idea of "self-determination of ethnic groups" until secession, federalism began in Ethiopia by changing the political, administrative and economic power to the tribe. Ethiopia's federalism was introduced after a long period of centralization in the country and was greeted with both hope and skepticism by the international community and political groups within the country. Ethiopia's primary and current central political issue is the struggle between regional and central powers (Balcha, 2006).

During the imperial period, the struggle was characterized by disputes between the central king or the emperor and the regional princes. In the year when the Marxist military junta took power in 1983, tribal movements replaced the lords and chiefs with regional power. In the year in 1991, when EPRDF came to power, ethnic liberation movements controlled the center while regional forces defeated the central elite. The Ethiopian constitution of 1995 gave "nations, nationalities and peoples" the right to self-determination until secession. It is a right granted to any ethnic group in the country. A measure of autonomy includes the right to establish public institutions. The Sidama ethnic group used their right to establish a regional government in the southern nations to get fair representation in the region where they live and at the regional and federal level as well as the right to establish their own region at any time (Balcha, 2006).

### **2.3. Autonomy and Sovereignty in Political Philosophy**

The concept of autonomy and sovereignty are one of the key concepts in political philosophy. It plays an important role in the limits of state coercion, legitimacy and authority of the state (Foldvary, 2018).

#### **2.3.1 The Meaning of Autonomy and Sovereignty**

The word "autonomy" is derived from the Greek root "self" and "law" and literally means making one's own laws. Therefore, Autonomy can be translated by the words "self-

government" and "freedom". The term is sometimes used to give limited "autonomy" in the sense of delegation of departments (detailed job responsibilities) (Feinberg, 1983). The evolution of the concept of autonomy dates back to ancient Greece, when cities maintained their sovereignty and independence from the interference of external powers. Thus, autonomy refers to self-determination and self-ownership. The modern concept deals with personal or individual autonomy insofar as the agent chooses to act or not to act according to specified requirements, rules or laws. It is generally accepted that autonomy is when an agent can determine concepts and actions for him or her. Despite the agreement on basic orders, many concepts of autonomy emerged over time under the influence of law, politics, philosophy and religious precepts. In Western thinking, autonomy refers to the freedom to self-determine rights and freedoms without interference. Philosophically, the concept of autonomy is conceived as more than a collection of capacities and rights. (Motloba, 20018).

The word "sovereignty" is derived from the Latin word "supranus" which means superior or superior. The word sovereignty sounds modern, but "sovereignty" goes back to Aristotle, who spoke of "the supreme power of the state." The term "sovereignty" was first used by French jurists in the fifteenth century, and later found its way into English, Italian, and German political literature. For Aristotle, the law is supreme; Sovereignty should not be given elsewhere but by law. In short, the word sovereignty refers to the supreme authority to enact laws and the authority to enforce laws in a specific territory, which enables the sovereign to exercise his will over his subjects by submitting himself to the laws he has made (Eribo & Nosakahare, 2021).

The concept of sovereignty emerged with the creation of the state, during the transition from pre-imperial to state. This concept cannot be separated from state power, referring to the person/category exercising public power. Thus, sovereignty represents the inherent nature of governmental authority. The development of the concept of sovereignty is related to the process of integration or reconciliation between state and society. The formation of sovereignty was originally defined as a political and judicial concept, the idea that there is a supreme and absolute political power in the political community. From a historical perspective, the sovereignty of state power represents a social and political phenomenon and

the realization of socio-economic life. Sovereignty is the right to have, provide for, and exercise superior authority, proper economic, social, political, military, and administrative organization within a given territory (Merrim, 2001).

At the international level, sovereignty means freedom, that is, the non-interference of foreign powers in the internal affairs of another country. International rules are based on the principle of sovereign equality of independent states; International law is non-interventionist and establishes universally accepted rules. From this point of view, it can be said that the sovereignty of any country is a logical result of the existence of several sovereign states (Benoist, 2011).

### **2.3.2 Hobbes and Kant theories Related to Autonomy and Sovereignty**

The concept of sovereignty emerged with the creation of the state, during the transition from pre-state to state. The concept of sovereignty cannot be separated from the power of the state, referring to the person/category exercising public power. Thus, sovereignty represents the inherent nature of governmental authority. The concept of sovereignty, which is a universally accepted principle of international law in contemporary constitutional provisions, has been a concern of philosophical minds since ancient times. The history of sovereignty begins many centuries ago in ancient Greece. From ancient times to modern times, people have thought about the best way of social organization to ensure a happy life for citizens. During this period, various theories were developed about a person or a government body that should exercise the power of government. Plato and Aristotle, ancient Greek philosophers, were the first thinkers to reflect on the nature and basis of government power. The middle Ages come with another political philosophy. The most important theories of sovereignty of this period are outlined in their introductory form, which were later developed. Saint Thomas Aquinas developed the concept of papal sovereignty, according to which the pope should be the most influential person in the state and his authority should be greater than that of the king. Thus, this philosopher legitimized the power of the church, in general, and the power of the Pope in particular (Arseni & Pozneacova, 2021).

Analyzing the development of the concept of sovereignty, modern governance includes Hobbes, Rousseau and Kant. Hobbes holds the state as a myth, a fantastic being, completely independent of the will of those who wrote it. The state will be an all-powerful Leviathan with its own will and interest, indifferent to the rights and interests of the people. The Enlightenment represents a new era in the formation of the concept of sovereignty. In this period, human potential is used; man becomes the center of the universe, art and philosophy. Based on his social contract theory, Thomas Hobbes developed his famous theory of sovereignty, which faced strong opposition to the concept of national sovereignty. Despite the conceptual differences between the concepts of popular and national sovereignty, the people remain the primary holders of power that is not the leadership of the state. The development of the concept of sovereignty reflects the fight against absolute monarchy to protect human potential, basic and inviolable human rights (Arseni & Pozneacova, 2021).

When the people agree to establish a sovereign government, they appoint the sovereign to "bear their bodies," that is, to the extent that the sovereign represents their will, by his own thoughts and actions, in matters concerning the peace and security of the state. In establishing a sovereign, each citizen determines that it is expedient to establish a sovereign power with full and unfettered freedom for the use of self-preservation, and thus to force itself not to exceed the rights of this individual or group of individuals to act according to their 'judgment and reason' in matters concerning the peace and security of the citizens. In the Hobbesian realm we should be able to point to ways of individual self-determination or conscientious objection (Sheridan, 2011).

According to Immanuel Kant, to be autonomous is to be subject only to the laws one makes for oneself. Some discussions of autonomy tie it closely to Kantian motivations for free will and related ethical discussions. Being accountable, or otherwise, is closely related to freedom and responsibility (Enoch, 202). Kant's view is the opposite of Hobbes's. According to Hobbes, man is subject to his will, and his foresight is below his will. Therefore, all actions are related to obtaining a benefit. Hence, every individual is guided by this logic (Bell, 2019). Autonomy is based on the will to obey the law, and this leaves no room for any reason why the law should be obeyed. The idea of autonomy separates the authority of the law from the

value represented by the content of the law and makes the law based on our respect for the rational nature in ourselves and makes each rational being an end in itself (Allen, 1999).

Sovereign states are the sole and supreme agents responsible for enforcing the law and, as such, cannot be legally coerced by other states or supranational institutions. At the same time, there is an obligation to establish international legal status as a necessary guarantee of justice across borders. Affirming sovereignty and the state of nature is a Kantian proposition of reason, and it is uncontroversial to assert that it relates only to legislative power. The most important idea Kant took from Hobbes, and he gives a stronger philosophical justification in the section of the doctrine of justice in the state of nature called "private right", there are no legal obligations and as a result, any guaranteed sovereign rights without prior political authority. Kant said: "Every person in a nation, when he gives up his external freedom, is immediately regarded as a member of a common wealth, that is, a nation (university) (Mare, 2020).

### **2.3.3. The historical Development of Rousseau Autonomy and Sovereignty and Relevance to Contemporary Political Thought**

Jean-Jacques Rousseau was the first philosopher to wrestle with the problem of how the concept of liberty as a social process could be reformulated and restructured in the modern world. Rousseau's ideas about sovereignty, the general will, the legitimacy of the state, and the comparison of moral authority with authority were the most influential (Peter, 2010).

The origin of the modern concept of autonomy is Rousseau's philosophy. Autonomy involves the participation of citizens in making laws for themselves that reflect their common understanding of the common good. In Rousseau's view, autonomy is not conceived at the individual level; rather, self-determination is possible only if citizens partially surrender their status as individuals and consider their social membership as essential to who they are, not incidentally. Indeed, Rousseau's concept of autonomy is different from the contemporary concept of autonomy. However, Rousseau's concept of autonomy is significant; indeed, the translation of the concept of autonomy into treaty law reveals a conflict between the moral value of autonomy and the fundamental goals and processes of law (Sonenscher, 2015).

Rousseau's most surprising point is not only that he expressed his views on the social, economic and cultural conditions of a free state and people; It also provides excellent evidence of his views on international relations and the problem of war and conflict in the European system of states. While the modern system of government is the source of civil strife and war, government (properly understood as a free people or a people under the general will) is the solution to that war and conflict. And Rousseau encouraged them to turn their geographical independence to their advantage in search of political self-sufficiency or power, and also to take cultural independence as a basis for separating them from the corruption of the international community. Freedom is secured not by seeking recognition from the world of things, but by strengthening the resilience of an independent people who are indifferent to the struggles of others. Rousseau's immediate influence was adopted by the most powerful members of the Jacobins in the French Revolution, and all subsequent interpretations had to contend with that. In the 21st century, that issue remains a source of contention among those who see Rousseau as the source of the values of liberty and solidarity (Kelly, 2022).

Rousseau played an important role in developing the concept of the "sovereignty of the people". Rousseau said that the will of the people can only be expressed by a group of people and lead to the achievement of the common good. According to this concept, everyone has their own "piece" of sovereignty and all people are equal. So, sovereignty belongs to the people, according to the will of the individual. However, the realization of popular sovereignty always requires the expression of the will of the majority of citizens. Therefore, all members of this region are equal in rights, and sovereignty must be divided into equal "parts" belonging to all citizens. Consequently, sovereignty must be the result of the sum of the interests of all citizens. "Sovereignty expressing general consent cannot be excluded, because consent cannot be transferred." So sovereignty is inalienable and indivisible. Therefore, every citizen has its own primary right to participate in the exercise of sovereignty, which is the right to make laws. In conclusion, sovereignty, for Rousseau, can only be expressed by the will of the people and rulers are the "simple authority" of the people (Arseni & Pozneacova, 2021).

### **2.3.4 Jean Jacques Rousseau's Conception of Autonomy and Sovereignty**

Modern reflection on the ideal of personal autonomy has its Western origin in the philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, where autonomy, or self-legislation, involves citizens joining together to make laws for themselves that reflect their collective understanding of the common good. Nevertheless, there is an important sense in which autonomy as Rousseau conceives it also requires the developed capacity for independent, self-determined judgment. Moreover, their conception is too easily reduced to the procedural components of informed consent. Rousseau conceptualized autonomy as 'citizens joining together to make laws for themselves that reflect their collective understanding for the common good' and autonomy in this sense required citizens to possess the 'capacity for independent, self-determined judgment (Neuhouser, 2011).

Jean-Jacques Rousseau Thus, sovereignty is public, as individual will. However, the realization of popular sovereignty always requires the expression of the will of the majority of citizens. Only in this way do the individual "parts" of sovereignty form a whole, which makes it possible to achieve mutual benefit. The theory of the sovereignty of the people formulated by Rousseau posits the people as a concrete entity, which is formed from the people living in a certain territory, which is related to the state. Every citizen has his own original right to participate in the sovereignty, which is manifested in the right to make laws and control their implementation. Or if this is not possible, we should note that the implementation of sovereignty through representatives under their control does not preclude representative institutions established as a result of free elections (Merrim, 2001).

The next step in the development of the concept of sovereignty was the formation of the doctrine on which the French Revolution rested, in the writings of Rousseau, the concept of the sovereignty of the people was followed to the last extreme. Again the starting point is the individual; again the sovereignty arises from the voluntary agreement of independent consents. In the original contract, each person surrenders all, and the result of the process is body politic, which when it is called passive state, when it is active, it is called sovereign. The abstraction of the substance common to individual wills results in the creation of a general will, which is soul and spirit, sovereign in its realm. Sovereignty, conceived by Jean-

Jacques Rousseau, stands out as absolute, infallible, indivisible, and irrevocable. It finds its source in the original contract and resides permanently in the body politic. Jean-Jacques Rousseau thus did for the people what Hobbes did for the ruler (Merrim, 2001).

### **2.3.5 Rousseau Theory of the Social Contract**

Human beings enter into a social contract to create civil society through their free choice, for the protection of private property. The process by which the state of nature ends and the formation of a political society come into being is known as the social contract. As Ashok Jain puts it, contract is possible only through agreement and contract that clarify authority and enforce freedom (Jain, 1995).

A social contract is essential to a stable civil society and helps to shape law-breaking individuals and bring peace to society. The social contract is a living reality wherever there is a legal government. This living contract is the basic principle underlying political association that overcomes the law of free will and ensures freedom because; people voluntarily adjust their behavior to agree with the legal freedom of others (Enoch, 2015). For Rousseau, the social contract encompasses any right for the whole society. Each individual has surrendered to the community his natural right to the sovereignty of the whole community and the things under the protection of the state (Rousseau, 1968). This shows that human beings have the possibility to exchange ideas. When people develop the concept of the social contract, they develop bad habits. Individuals are motivated by artificial feelings in society that lead each person to do more than the other (Strauss, 1987).

### **2.3.6 Rousseau Theory of General Will**

The social contract contrasts the general will with the private or specific will. A general will is said to be the will of "the whole community"; Personal wills are symbolically given to individuals in their natural state. Real authority exists only when laws are enacted by individuals expressing their views about the nature of the general will rather than their individual wills recorded in their election. Collective elections, which include elections, represent the "will of all," not the will of the general public. The exception is general: any

will that is not general is personal. Thus the interests of fewer groups than the whole of society and even the interests of all are conceptually unified (Levin, 1993).

In Rousseau's social contract, society and the individual are complementary. The right society governed by a "general will" makes the individual humane, immortal and free from unnecessary dominance or dependence. As he says, "Man is born free but everywhere he is in chains". Therefore, there is a need for an organized society that does not focus on the individual benefits of its members but on the general purpose. The freedom that the individual enjoys in the state of nature can exist in a proper society governed by the "general will". This general will is the source of all laws and man is truly free if he follows the instructions of the law (Aondohemba, 2015).

Rousseau believes that, the continued conflict between the individual will and the general will proves the undoing of the body politic. Accordingly, he thinks it should be resolved as follows: - Anybody that refuses to obey the General will shall be compelled to do so. This means nothing less than being forced to be free; for this, the situation that every citizen protects from any personal dependence by giving to his country. For Rousseau there is nothing ambiguous in this concept, because the citizen is truly free only when he conforms to the general will. Unless a citizen resists the general will, his right will cannot be his true will, because his true will is always the same as the general will of the whole community (Leader, 1953).

Rousseau distinguishes between two types of interest, which are related to reason and interest. When a person's will is ruled by passion, he calls it his actual will. When it is guided by reason, it is called real will. Real will understood in a social context, for Rousseau, is general will. A general will is more than the sum of individual wills because it is a reflection of the common good, not the interests of particular groups. To go against the will of the general is to conflict with your true will. Hence: 'He who refuses to obey the general will be compelled by his whole body. It only means that he is forced to be free. In Rousseau's view, sub-state associations such as trade unions are self-interested, not the common good. So these associations must be discouraged, and individuals, not limited by interest groups, make up their own minds as to what the general will is. If partial communities cannot be defended,

then, their number will increase and inequality reduced to a minimum (Boucher & Kelly, 2003).

General Will regards the common good of the citizens as opposed to the interests of each individual member of the community. We also find that every man wants what the general wants as a citizen, and that even if all cooperate in the common good, there can be a free-rider problem, which can lead to opportunistic selfishness. It must be avoided (Bertram, 2004). According to Rousseau, the true will of the individual is his emotional and irrational will. It is based on self-interest and not related to the welfare of society. Such a confession is a narrow self-contradiction with others. The true will of the individual, on the other hand, is the rational will aimed at the general happiness of society. True will promotes harmony among individuals in society. Rousseau believes that the average person has real and genuine will. A general will is the sum, or rather the amalgamation, of the true wills of individuals in society. After proper discussion and deliberation, the common good represents the common consciousness. The main characteristic of the general is not the sovereign power, but the promotion of the common good and the public (Sadanandan, 2013)

The nature of a general will is determined by two elements: first, it is intended for benefit, and second, it must come from all and apply to all. The first refers to the object of the will; the second, to the origin. Rousseau makes a distinction between whole will and general will. There are several differences between whole will and general will. The latter sees only the common good, while the former takes into account individual interests and not just the sum of certain wills. Therefore, the will of all is the sum of all the wills of the individuals of the community taking into account their personal interests and not just the sum of certain wills. Therefore, the will of whole is the sum total of all the interests of the individuals of the society, whose wills are partly conflicting and partly compatible with each other. But the general will represents the sum of these wills common to all citizens (ibid).

This is why Rousseau, unlike other mainstream political thinkers, considers the sovereignty of the people to be inviolable and indivisible. The apparent confusion between general will points to Rousseau's central problem between individuals and the general as practiced by the

sovereign. A general will is only a decision of the whole society. We know that the sovereign body is composed of all the adults in the society (Wraight, 2008).

### **2.3.7 The Influence of Rousseau's Ideas in Political Theory and Movements**

Autonomy is a central concept in understanding Rousseau's vision of government. For Rousseau, government is legitimate insofar as it enables individuals to obey their own will and be free. Rousseau's government allows for a harmonious relationship between individual autonomy and the happiness that comes from participating in a political community. The unions' approach to legitimizing the government seems to be based solely on the principle of freedom. Government is needed to protect and express individual rights. Associations aim to demonstrate that the coercive power of government does not involve arbitrary attacks because such an institution is chosen by rational individuals seeking to protect their basic interests (Hasan, 2016).

Rousseau's government aims to protect the basic interests of individuals. Regarding the role of the lawgiver, Rousseau argued that all social autonomy refers to the need to regulate one's actions by the rule of law, even laws designed to protect one's own basic interests. - Legal authority can only function as a defining fact because it runs counter to natural self-interested tendencies only if individuals have a strong civic bond. As Rousseau wrote, one cannot “conceive true happiness for anybody apart from its constitution. Rousseau says that the essence of human nature is freedom. Liberty is sometimes called the chief goal of human happiness, the central human good called liberty (ibid).

The Other influence of Rousseau related to the French Revolution, The causes of the French Revolution are economic instability, the ruling party's government lost power after entering into a political crisis, and the increasing conflict between classes reflect the troubled society at the time. Among the main reasons, economic instability stands out, and one of the most important consequences is the recognition of human rights. It was a royal system headed by a king who had full authority over the government and the people. The French were divided into different social classes, coupled with weak governance and new political ideas, famine led to the start of the Revolution. As a result, the first constitution was created and the

Democratic Republic was born. In addition, revolutionary ideas spread to America and other countries. Enlightenment ideas began to change the culture in France; the idea of a society based on reason rather than culture was encouraged. The Enlightenment introduced new ideas such as freedom and equality. The aristocratic bourgeoisie began to question the entire system due to the instigation of the revolution. These new ideas began to spread among the educated classes and it was concluded that a revolution was necessary to implement Rousseau's ideas (Alexander, 2021).

Many of the theoretical and practical challenges to responding in ethical and politically effective ways to the many unjust phenomena in today's world system (in which the imbalance of power between states is evident) arise from the unfair nature of conflict. The formal principle and reality of popular sovereignty is only when government power can be confirmed in formal constitutional democracies. Modern political theory is often mentioned in philosophical debates on international law: the philosopher can build the concept of popular sovereignty and it is desirable, and its practical use does not fall into the justification of the power of the modern state. Philosophers' theory allows us to develop the concept of popular sovereignty (Mare, 2020).

#### **2.4. Background Information of the Gurage people and their Self-Determination Quest**

It has been more than 27 years since the establishment of the southern region, which is home of 56 ethnic groups. The nations included in the "Zone" administrative structure in this region, before Emperor Menelik II's wars to shape today's Ethiopia, most of them said, "We were self-sufficient nations, governed by a king," referring to their early state history. After the establishment of the new Ethiopia, the ones with the best history in terms of population or previous administrative structure were selected and organized, and they continued to be part of Ethiopia in the name of the structure given to them by the government. During the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie, they were organized into provinces and districts, and during the Derg era, they were divided into provinces and the structure was named after them (Gyon news, 2011).

In 1983, when the Derg government fell and the EPRDF took power, the country's administrative structure was changed from a unitary to a federal structure based on the fundamental narrative of the 1974 student movement. The transitional charter, which served as the country's constitution from 1992 to 1995, dismantled the Derg-era administrative structure and divided Ethiopia into 14 regions (ibid).

During this period, the 56 ethnic groups in southern Ethiopia were included in regions from region 7 to region 11. In 1995, before the adoption of the constitution of the Federation, the EPRDF, which formed itself as the front of a coalition of four national organizations, had already divided the region to be administered by the national organizations. The EPRDF, which was established as its basic objective to establish national federalism in Ethiopia, divided Ethiopia into fourteen regions through the proclamation No. 719/84 issued during the transition period. Even under the influence, the authorities of most states bitterly opposed this plan. During the discussions that took place while the constitution of the Federation was being drafted, the representatives of each region, who were not happy with the inclusion of the direction of one region in the constitution, bitterly opposed the coming structure and put forward their own resolutions (ibid).

When the Federal Constitution of Ethiopia stipulates that there are 9 regions that are members of the federal government of Ethiopia, the 5 regions that were previously governed by the southern nations were crushed and consolidated into one region and its name was called "Southern Ethiopian Nationalities and Peoples Region". Since then, the main agenda of the southern nations has been the protest that "let us govern ourselves, it is not appropriate for the administrative structure to crush all these nations together and call them by the name of a direction." However, all the representatives of the nations of the oppressed regions who opposed the EPRDF structure and said, "let's return to our former statehood", and other nations who raised the question of "let us become a state, let us be independent" were made to fall under heavy influence. When this question became a source of protest in every available forum, 21 years after the southern region began to be managed as a single region in 2018, when the political change came in Ethiopia, the question of regionalism erupted as a new question. For the past one year, in the Ethiopian political protest and grievance

environment, the southern region has been filled with the demand of 11 ethnic groups, "Let us be independent regions". Sidama and Gurage asked "let's be a region" and the councils of the respective zones approved the appropriateness of this request and submitted it to the regional council according to the process (ibid).

#### **2.4.1 Historical, Cultural, and Political Context**

Since the Southern Nation, Nationalities People region is a region that consists of different nationalities in one region, for the past 27 years; there will be unjust actions for denying and destroying the identity of the nations that have submitted their request. Gurage people think that, there are no social, economic and political values which are useful to organize the people together with the others. Gurage peoples are close to the community in terms of language, culture and psychology. They are peacefully demanding their rights to govern themselves, to develop their language, until the nation's federalism is destroyed, and the strike was successful (ethiopianreporter, August 4, 2014).

Historically, it is believed that the settlements of the Gurage people are bordered by the Awash River in the northeast and northwest, the Gibe River in the southwest, Hadiya in the south, and Lake Ziway in the northeast. Currently, in addition to Gurage, this place is home to Oromo, Silete, Halaba, Mareko and Kebena ethnic groups. Based on the second round of settlement the chronicles of Emperor Amde-Tsion, many Gurage history books place the arrival of Azmach Sabbat and their followers to the area in 1235 AD. Gurage area was part of the strong state administration and central government in Ethiopia that was completely successful and properly maintains the balance of power in the area from Emperor Amde Tsion to Emperor Zerayakob. The 3rd round of settlement Dr. Mohammad Tadesse Keremo from the east in the 16th century following the establishment of the Islamic Adal dynasty of Ahmad Ibn Ibrahim Algazi (1506-1543) (Ahmed Giragn) and the expansion of the territory, the population movement of the Muslim followers and missionaries brought many residents to the area (Alemu, 1987).

As stated, when Gurage analyzed the place in Ethiopia in the middle ages, it was an independent state from the 14th century and was being cultivated by the central government,

which is clearly written in the chronicles of the kings. For example, being in the list of forty-six states that belonged to Emperor Libinedingil, being in 37 states of Emperor Sertsedingil, and being in fifty-two states of Emperor Zerayakob 1434-1468 proved that they are people with a long history. Before the formation of modern Ethiopia, the people of the country were governed by their own ancient administrative system, and the organizational system mainly followed a decentralized state administration system. Although these territorial areas did not have a centralized government, they had ancient organizations and systems where they could protect themselves from foreign aggression, ensure their internal peace, establish accountability, and properly serve public values. It was also a time when efforts were made to establish small and large political administrations, i.e., government-like organizations for the local people, to cover the gap in the relationship between the administrations over the years (ibid).

Politically, the organization of this region, which was not accepted by the masses since its inception, due to the exclusionary policies, the unfair distribution of wealth and power, and the lack of good governance, has greatly contributed to the question of regionalism among many of the region's community (ethiopianreporter, August 4, 2014).

#### **2.4.2 Present Factors and Motivations behind the Gurage People Self-Determination Quest**

The questions of the entire Ethiopian people, namely, the questions of living in peace, justice, equality, self-government and democracy, development and equal use of resources, the use of one's own language, and the promotion of culture and heritage are the questions of all Ethiopians. Also, Violation of human right, and failures of people's coexistence, instability of the country are coercive factors. Gamo Democratic Party Chairman Darot Guma says that he believes that the problem of good governance, equitable development benefits, lack of fair representation and unfair practices in general are among the reasons for the question of regionalization of the southern region zones (ethiopianreporter, August 4, 2014).

The perverse constitutional dilemma, a system steeped in piracy; Lack of justice. Inequitable distribution of wealth; It is that the basic right to be the legal owner of the property and to

live in peace by working hard and producing wealth is a violation of administrative violations are factors for the self-determination demand (Ezema June 16, 2020). The other motive for Self-rule demand is the constitution; the demand of the Gurage people to be organized in a region is a constitutional right that is clearly established in terms of law. Article 47/2 of the Federal Constitution: "Any nation, nationality and people have the right to establish their own region at any time. Such thinking emanated from logical motives of self-autonomous administrative demand.

## **2.5 Review of Empirical Studies**

Self-determination requires the creation and rooting of a prosperous society. The conditions necessary for Self-determination can be political, economic, and psychological. These conditions are considered to be encouraging for sub-national and municipal autonomy (Awol, 2018).

### **2.5.1. The Prerequisite for Self-Determination**

Many scholars agree that questions of identity in politics are often related to issues of culture, language, and territory. Claimants make their case based on the importance of preserving their culture and language, which many consider to play a central role in group identity. The questioners also linked their identity with the region they live in and made their identity question the center. The issue of territory is related to self-rule and emotional attachment to a specific region (Girma, 2011). Self-determination has basic principles and includes social, economic and political issues. Among other things, if a particular group has shared linguistic, religious, ethnic and cultural characteristics, it calls for Self-determination and recognition of the group at the national level. Therefore, the existence of these common issues is a great contribution in the efforts of a group to manage itself (Awol, 2018). In this section, the relationship of identity with culture, language and region is will be reviewed.

### **2.5.2 Nature of the Federal Negotiation**

This course examines federal organization and the pre-federal negotiations that led to the creation of the federal government. Those who are able to generate effective public support in

favor of self-determination and at the same time have the power to negotiate in federal negotiations will strive to assert their right to self-determination more than anyone else (Awol, 2018).

### **2.5.3 The Desire to Become Autonomous**

As a principle, the right to self-determination is enshrined in the United Nations Charter and Article 1 of the ICCPR, and the African Charter on Human Rights recognizes the right to self-determination of all peoples, whether colonized or oppressed (Guta, 2006). A strong drive for autonomy and self-management is a vital drive for autonomy. The reasons can be explained in several ways; For example, a group can demonstrate its purpose by keeping itself from integrating. A group can strive to achieve economic viability for itself, and it can also show a group's psychological readiness for a state (Awol, 2018).

### **2.5.4 The Right of Self- Determination in FDRE Constitution**

With more than 80 ethnic languages spoken, Ethiopia is one of the most diverse countries in the world. It is a country with many linguistic, cultural, religious, social and economic activities and a traditional administrative structure. History tells us that modern Ethiopia was created in the 19th and early 20th centuries (Guta, 2006). It can be said that ethnic identity and the right to self-determination after accepting a nation as a nation are two pillars of Ethiopia's attempt at ethnic federalism. In particular, these two bodies have controversial implications in the area where they believe that the identity and self-determination rights of the southern ethnic groups and peoples have been violated. Legally, the Federal Constitution, the Amended Constitution of the SNNP Region, and the Sub-Federal and Southern Regional Laws (Proclamations) provide the constitutional and legal frameworks for how to govern their respective identity and self-determination issues (Rahel, 2020).

Ethiopia's nations, nationalities and peoples under national oppression and autonomy are all the ideas that are visible in the constitution of the Federation. The constitution has resources to protect the rights and interests of nations, nationalities and peoples. A critical event that occurred before the constitution came into effect regarding self-determination, the charter should be proclaimed the "Transitional Charter of Ethiopia". The entry into force of the

Charter was the official recognition of the right of nations, nationalities and peoples to self-determination. The Charter recognizes the right to self-determination without distinguishing between nations, nationalities and peoples, and consequently the right to establish public institutions, promote culture and representation based on fairness and equity (Wondosen, 2010).

The right to self-determination has become a very important concept to be listed in the 1995 Constitution. In the introduction, it has begun to be seen as the right of ethnic groups and peoples. However, the most detailed statement of the right is in Article 39, which lists a) the right to promote language, culture and history, (Article 39(2) of the Federal Constitution) b) self-determination and regional autonomy (Article 39(3) of the Federal Constitution and c) Article 39(1) and (4) of the Federal Constitution (Awol, 2018).

The concept and dimensions of the right to self-determination are broad and multifaceted. It is one of the most important rights of oppressed peoples because it can be viewed simultaneously from political, economic, social and cultural rights. The right to self-determination is the right of all nations, nationalities and peoples to self-determination. According to article 47 sub-articles 2, each Ethiopian ethnic group has the full right to establish government institutions in the region where they live and self-determination with fair representation at the federal and regional levels. A federal constitution is unique in that it theoretically grants all nations, regardless of their size or political consciousness, the right to self-determination. In practice, some nations have been able to establish their own home regions, while others have established sub-regional autonomy by establishing their own zones or districts. There are also ethnic groups that do not have autonomy at the regional, zonal and district levels. Insignificant powers are reserved only for regional governments (Gutta, 206).

### **2.5.5 Language Independence**

Language plays an inevitable role in the daily activities of societies around the world. It not only serves as a means of communication but is also a source of pride, self-confidence and identity that is a reflection of society. Also, it plays an important role in the diplomatic coexistence and social life of mankind. This is why each language group has an intrinsic

motivation to strive to preserve its own language. In order to experience culture, there must be the right to use one's own language, so language and culture are important elements of identity. On the other hand, a group as a population has the right to speak and write in its language, and to receive public services in that language. Minority groups deprived of their language may feel marginalized and unable to maintain their distinct identity and risk their opportunity to participate equally in political, social and economic affairs. Therefore, it is better to provide protection without discrimination on the basis of language (Guta, 2006). In terms of fueling regionalism, the role of language is significant. On the one hand, language serves to unite speakers of the same language under one umbrella, and on the other hand, it forces groups by evoking feelings of disenfranchisement among people who speak different languages (Awol, 2018).

According to Article 5 (1) and (2) of the Federal Constitution, all Ethiopian languages are equally recognized in the state, while Amharic is the working language of the federal government, but it is not written as the language of communication between the federal government and the regional government. Ethnic groups demand cultural protection and diversity by giving regional councils the power to determine the working language of their respective regions (see Article 5(3) of the 1995 Federal Constitution). This paves the way for states to adopt their own official languages. The right of ethnic groups to use their own language in public affairs was constitutionally recognized (see Article 39(2) of the 1995 Federal Constitution) only when their territory was annexed (Gutta, 2006).

In multi-ethnic federations like Ethiopia, the purpose of the federation is to create unity out of diversity. It should be remembered that the issue of language policy covers all political, economic, social, cultural and educational issues of the country. If cultures are propagated and preserved through language, it is inevitable to practice and pursue education in the mother tongue to some extent. If you don't learn the mother tongue, it is difficult to develop language, culture, and maintain cultural equality and reduce the subordination of languages. By learning one's own language, it is possible to exchange a culture that develops a sense of belonging, tolerance and diversity (ibid).

### **2.5.6 Cultural Self-Determination**

Besides language, culture is one of the main elements of a nation. As culture is the way of life of a society and part of a nation, as stated in Article 27 of the ICCPR, nationals have the right to recognition and protection of their right to use their own culture with other members of the group. In multicultural states, it should be promoted by adopting educational and cultural policies and strategies that promote cultural diversity as much as possible. Therefore, ethnic groups should have the opportunity to experience, develop, promote and teach their culture. Therefore, those who do not violate the rights of others, especially the rights of individuals, should be equally recognized for all cultures (Gutta, 2006). Most scholars agree that culture binds individuals together, provides a basis for a common identity, and creates a context for seeing and understanding the world. From this point of view, they gave importance to language and did not separate culture from language (Parekh, 2000).

When it comes to the Federal Constitution, it has taken the same position by clearly recognizing the right to self-determination for nations, ethnic groups and peoples for culture. The definition of cultural autonomy in the Federal Constitution may seem clear enough. But in actual practice it may be difficult to determine the scope of the right. The recognition of traditional and religious practices that were once removed is another achievement of the constitution in upholding the right to cultural self-determination (Awol, 2018).

### **2.5.7 Political Self-Determination**

In addition to language and cultural rights, the rights of ethnic groups to participate and represent in government administration are important. Each country is different and has its own political structures and mechanisms of representation, these mechanisms include effective representation in the national executive, decision-making mechanisms such as public institutions, and in the civil service. It involves participation in areas of judicial and administrative authority and policy formulation and implementation at various levels of government, and besides influencing the decisions of the masses, it gives nations a sense of ownership (Guta, 2006).

The government guarantees the right of ethnic groups to participate in public discussions at any level of government at their own discretion. For this reason, in addition to recognizing constitutional human rights, ethnic groups should be given a greater say in socio-political affairs and government policy actions. Therefore, a political environment with balanced representation should be provided to all parties at all levels of government and in all branches of government. With this right, ethnic groups can share power in government administration to protect their interests and strengthen their relationship with the community they live in (ibid).

So far, the right to political self-determination is the biggest aspect of the right to self-determination in a pluralistic society to remain united as Ethiopians. It defined sovereignty over culture, education, language, religion, money, administration of justice and public welfare, as well as some economic autonomy. Similarly, the Federal Constitution recognizes the various forms of self-determination mentioned above. It has already been mentioned that regions in Ethiopia are formal and institutionalized due to the majority of ethnic groups and peoples (Awol, 2018). From a political point of view, EPRDF paid attention to the administrative integration of the first era of federalism, especially in the southern region, despite the commitment and permission given to the ethnic groups to organize and operate independently. But currently, the region organized under 20 nationalities is struggling to accommodate 56 nationalities. As a result of this struggle, the number and identity of local government structures underwent various reforms (Parekh, 2000).

#### **2.5.8 Secession**

The right to secession is part of the right to self-determination of 'nations, nationalities and peoples' regardless of their numbers, history and political status. The limitation on the right of self-government of nations, nationalities and peoples is only for all regional or local bodies to carry out their work and use their rights based on the framework of democratic principles, the rule of law and the laws and spirit of the federation (Guta, 2006).

According to the Transitional Charter, nations, nationalities and peoples can exercise their right to secession and assert their right to self-determination. Therefore, when the right to

self-determination, political and cultural, among other issues is clearly recognized, it will be very difficult to prove that the rights of nations, nationalities and peoples are denied. In addition, in Art 13(2) the fundamental rights and freedoms stipulated in Chapter Three of the Federal Constitution shall be interpreted in accordance with the principles of international documents accepted by Ethiopia. Even if there is a right to alienate, the validity of the right must meet strict requirements. (Awol, 2018)

Even if the Federal Council, the body responsible for interpreting the Constitution, intends to realize the right to secede, the strict implementation of the Constitution is not easily achieved. In Art 39(4) the right of nations, nationalities and peoples to secede in the Constitution shall be implemented: (a) When the request for secession is approved by two-thirds of the members of the Legislative Council of the ethnic groups. and the people concerned; (b) when the Federal Government prepares a referendum within three years from the date of the resolution of the relevant Houses of Independence; (c) when the request for secession is supported by a majority vote; (d) When the federal government transfers power to the Assembly of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples who voted to secede, and (e) when the distribution of property is done in a manner prescribed by law (Article 39 (4) of the Federal Constitution) (Awol, 2018). We must remember that DPRK (including secession) is the right of nations and peoples, not the rights of states. As mentioned earlier, no member states are the same. Accordingly, in regions where diversity is high, with more than 56 nationalities in the southern region, a 2/3 majority is almost impossible. Therefore, it is pointless to submit a request for secession in the regional council, where the parties concerned are small, because other ethnic groups in the council may oppose the opposition (Awol, 2018).

## **2.6 Successful and Failed Self-Determination Experience**

Currently, the question of autonomy in Ethiopia's federal system is very strange. However, most of the claims remain unanswered by the concerned parties; instead some of the missions lead to violent clashes and the death of innocents and massive destruction of property. Therefore, the question of self- self-determination and sub-continental self-governance is currently one of the most important disputes between ethnic groups and between ethnic groups and the government, state and federal government. As fate would have it, some of the

same demands for autonomy have been addressed by the state government, but the terms are still unclear. A relatively small number of people in Ethiopia have had the opportunity to govern them; similarly, it appears to be a matter of chance rather than a matter of law (Awol, 2018). As evidence, the researcher separately will presents some successful and some unsuccessful self- self-rule questions in Ethiopia's federal system. To start with the successful ones:

### **2.6.1 The Sedama Self-Determination Experience**

The Sidama self-determination was one of the issues. Showing that the people of Sidama have a different identity from the southern region, they demanded their right to self-determination be respected. As such, they successfully challenged the state and federal authorities according to constitutional principles and procedures. The Council of the Federation, which has the legal authority to make a final decision on issues requiring the interpretation of the constitution, has been discussing it with the Southern Region and the Constitutional Affairs Inquiry Assembly for a long time to address the operational problems faced by the Sidama ethnic groups and peoples. The referendum that resulted in the establishment of a separate Sidama region by holding a referendum in 2018, it took place on November 23, 2018 after much political campaigning, internal rivalries and a negative response from the federal government. However, the Sidama people won the title of an ethnic community and established their own regional administration, but their claim was not accepted by the federal government from the beginning (Awol, 2018).

The struggle of Sidama ethnic groups and peoples to establish their own regional administration by separating from their region, the right of ethnic groups and peoples to obtain regional administration at the regional level is a manifestation of the right to self-determination. However, the members of the Sidama ethnic group have responded to the question of secession from the southern region by going beyond the unequivocal condition of the constitution. When the right of self-determination of nations, ethnic groups and peoples is needed, it can be separated from the region in which it is located, not only autonomously. The Federal Constitution implicitly provides for the establishment of autonomous regional states intended to accommodate regional ethnic governance. Despite this constitutional provision,

the tendency to enforce the right to self-determination is always accompanied by the loss of innocent lives and the destruction of property (Awol, 2018).

### **2.6.2 Failed Self-Determination Quest Experience**

According to the constitution, there is no doubt that Ethiopia is a federal political party. But the federal institutions are controlled by the highly centralized EPRDF, which makes decisions from the capital, from the Prime Minister's Office to the zonal administration. A well-organized one-party network extends from the center to the region, which realizes the constitutional federalism in Ethiopia. Despite the formal commitment to multi-party democracy in the 1994 Ethiopian constitution, a unified power structure was created under [prosperity]. Like the former communist party EPRDF, [Prosperity Party] claims to play the role of a vanguard political movement. According to the practice of the Soviet Union, the decision to grant a certain level of governance to the ethnic groups rests solely with the "Vangar" EPD [Prosperity Party] (Awol, 2018).

As a result, there are some paradoxes, which are still difficult to explain, such as the Harari people whose total population does not exceed ten thousand and 7% of the total population of Harir city are allowed their own province, while the Gurage, whose population is more than 1.8 million, are included in the southern region. As mentioned above, nation is the central organizing tool of Ethiopian federalism; any group recognized by the constitution as a nation, nation or people have full right to establish its own territory. In Ethiopia, the constitutional recognition of the rights of ethnic groups is considered as the cornerstone of the federation. Consequently, a number of petitioners seeking recognition of their particular ethnicity have been brought to the HOF. Among them, when the Gurage's asked to establish their own region, it was rejected by the EPRDF. This shows that the EPRDF [prosperity] is not willing to fully accept the constitutional rights of ethnic groups (Ethiopian reporter, August 10, 2022).

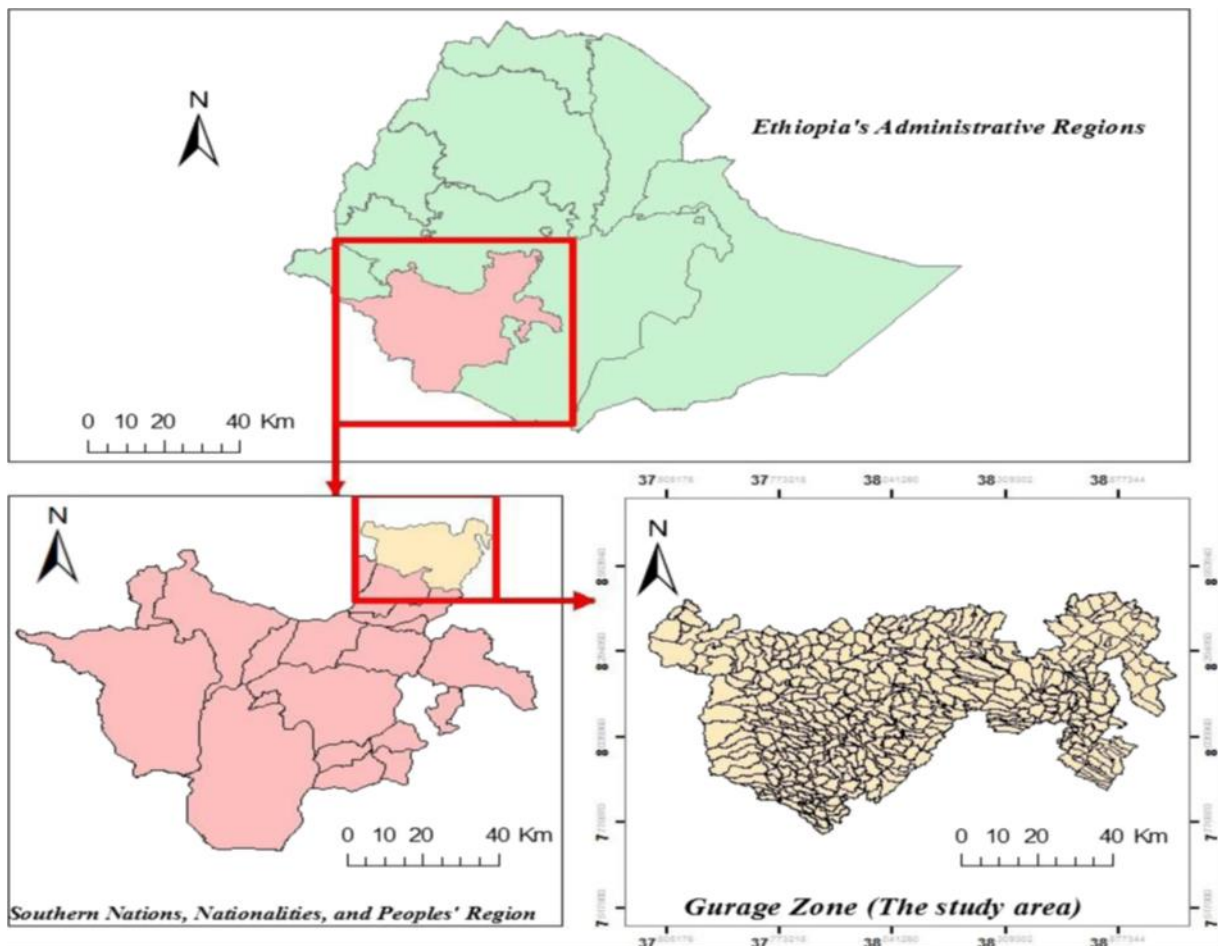
### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

This chapter explored the location, demography, and local government administrative structure of the study area. Moreover, it discussed the research approach, research design, justification of selecting the study area and data source, sampling technique and size, method and instruments of data collection, method of data analysis.

#### 3.1. Description of the Study Area

##### 3.1.1 Location



Gurage is a zone in the Ethiopian Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR). This zone is named for the Gurage people, whose homeland lies in this zone.

Gurage is bordered on the southeast by Hadiya and Yem special woreda, on the west, north and east by the Oromia Region, and on the southwest by Silt'e. Its highest point is Mount Gurage. The language of the people is Guragina. the Gurage Zone in southern Ethiopia, which is located between 7°76' and 8°45' N latitude and 37°46' and 38°71' E longitude (Fig. 1) (Sebsibe, Fikre and Seifu, 2018,). Gurage is located in the southernmost part of the central Ethiopian plateau approximately 150- 250 km south of Addis Ababa. Fig. 1 Map of the study area (Gurage Zone) (Tadesse et al., 2018)

### **3.1.2. Demographic characteristics**

Based on the 2007 Census conducted by the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia (CSA), Gurage has a total population of 1.867 million with an area of 50,023 square kilometre. The six largest ethnic groups reported in Gurage Zone were the Gurage people (82%), the Mareqo or Libido (4.28%), the Amhara (3.36%), the Kebena (3.34%), and the Oromo (1.69%); all other ethnic groups made up 2.62% of the population. Gurage languages are spoken as a first language by 80.54% of the population, 5.28% spoke Amharic, 4.09% spoke Libido, 3.2% spoke Kebena, and 1.06% spoke Oromo; the remaining 2.85% spoke all other primary languages reported. The majority of the inhabitants were reported as Muslim, with 51.02% of the population reporting that belief, while 41.91% practiced Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity, 5.79% were Protestants, and 1.12% Catholic.

### **3.2. Research Approach**

Based on its purpose, the study employed qualitative research approach. A qualitative research approach is used for narrative reports to explain and analyze the implications of people's behavior and actions (Erickson, 2011). This method allowed the study to understand the events that the society is dealing with in terms of the meaning they bring to it. Therefore, it helped the researcher to analyze the nature and needs of the Gurage people. Also, Qualitative research will be very useful for this study because it studies real-time events and realities in the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). In this study, why the researcher employed qualitative research method is because, it gave an overview in the context of the Gurage people demand for self-rule and helped to get information on the knowledge of different

participants. According to Michael Patton, a qualitative research theory helps to obtain important information in a deeper and broader way. Furthermore, it is used as broad evidence to understand behavior patterns and information movements, not necessarily quantitative and quantitative formations (Laureate Education, 2009).

### **3.3. Research Design**

In this study descriptive research design has been employed. One of the important of qualitative research in this research is the concept that the researcher as a researcher in its meaning, approach, people try their best to find respondents based on their experiences and perspectives (Kumar, 1999). A descriptive research design attempted to systematically describe a situation, problem, and service, or provides information about a community's living conditions, or expresses an attitude toward an issue (Kumer, 2009). It is used as a reference to describe the characteristics of the Gurage people and evaluate that focus on self-rule claims. Descriptive research study has been fitted with this study because it narrates some predictions related to the facts about individual and group situations. That is why social research often falls under this category. This is because it aimed at providing complete and accurate information; is found necessary in this study as it is used to define the objectives sufficiently to ensure that the collected data are appropriate. (Kothari, 2004)

While conducting this study, the researcher used descriptive research design as it helps to find a good explanation of the phenomenon of Gurage people emerging with the question of territoriality and to investigate "why" such claim happened. It is preferred to collect data that helped to accurately describe the problem of the Gurage peoples demand. It is a type of research design that aims to systematically obtain information that describes the events, conditions or feelings of the people in Ethiopia, especially the Gurage people, so it will be important for this study.

### **3.4. Target Population**

All indigenous people of Gurage are a people who are directly affected by the prohibition of self-rule demand. As a result, the target populations of the study are the people, local

government, political elites who have clear understanding on Rousseau's notion of autonomy and sovereignty.

### **3.5. Sample Size**

In qualitative research, as long as the primary focus is exploring a situation, issue, or phenomenon, as a result sample size is less important, and data are often collected until reaching saturation point. Obtaining new information is believed to have been reached. In addition, if the researcher assumed that not much new information is being obtained from the respondents, he/she has been shortened the data collection, because the information that the researcher wants to know and the information to be collected are not connected. As a result, the greater the difference, the more respondents needed to be contacted to reach the saturation point (Kumar, 2009)

### **3.6. Sampling Method**

This study employed non-probability sampling; especially the purposive sample. This allowed the researcher to select respondents who have relevant information about the problems under study. By choosing a knowledgeable person and compressing the information that gives a better understanding of the problem, such a sample helped to provide the necessary information to achieve the purpose of the study and to build historical facts, describe and develop events. Non-probability sampling allowed you to take samples of the population that are not finite in number (Alvi, 2016). Non-probability sampling is a sampling procedure in which there is no basis for estimating the probability that each item in the sample is included in the sample. It is designs that are adopted due to the relative advantages of time and money available in small surveys and surveys of individuals (Kothari, 2004). Accordingly, 32 interviewers of the study are taken by the researcher through the method of in depth interview with selected member of (the people, local governments), key informant interview (with philosophy Scholars) and FGD with (government officials, elders and Youths).

### **3.7. Type and Source of Data**

Deciding the method of data collection has been employed for the study, the researcher used two types of data, primary and secondary sources of data. The primary sources are first hand sources through this; data's are collected by Interview, focus group discussion (FGD). The secondary sources include document analysis either published and unpublished materials such as books, magazines, journals, articles and unpublished reports from government and nongovernmental organizations in relation to self-rule demand and Rousseau's notion of autonomy and sovereignty.

### **3.8. Data Collection Tools and Process**

Qualitative research methods are characterized by flexibility and freedom in terms of the structure and sequence given to the researcher. In some cases, it can be difficult to distinguish research design from data collection methods. Due to its philosophical content, this research employed unstructured interviews, because when we use unstructured interviews, the platform is free and open-ended in terms of wording and explaining questions to the respondents. It also allowed the researcher to prepare and raise questions based on situations encountered in the discussion (Kumar, 2009). Therefore, Face-to-face (researcher and respondent) interviews are conducted with the relevant parties. This study used Unstructured interviews: - in-depth-interview, key informant interview and FGD, and Secondary data sources.

#### **Key Informants Interview**

In relation to Gurage people demand for self-rule scholars who have philosophical background about Rousseau's conception of Autonomy and Sovereignty especially; philosophy graduates are used. Therefore, samples of 3 philosophy elites are selected as key informants under the study.

#### **In-Depth Interviews**

In-depth interview is a frequent used for face-to-face meeting between the researcher and the informants, where they expressed feelings about their lives, experiences or situations in their

own words, so it is useful to understand thoughts and attitudes. As a result, 17 interviewers are used in the people of Gurage and the local government based on personal skills or positions in society to provide more information.

### **Focus Group Discussion**

The study explored the perceptions and experiences of a group of people with similar experiences to the Gurage people self-rule demand through focus group interviews. Accordingly, the researcher used two FGD period involving 6 different participants in each from the government officials, elders and Youths. The focus group discussions provide a broad frame for subsequent discussions, broad discussion topics are prepared in advance by the researcher. Thus, the researcher collected data using suitable recording techniques by carefully recording the conversation in notes (Kumar, 2009).

**Document Analysis:** The study conducted secondary data such as documents, unpublished report, articles and books which are written relation to self-rule claim and Rousseau's political philosophy.

### **3.9. Methods of Data Analysis**

In order to achieve the research objective, the responses of the respondents were transcribed before making the philosophical content, and then the transcribed interviews were analyzed for their relationship with Rousseau's philosophical idea of autonomy and sovereignty, and constitutional laws were used to examine the question of autonomy. Data analysis in qualitative research involved in preparing and organizing data for analysis, then reducing the data to themes through a process of editing and coding (Kothari, 2004). Therefore, data collected from primary and secondary sources were analyzed thematically based on the objectives and questions of the study. The un-structured interviews, FGDs and document analysis collected from the respondents were structured by themes and patterns and carefully analyzed for meaning and content to have a clear analysis based on the set objectives and questions.

### **3.10. Ethical considerations**

The researcher took appropriate ethical considerations during data collection and analysis. To avoid unnecessary stress and waste of time in data collection, so the researcher followed up by informing the relevant participants or respondents about the purpose and benefits of the study and their service rights in a timely manner. The researcher is free from bias and selects study participants based on inclusive selection criteria, as well as personal biases and analysis of aggregate data. During the data collection process, the interviewees (informed focus) and real names were replaced with a secret code. The researcher examines the collected data and provides the correct information to build a consistent justification for the statements. Therefore, the researcher has sworn that the informants who may contribute to provide information will not be violated in this regard based on their free will and confidentiality.

## **4. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

In this chapter, the researcher tried to answer the research questions by analyzing the data presentation method. The points raised in this section: By briefly stating the purpose and significance of Rousseau's study of the self-governance of the Gurage people, he examined the struggle for the rights of the Gurage people by connecting them with Rousseau's philosophical ideas of autonomy and sovereignty. First of these: he explained Rousseau's critical concepts of autonomy, sovereignty, social contract and general consent related to the question of self-governance of the Gurage people. List its implications and importance. Secondly: Gurage people tried to examine the basic reasons of regional self-organization, the appropriateness, the effects of the question, the disagreement of the government with the constitution and solutions with reference to the constitution of the federal government. In order to achieve the objective of the study, the data collected through interviews and focus group discussions were presented verbally. Therefore, information from various sources has been organized and narrated. Therefore, based on the information I obtained from the interviews and focus group discussions, the chapter covers a total of six main themes. Interviews and focus group discussion are referred to throughout the chapter as: (interview code, interview location and interview date) and focus group discussions are referred to as: (FGD code, FGD date and FGD location). Finally, the thesis ends with conclusions and recommendations.

### **4.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relevance of the demand for self-governance by Rousseau's concept of autonomy and sovereignty. Rousseau's philosophic ideas are significant in correcting the global weaknesses in the political world and defending the demand for the autonomy of the Gurage people for human rights. As Rousseau's concept of freedom as a public process can be reformed and structured in the modern world as a philosopher who struggled with the problem, the research examines how the people of Gurage are sovereign in their own affairs. Rousseau's ideas about sovereignty, the general will, the legitimacy of the state, and the comparison of moral authority with authority were the most influential. General consent has been studied by many scholars, but one of the most

critical and penetrating ideas to examine the question of the Gurage self-rule demand is Rousseau. (SP-2, Worabe, 01 May 2023). Therefore, these concepts will be analyzed in step by step. Sovereignty is a defining characteristic of power. The sovereign will always act for the general good and will not discriminate between the different classes of citizens, but a limitation of the sovereign is the final judge. Rousseau included the concept of sovereignty in the constitution; his theory of the social contract gave people the idea of a suitable solution, which remains relevant to this day. Therefore, in this chapter Rousseau examines the relationship of the general will, sovereignty, social contract with the Gurage people demand for self-determination (SP-1, Addis Ababa, April 9, 2023).

#### **4.2 Identification of Rousseau philosophy related to Gurage Peoples self-determination demand**

In order to continue a community with social unity, peace, security, freedom, and rights in safe the role of government must be crucial. To perform this, according to Rousseau's teaching; individual must submit their authority and goodwill to the entity called the government. In order to establish a government, first it is must to identify the type and nature of contract. Rousseau is one of the founders of this idea, for him the primary function of government is to uphold the rights and freedom of the society. Rousseau's goal is the unity and peace of the society, because he believes that if it is possible to protect the safety and property of the society, as well as freedom and rights, and if the sovereignty is confirmed, a peaceful society will be found. The concept of popular sovereignty is linked to the concept of the social contract, according to which the people entrust the power of government to an elected legislature. The most important aspects of popular sovereignty are expressed in the people's right to revolution. Therefore, if the incumbents do not fulfill their obligations, they can denounce the contract made under this agreement. As a result, the government bodies are free to terminate the contract if the government authorities do not respect their rights and cannot guarantee them by violating their obligations by concluding this contract (SP-3, Addis Ababa, April 14, 2023).

Rousseau was the first philosopher to grapple with how the concept of autonomy as a public ideal is structured in the modern world. Rousseau's ideas about sovereignty, general will, and

the legitimacy of government versus power were the most influential. Rousseau developed the idea of the general will on the part of the people, the idea of the general good of the people. He emphasized the importance of sovereignty and democratic government. General will stands as the foundation of lawful government. Rousseau's reason for the transition of man from the state of nature to civil society is the need to protect his life and property, in a manner that respects the principles of autonomy and equality. The social contract, along with the general collective power, stipulates that each person and property will be protected. Based on this, Rousseau said that you should only obey yourself in your social contract and be free as before. And to achieve this goal of the social contract, Rousseau proposed what he called general consent. Once a part of the general will, he argued, it becomes an indivisible part of the citizen's identity. It also says that citizens enjoy inalienable rights. (SP-2, Worabe, 01 May 2023).

The concept of sovereignty assumes that the common will must be exercised directly by the people. If the people who own the sovereign power do not agree with their wishes in a referendum, they can modify or cancel any decision of the representative assembly. However, Rousseau asserts that the collective will is always just, establishing the social-state's unlimited dominance over man. Rousseau reminds us that human beings should live in a world of compulsory freedom saying that it is possible to establish order in an age of chaos. Human beings are created free and should be administered by their own free will (SP-1, Addis Ababa, April 9, 2023).

#### **4.3 Nexus between Rousseau theories and Gurage self-rule claim**

Jean-Jacques Rousseau has had a profound influence on the current political arena. Rousseau's ideas played an important role in promoting human right to be autonomous. He remains an important figure in the history of philosophy because of his contributions to political philosophy. Rousseau is playing the role of self-determination, following the natural separation of the modern individual from humanity. Using Rousseau's works, it is possible to find different ways to achieve human freedom in a world where people depend on each other to fulfill their needs. In the modern world, Rousseauian sovereignty and autonomy will be the solution for humanity to understand its identity. The concept of Rousseauian sovereignty and

autonomy is to build institutions that allow and promote free and equal citizens to live together in a society where they are sovereign. Furthermore, it enhances the capacity for self-control and creates the most destructive self-serving mechanisms. Rousseau believes that human beings can live together in a relationship of equality and freedom. Rousseau's concepts of sovereignty and autonomy influenced political and educational theory throughout the Enlightenment. Therefore, Rousseau's ideas are believed to have influenced Garage's revolution, as some of his ideas were expressions of freedom (SP-3, Addis Ababa, 14, April, 2023).

Rousseau's insistence on the basic freedom of people in their natural state contributed to the modern notion that people have inalienable rights regardless of their position in society. This idea is clearly reflected in documents such as the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the modern world (SP-2, Worabe, 01 May 2023). Many of Rousseau's fundamental principles of international relations helped shape modern thought. At first glance, Rousseau seems to prefer states to remain independent of each other as much as possible, because he believed that dependency was the root of all conflict. Rousseau wanted a better society where everyone had the same rights and opportunities, which was closely associated with the theory of equality. Rousseau's all-time desire was for equality in society, equal rights applied without discrimination, seeking the best for everyone. Rousseau's social contract has a major impact on political administration, suggesting how people can regain their freedom. The Social Contract begins with "Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains." Therefore, he argues that people should not be in chains. If civil government is based on a true social contract, people will receive better freedoms in exchange for their natural freedoms. Such freedom is achieved by obeying the law (constitution) that it makes itself (SP-1, Addis Abeba, 09 May, 2023)

Rousseau wrote about the establishment of private property: "The first man, who fenced off a piece of land, thought to himself that it is mine, and found people easy to believe him, is the true founder of civil society." He would have avoided many crimes, wars and murders if he had told his fellows to beware of listening to this impostor by raising the problems or filling the hole. He explained that the fruits of the earth belong to all of us, and the earth itself

belongs to no one. Therefore, the people of Gurage had a strong connection with Rousseau's idea and were a people who lived by moving around the country with the view that Ethiopia's land belongs to everyone. However, according to Rousseau's statement that people are forced to withdraw from the social contract because of when the government does not protect private property, the people of Gurage have also raised the question of self-determination by seeking a general will (law) and entering into their own social contract (SP-2, Worabe, 01 May 2023)

The key idea of Rousseau's theory of the social contract is the "general will", His concept is very effective. He pointed out that any legitimate government must be based on the general will, which is the basic source of sovereignty. It says that all laws and actions must be in line with it. Therefore, if done correctly it is used to create laws that apply equally to all communities. Because, they were able to act freely according to the general will, they took a lesson from Rousseau's idea that states should be as autonomous as possible. The important aspect of self-determination for the Gurage people is that the general will must be applied universally and generally, so that the society can be judged equally, the law will be applied equally to all citizens. Inequalities are removed and there can be a significant democratic element to the government as the people decide to organize the state (SP-3, Addis Ababa, 14, April, 2023).

Rousseau is considered as the father of modern democracy, Democracy is also known as people power because the way of governance is based on the will of the people. So democracy is not an autocracy or a dictatorship where one person rules. At least in theory, it is the government that represents all the people according to their 'interests'. Today's political debates ask how much democracy we should have and what we should be subject to voting. The main argument for self-determination, which the people of Gurage are determined to make now, is to respect the law and the people's vote. Here, Rousseau's idea of democracy is different from the idea of the people of Ethiopia, because for Rousseau, representative democracy is not valid because it does not represent the will of each person. Therefore, for Rousseau, he argues that people should be directly involved in every aspect of their society. In Rousseau's work called General Will (Law), one of the concepts of general will (law) is the concept of common good, this theory of Rousseau supports modern republican rule in

political thought. Rousseau said that the General Will (law) is a democratic way, where everyone gets the same rights and what they deserve without any discrimination (SP-2, Worabe, 01 May 2023)

#### **4.4 Implications of Rousseau theories for Gurage people self-determination demand**

Even though, Rousseau lived long time ago, his ideas address many of today's concerns, especially about social inequality and unfettered democracy. Many intellectuals agree that we Ethiopians are facing a deep social problem; the growing of administrative division is one of the dangers facing the country. Many citizens feel unrepresented by the people they elect and are disturbed by leaders who protect special interests. Rousseau's ideas are a vital lesson for that mission of integrating the social contract we take for granted into our modern society. Yet in many ways, the principles of enlightenment still exist; the concept of fundamental human rights still inspires oppressed people throughout the world. Rousseau's idea of autonomy influenced many models of government, although these concepts began as Europeans, they have become global. They set the standards used in international law and governance today (SP-2, Worabe, 01 May 2023).

Rousseau does not propose solutions, but he asks important questions: How can we reconcile individual and social interests? How do we organize political life for a purpose? It also examines the importance of political participation and notions of equality of opportunity by addressing meaningful concepts defined as universals in the social contract between citizens and the state. By highlighting the values of freedom, equality and community, it is a helpful idea to find answers to the questions that our society is facing now. However, Rousseau believed that a perfect society could be built on common sense and tolerance (SP-3, Addis Ababa, 14, April, 2023).

Rousseau has put forward important ideas for us live in the 21st century, seeks common good that allows our society to revive democracy, solidarity and the art of living together. Rousseau was interested in national self-determination and nation-building, and he thought about peace and stability, but his philosophies are different from the current intention for self-determination. Rousseau believed that when man departs from the state of nature, he becomes

selfish and expands into pride. Rousseau's nationalism has a common purpose: that the individual should understand and take pride in serving the good of the community. Rousseau wanted people to avoid corruption, improve their bad habits, and focus on giving themselves to the country and the citizens (SP-1, Addis Abeba, 09 May, 2023).

Rousseau's commitment to emphasis on the importance of law became the foundation of republicanism as a philosophical and political concept, above all self-determination and autonomous freedom, it is honorable. Therefore, a political society is only a political society that respects the declarations of freedom and equality with other people and recognizes the right of moral autonomy for its members and works for the common good of the whole political society, a truly free political society (SP-2, Worabe, 01 May 2023).

Rousseau believed that freedom and equality required a social contract in which people entrusted their lives, liberty, and property to the government and to each other. Everyone should participate in self-discipline and self-sacrifice, mutual concern and common effort, all should do their part in the work of self-control. In order for this organization to be implemented, people need to live in a common ethnic community and have a sense of patriotism. Therefore, at first the region was located on a natural geographical region where the people were of the same ethnicity and culture, speaking the same language and following the same tradition. Second, the region was to have strong social and political institutions to provide civic education, maintain the rule of law, and promote general interest (SP-3, Addis Ababa, 14, April, 2023).

#### **4.5 Lessons from Rousseau concept of Autonomy and Sovereignty**

In his social contract theory, Rousseau argues that an attack on one member of a community is considered an attack on the whole community. What we can understand from Rousseau's idea is that, it is not appropriate to arrest and abuse the youth who support the community's ideas in their efforts to Gurage people demand for self-determination and it is considered to abuse the mass (SP-3, Addis Ababa, 14, April, 2023). Rousseau's philosophical concept of autonomy has its own significance for Gurage people demand for self-determination. Indeed, although Rousseau's concept of autonomy is different from the contemporary concept of

autonomy, Rousseau's concept of autonomy is significant. There is also the important point that Rousseau's autonomy claims the independent, self-determining capacity. Jean-Jacques Rousseau took the concept of autonomy as 'citizens working together to make laws that reflect their common understanding of the common good' and thus the right to self-determination requires citizens to have 'the capacity to judge what they decide for themselves. Rousseau presents a just political system as a harmonious scheme of cooperation between free and equal subjects. The Gurage people have taken lesson from Rousseau' s idea of justice and today the Ethiopian political system has tried to organize their society in an unfair way, and they have failed to accept the rules of the administration. For Rousseau, justice cannot be imposed against the will; it must be by the will of the people, otherwise it will be crushed (SP-3, Addis Ababa, 14, April, 2023).

As Rousseau predicted, the greatest challenge of modern society is the issue of equality. This issue of equality is due to the creation of private property following the establishment of civil society. In a political society, people get into conflict because of the imbalance between the people. This Rousseau's idea arose from the lack of equal benefits from the southern region, where the Gurage people are already governed, to separate from that region and establish an independent region for self-determination (SP-1, Addis Ababa, 09 May, 2023).

Therefore, Rousseau urges that, peoples should respect human rights and give up their freedom without using administrative tyranny without violating the constitution. Taking a lesson from Rousseau's idea of independence, the people of Gurage are challenging the government to respect the constitutional requirements and refrain from promoting a dictatorial system. Gurage people's question of autonomous administration is by testifying Rousseau's argument; it is preferable for states to be governed as independently as possible (SP-3, Addis Ababa, 14, April, 2023).

## **6. Discussion of Implication and Significances**

### **6.1 Determinant factors for the Gurage people demand for self-determination**

Key Informants point out that, it is necessary to understand Rousseau's analysis on the justification of private property which causes to immorality and injustice in modern societies. Rousseau's ideals of individual liberty in society are a reminder to reject totalitarianism in modern states, while rulers disobey the constitution and violate human rights and lose liberty (Simon, 2015). According to Rousseau, the greatest frustration of modern society is the phenomenon of inequality. Man had the ability to be perfect, which allowed him to escape from the state of nature, but civil society created imbalance between the desires and the ability to satisfy civilization. Civilization, by multiplying needs and failing to satisfy these needs, has made man unhappy and unequal in civil society (Simon, 2015). The Gurage people emphasized and challenged the vision of self-determination because of the lack of equality and justice. In the region they have been administered subjected to many kinds of abuse. The region couldn't provide an immediate solution to conflict and oppressions arising in the area. Therefore, to be autonomous is the best remedy for the society to solve conflict and oppression immediately.

Rousseau preferred states to remain autonomous as much as possible, such Rousseau's thinking originated from deep hatred of dependency, which he believed as the root of all conflict. Clearly, humanitarian intervention creates dependency and imbalances between states (Blanchet, 2012). As a result of this, in order to ensure the fairness of the shortcomings and challenges seen by the community, it is the role of the government who is elected by the free will of the people. The government should examine the constitutionality and appropriateness of the question and make a decision. However, due to unequal treatment and misjudgment of the government, Gurage people rose persistently to realize the demand for self-determination.

Rousseau explains that the political success of a state is achieved, when it solves the basic political problem, ensures the welfare of its members and gives them autonomy (Blanchet, 2012). The struggle for Gurage people self-rule is linked with freedom and security that is the reason why it has a similar perspective to the process of the Rousseau conception of peoples

entering to a social contract. Rousseau argues that, due to the formation of civil society people entered into a social contract in search of protection and security. For him the simplest and far-sighted source of self-governance is family, and then it grows into [what we call, a district, a zone, a region and] a country. Rousseau said that, the better thing that society should dream is not inventing things, but how to renew our self-governance (Sweeney, 2010, 17). So, the Gurage peoples are forced to find a solution that will favor better protection and freedom. This is because, as Rousseau says, as a human being to deny freedom is to give up one's own identity (Blanchet, 2012).

According to Rousseau, we humans are special beings, not only because of our ability to acquire new things, but also we develop new desires, the ends of our actions transform our individuality into a social setting. A thing in which peoples want is to gain natural freedom, which consists of security and wellbeing (Sweeney, 2010, 7). That is the reason why the Gurage people stands firm for the community by strongly opposing the lack of development in the community and corrupted government system. According to the key informants, one of the driving factors for the Gurage people self-rule is the constitution. Article 47/2 of the Constitution states that "*Nation, nationality and people within the state have the right to establish their own region at any time*" Accordingly, the Gurage people have the right to establish their region. The people whom I interviewed me listed the main driving reasons as follows: -

*The main concern of the question is whether the Gurage people properly represented in the southern nation, nationality and people region? No. Gurage peoples are suffering from economic, social and political problems due to lack of good governance. Also, there is unfair distribution of wealth, unequal development, and lack of political representation. So, the Gurage people are considered as a slave and a second citizen in their country (LGO-1, Butajira, 31 March, 2023).*

Rousseau argued that people in the state of nature had no desire to enslave one another. But when people incapable to live lonely, they form a family to cooperate, to meet common needs, after that, many families came together to form a society, in society that private property is established, due to the formation of private property peoples start to rob one to the other. As

a result of such insurrection and instability, to be administered through law for the protection of private property and wellbeing peoples entered into a social contract. The contract in which individuals give up all their rights to society is called 'general will'. Thus, people appoint the people's government for the general good of the society for the purposes of the 'general will'. Rousseau argues that it may be impossible for people to govern by themselves, so a government that enforces a social contract is relevant. The community can hold the government for his accountable for not implementing social contract agreements. Therefore, Rousseau's sovereignty is the universal connection with the 'general will' of the people who represent the society, in which the individual asserts his freedom from dependence on others (Simon, 2015).

Since the social contract in which the Gurage people were organized against their will (southern region) did not give their freedom, failed to prevent them, because the social contract (southern region) did not respect the 'general will' (the constitution), the Gurage people withdrew from the social contract and created their own new social contract (Gurage region) and the 'general will' (Constitution) as well. This is because, according to Rousseau, popular sovereignty is indivisible and inalienable because the people do not want to transfer the ultimate right to determine their own destiny to any group/individual (SP-3, Addis Ababa, 14, April, 2023).

According to key informants, Gurage people demand for self-rule is mainly about enforcing the constitutional rights of the people. Therefore, they describe it as follows: ..... *it is a struggle we have been fighting for more than three decades to bring about this change, it is not for political gain, but rather we are fighting to develop our society, to promote our endangered languages and cultures, and to accelerate development (LGO, Wolkite, May 03, 2023)*.. Rousseau argued that human freedom in civil society should be governed by the universal law of 'general will'. Freedom and individual sovereignty, people can only be found when dependence between people is destroyed, at least regulated by law ('general will') (Simon, 2015).

#### **4.2 Legitimacy of Gurage people self-determination quest including Rousseau's point of View**

Rousseau asserts that, property should be controlled by the "general will," which is the universal law that restored human freedom in civil society. In order to implement in the modern governments, the leaders involved in the contract with the citizens must be willing to ensure adequate provision of the basic needs and security of the citizens (Simon, 2015). When the Gurage people entered into the social contract, they were agreed to be governed according to the 'general will' (constitution). Therefore, the government should not deny this, as it is a reasonable request based on the general will (SP- 1, Adis Ababa, 9 April, 2023).

For Rousseau, the way in which individuals can form a just political society is by surrendering their individual liberties to society as a whole; here laws are declared by a sovereign assembly. The sovereign, by his nature and constitution, has no other function than to control the basic principles of organization which each member has freely established together. As long as he does this, every citizen will be a healthy and decent recipient of civil liberties, and will remain truly free, while enjoying the security provided by the government. But if the sovereign cannot systematically respect the will of the general, civil liberties will be lost and the social system will cease to be governed by the social contract and will shift to a version of strong rule. Since the sovereign is the supreme secretary of state laws, there can never be a separate body to prevent this from happening. A majority in the sovereign body, as he says, will go so far as to give their choice, so long as they sufficiently express the sentiments of the community, and pay homage to the general (Wraight,2008). As a result, the Gurage people entered peacefully by asking their constitutional demands to be confirmed, but the ideological suppression and tyranny applied by the government will lead to a revolution where the society is accustomed to answering the questions of the government. Therefore, the government should be a model in Ethiopia and Africa by answering the Gurage people peaceful questions in a peaceful way.

Rousseau does not think that every nation is fit to be governed by a legislature in a constitutional political system. He thinks that great care is needed for a country to accept the radical maturity of its transition to true civil liberties. For him, small states are better than

large states because, the former are better suited to perpetuate the community and common purpose taught by the lawgiver (ibid). Even in the modern world where the Gurage people have spread fast and easy communication, the sovereign body must meet and consult with the members of the region to approve the general will. In the large and fragmented Southern region this would be difficult, but in a small part of Gurage such a problem would be much less (SP-3, Addis Ababa, 14, April, 2023). As Rousseau ascertained, the political success of a society is achieved when it recognizes and solves the basic political problem by enforcing the organization and "general will" of the society, the reverse is true while in political Failure (Blanchet, 2012).

Federal, regional, zonal and districtal leaders testified Gurage people demand for self-rule is appropriate and constitutional. The Gurage people have met the requirements set by the constitution for a community to be autonomous. The Federal Constitution declares that all sovereign power resides in the nations, ethnic groups and peoples of Ethiopia. According to Article 39, the nation, ethnic groups and peoples of Ethiopia have the unconditional right to self-determination, including the right to secession. According to an informant, *the Gurage people demand for self-determination is a reasonable and constitutional right. A community who lives in a certain area with the same language, culture and similar way of life has the constitutional right to establish their own region* (LGO-2, Butajira, 3 April, 2023). *The right to speak, write and raise one's own language is enshrined in the Constitution, has the right to full self-determination, which includes the right to express, develop and promote its culture, and to preserve its history, to establish government institutions in the region in which it resides, and to have fair representation in the state and federal governments* (LGO-9, Wolkite, 25April, 2023).

The researcher says that all claimants, writers, relatively independent individuals and some relevant government officials, including the government, do not deny Gurage peoples demand for self-determination, it is constitutional and appropriate. In general, the Gurage Zonal Council, in its meeting held on November 17, 2011E.C unanimously approved the decision of the Gurage people to organize themselves into a region. As Gogot prty mentioned, The basis for this decision is the Constitution of the Federation, Article 47/2 of the Federal

Constitution states that "*any nation, nationality, people have the right to establish their own region at any time*" and in the same article sub-number 3a-e of the constitution, it is clearly stipulated how to establish their own region. Also, According to Article 47/3/ of the Federal Constitution, it is the People that can make the decision of statehood in the region.

Rousseau asserts that, sovereignty belongs to the people and no one can take it away. It is important that when the sovereign legislates, it reflects their wishes and needs in some way. He said that the "general will" is the most reliable and infallible guide to the laws that each society should adopt. According to him, one of the main problems of political association is the failure to balance the conflicting interests of the members of the state. Therefore, , laws can only be given properly when they are bound by some kind of covenant or alliance (Rousseau, 1762, 11).Therefore, the decision to become Gurage region, which was unanimously decided by the Gurage zonal council, has a legal basis is the decision of all the people who live in the zone through their representatives.

#### **4.3 popular supports for Gurage self-rule demand and commitment of the people**

Rousseau intended to establish a general will for all sections of society. Accordingly, the act of transferring the rights of one person to another is not permitted in a truly republican society, because the will of a private person cannot be transferred. In other words, for Rousseau, "the sovereign cannot be represented by anything but himself. He warns that, only the public laws of the sovereign govern the society (Wraight, 2008). Sovereignty cannot be mistaken; its "general will" is entirely untainted by the pernicious elements of individual interests and aimed at the common good. Rousseau emphasizes the essential role of freedom for a valuable human life, and our logic dictates that in order to realize civil and moral freedom, all members of society must give up their natural liberties in order to create a strong consensus that preserves the stability of civil society. After 'signing' this social contract, the majority vote becomes binding on all citizens because "when a law is presented to a public meeting, it is asked whether they approve it or not (Karatekeli, 2021, 42)

According to the FGD made by the researcher, famous individuals such as musicians, authors, political party members, young elites, elders, women, city dwellers and natives of the

community, have taken a firm stand on the issue of Gurage people self-determination. However, contrary to the statement above, according to some informants, the Gurage people demand for self-determination considered as a minority concern. People who are trying to gain political status and economic benefits underestimate the Gurage people self-rule struggle. In addition, some government officials and individuals argue that Gurage people self-rule will destroy the brotherhood and cultural unity and tradition of the neighboring communities (FGD-1, Wolkite, 12 April, 2023).

Also, some key informants stated that, even if Gurage people's demand for regional self-determination is a constitutionally guaranteed right, it is not the question of the whole community, it is fifty to fifty (LGO- 6, Buee, 04 April, 2023). And other informant justified that, currently majority of the community stands firm in support of regional self-determination. But it doesn't mean that, every area pays attention (LGO-7, Buee, 04 April, 2023). According to the interview, existing factual reports and secondary documents show that the right to self-determination is a matter for the entire Gurage people. The political leaders, the natives of the society are the proponents and moguls of the self-determination agenda.

But among certain leaders, it shows some differences and this can be overlooked as every citizen is more far-sighted than the society, more conscious of his personal interests in all kinds of socio-economic and political endeavors. But the activity in active sections of the society can be considered as a measure to protect the interests of the people. Therefore, in a general study, as the researcher has confirmed, important members of the society have made the Gurage people demand for self-determination an issue of their existence. Thus, key informants strongly support the view in terms of promoting cultural, economic and political activities.

#### **6.4 Inconsistency of the Government with the Constitution in Support of Rousseau Ideas**

Rousseau's constant concern is that, there must be proper checks and balances to prevent government from becoming oppressive and tyrannical. For him, the state can be successful if

the people are allowed to participate in the basic institutions of government and have enough material comforts to meet their needs. If the citizens of the state feel that they have an equal share in the life of the community, and if they also perceive that the particular makeup of the institutions gives them a more satisfying lifestyle than others, then the relationship of the sovereign to the state can be said to be successful ((Wright, 2008).).

Under this subheading, the researcher tried to examine the reasons why the Federation Council arbitrarily used the constitution to change the decisions, and why the constitutional rights of Gurage people not guaranteed. According to a social development policy researcher (Dr.), the right to self-determination is enshrined in law (in the constitution) in Ethiopia; but, there are many flaws in its implementation.

*The government is not loyal to the law; it is power that rules a government, if it is not faithful to the law. The reason is that the government did not respond Sidaman's request as he want, but because of riot and protests forced him to respond. This is the unique nature of African leaders. If the government was faithful to the law, it should not have hesitated to respond to riots and protests. Publicly, it is being said that he will "we will respond the question of regionalism", but internally, he has been working how to strengthen staying as a region (December 4, 2022).*

In relation to this, the sovereign body of Rousseau's scheme is the legislative body of the state. It lays down the ground rules that bind all members of the community. The sovereign has no business issuing edicts to elect individuals in government. Instead, he says, the government should be thought of as an institution that appeals to the citizens of the country and ensures that the laws issued by the sovereign are respected. Furthermore, the state is described as the 'mediator' between the supreme power (the sovereign) and the people. But, as Rousseau describes as a key problem is that, the state tends to develop its own identity over time and sees itself as a whole body of government. After happening this, the society will be in danger of being divided and the whole social project will be in danger too (SP-3, Addis Ababa, 14, April, 2023).

As we can understand from this, the chaotic government that Ethiopia has entered is because all its administrative and legal institutions are operating under my control. According to a social development policy researcher (Dr.), *the government is suspicious of the people's suggestions that the government will benefit if it goes this way. The government is not doing this for the sake of the community, but because of the idea that it will cause problems for my leadership and administration* (December 4, 2022).

In contradiction to the constitutional promise of prosperity, the government is implementing the repressive system of the past EPRDF. Moreover, the federal government's interference in public rights will make people live oppressed. The government did not keep its constitutional promise (general will) to give self-determination to the various ethnic groups(LGO-11, Wolkite, 23 ,April, 2023). According to the author from various sources, there is injustice in the government's response to the efforts to self-determination. As the researcher put it, when the self-rule issue of the Sidama people was decided by referendum, the agenda approved by the Gurage people in the zonal council was not held in a referendum. This indicates that the Federation Council is not following uniformity and fair procedure in resolving issues at hand.

Moreover, Lawyers criticize the governments, the Gurage people have been reduced to assimilated governance for more than thirty years without public interest and constitutional confirmation. As a result, they submitted a formal letter to the state assembly and the federal assembly to return to their previous state administration. But the Federation Council chose to remain silent and showed its misjudgment (LGO-12, Wolkite, 25 April, 2023). But, as Rousseau said, "Sovereignty belongs to the people and no one can take it away. Lawyers support the idea by referring to Article Eight of the Constitution, "Nations, nationalities and peoples are the owners of sovereign power", and sub-article two stipulates that they exercise this power through their representatives (SP-2, Worbe, 01 April, 2023).

Therefore, according to Rousseau, the success of government ultimately derives from the enthusiasm and sense of purpose displayed by its people. Without this, having a good set of institutions does nothing improve the chances of finding truly brilliant leadership. They show how the cultural and material connections between people can be more easily observed in a small community than in a large and diverse country, where continuous, intimate political

participation can be achieved (ibid). Even though, Rousseau did not support representative democracy, believed that British citizens were liberated by their representative democracy, but exercised their freedom only during the relatively common elections. For the rest of the time, the citizens are subject to the whims of their representatives, and enslaved as they would be under any tyrant (WRIGHT, 2008).

Therefore, as the Lawyer stated, the only remaining thing to become Gurage region is conducting a referendum on the decision through a full vote by the representatives. Also, he said that until now Gurage council petition to Federation Council for the third time, if Gurage people rights are not respected according to the constitution, the petition will go to the international court (LGO-12, Wolkite, 25 April, 2023). Also another lawyer said that, "If we look at it from the point of view of the law, it is mentioned in Article 47 of the Constitution that, the law allows any zone, special district to ask for regional status." Also, Gurage's people request for statehood self-determination is lawful in terms of the federal constitution and that the request is appropriate (LGO-9, Wolkite, 25 April, 2023).

### **6.5 Conspiracy and intimidation that hinder Gurage people demand for self-rule**

Rousseau argued that when a proposal is raised in a meeting by the sovereign body, each member should be judged not by whether they approve or disapprove of a proposal, but by whether they think that proposal is consistent with their understanding of the "general will". After the assembly is over, the vote itself directly gives expression to the "general will" (Wright, 2008). He argued that, as long as many people come together and are considered as one body, they have only one will, which is the "general will". Furthermore, Rousseau's theory serves and lays the groundwork for democracy and revolutions against arbitrary rule. That the rights of a state must be based on some compact freely entered into by equal and independent individuals, and that the nature of the integration is such that the individual is a part of an inviolable sovereign people to determine its own constitution. So when such rights are denied to the individuals (arbitrary rule) there is the basis of revolution. Moreover, Rousseau's idea that the sovereign community is the sole lawgiver of reason has had an indirect influence on direct legislation by the people to the present day through referendums and initiatives (Simon, 2015).

Here, the agenda approved by the Gurage people through their elected representatives, has been presented to the Southern Regional Government, the Federation Council and all relevant government bodies. But the government could not respond appropriately. According to informants, *the government is working hard to divide the leaders of the zone. They are working on various countermeasures to prevent the society from forming unity. Among the plotters that affect Gurage people regional self-determination is the influence of the ruling party, the ruling party wants the organization of regionalism to be done according to what it has set, but the Gurage people strongly rejected that because it is not the will of all* (LGO-10, Wolkite, 23 April, 2023).

Rousseau begins by observing that no one, not even a powerful ruler, can always rule by force. If a ruler has time to do anything other than suppress violence, he should at least agree with his subjects. Also, he rejected natural authority and ideologies of authoritarianism, and concluded that the only basis for a just society was the covenant (general will) (WRIGHT, 2008). According to the key informants, the government is not complying with the laws set by the constitution; it is not expected from the government to use the law that does not comply with. *After the submission of the formal letter, the Gurage people faced many administrative, social, economic and political and humanitarian pressures. The systematic brutality and fabrication of allegations to suppress the constitutional and peaceful demands of the Gurage people has intensified. In addition, the federal and state authorities are arresting and harassing people who are determined to fight for the rights of the people they represent against the demands of the Gurage people* (LGO-8, Wolkite, 25 Aril, 2023).

In November 2011, the Gurage Zone Council unanimously approved the proposal to secede from the South, Nations, Nationalities and Peoples region and request a referendum to be held in the region and the Federation Council, but both remained silent. As a result, the community of the zone has formed “Gogot” party to implement the struggle process to submit to the national and international arbitral tribunal so that, the Gurage people demand for self-determination can be realized. Gurage zone and southern region councilors who defend the constitutional and democratic rights of the Gurage people; Opposition parties, legal experts, leaders of the zone who have been serving in office; were dismissed and

imprisoned. In this regard, the zone is managed under a command post. This action is against the law and the decision of the sovereign body. In addition, whether or not the 2011 Gurage Zone Council decision was reported to the national and international community through the media, this indicated that the media are more concerned with the government than the people (FGD-1, Wolkite, 12 April, 2023).

## **6.6 Relevance of Gurage people self-rule demand in favor of Rousseau Ideas**

Rousseau's theory of social contract is important in modern society in several ways. In an organized society, sovereignty belongs to the people. Therefore, all types of rulers should be representatives of public interest. Since the people cannot share this sovereignty with any other entity, sovereignty is indivisible, and cannot be acquired outside of the people (Simon, 2015). According to key informant, being autonomous has much relevance, the community will more beneficial, if it is a region rather than a zone.

*It will increase development potential and strengthen its closeness and ties with the central government. Also being autonomous is useful to address the issues of good governance closely, to resolve frequent conflicts in the area, the project also has additional objectives such as; the need to address the shortcomings of good governance, inefficiency, unemployment and socio-economic problems. By bringing an administrative structure in the society, it takes it as a good opportunity to create historical and cultural ties to increase the benefit of all parties, peace, stability, good leadership, and productivity (LGO- 4, Buee, 04 April, 2023).*

Rousseau saw the state as an agent of the general will (law), which is the sovereign body in the body politic. He believed that, one important factor for the success of any republic was the role of the legislature among others. As the legislature is supported by the public, the role of the legislature is to change individuals, human nature, strengthen the constitution and make it useful for the entire society (Simon, 2015). According to a social development policy researcher (Dr.) the only option for the government is accepting the rule of law and following the constitution, which will basically solve the problem. *The government will be loyal to the Constitution in two ways. One is when he protects the constitution and subject himself to the*

*constitution he protect. The second is to amend the constitution because actual problems are not solved by the constitution. This is to show loyalty to the constitution, he must not violate the Constitution (December 4, 2022).*

Also, As member of the All Ethiopia Unity party justified, the question raised by the Gurage community is appropriate based on the constitution. He said that, *it is enough to mention the process in which the people of Sidama and Southern Ethiopia have asked this question and received a response. In this regard, he said that his party would ask for a process where the question of the Gurage ethnic group would be answered. Also, the Gurage community can pursue their claim in a legal way, i.e. in a manner that does not cause harm to human life, property, and there is a possibility that their claim for regionalism will be answered (OPP-1, Addis Ababa, 30 April, 2023).*

According to a person who is a teacher and political scholar at Kotebe Metropolitan University, it is stated in the constitution that any nation can govern itself and can establish a region. From this point of view, he says that, *it is not wrong for the Gurage people to raise the question of becoming autonomous region. He also said that the demand for regionalization is appropriate as the Gurage nation has a large community, many intellectuals and vast wealth. He stated that, the question raised by the Gurage people is appropriate according to the law laid down in the constitution, and there is no reason for any problem or contradiction (LGO-12, Wolkite, 25 April, 2023).*

Therefore, to ensure public sovereignty, the citizens of modern societies are allowed maximum freedom in the administration of their local affairs. Because of the complexities of the modern world, this can be done through representative democracy in modern societies. Understanding from Rousseau's ideas, modern concept of governments should always be ready to respect, respond public views and needs for a free and inclusive society governed by law. (General Will) (Law) Considering its relevance in Rousseau's ideas, it is also important to recommend that "law" govern modern governments rather than people. The actions of our leaders should be guided by law rather than selfish affiliations or relationships. Therefore, the stated law should reflect the desire of the people and the judgment should not be selective or delayed (Simon, 2015).

## 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusion

The research examined the legitimacy of Gurage people quest for self-determination from the perspective of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's concept of autonomy and sovereignty. The concept of self-determination was established during the French Revolution in the eighteenth century, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau was one of the leading philosophers who changed the mind of the society in order to solve the problems of good governance. Accordingly, the study showed the concept of self-determination has been gain acceptance in recent years, and ideas of self-determination started in Ethiopia's political environment due to many political, economic, cultural and other challenges. Ethiopian constitution stipulated that the right to self-determination is the right of nations, nationalities and peoples. Also, Rousseau strengthens this as national rights must be created by all peoples, Injustice can only be eradicated through sustained concrete actions and the voices of historically marginalized people taking a leading role. Rousseau argues that because of affection between peoples each other, they need a proper condition under the will that unites them, a constitution (general will), thus properly placed to make them happier.

The study attempted to analyze the efforts of the Gurages to preserve and develop their community, language and culture. Therefore, allowing Gurage region to govern themselves will allow the people to promote and preserve their language, history and culture. In addition, the study critically reviewed theoretical and empirical perspectives to address the issue of self-determination of the Gurage people. Based on the data presented and evaluated in the study, the following statements will be the main findings.

First, it has been confirmed from the informants that the Gurage people are in danger of losing their language and culture due to the lack of good governance, displacement, and the society is lagging behind in development. As stated in the article, the main indicators that the people's demand for self-determination is a matter of existence: As Rousseau argued, the constitution succeeds by paying attention to the citizens and making them to give pay attention to self-governance. From the EPRDF government to the Prosperity government,

information confirms that the demand continued his struggle by resisting suppression and abuse.

Secondly, according to Rousseau, people are free when they govern themselves; guided by in accordance to their own decisions and rules. Accordingly, the zonal council on November 28, 2018, which is the result of a social contract among the people of Gurage, unanimously approved the decision to organize into a region, confirmed people's perseverance and determination.

Thirdly, unlike popular sovereignty, it is pointed out that the theory of the government as a solution has been rejected by the majority and reaffirmed what the popular will is.

Fourthly, Gogot party has stated that the struggle will extend from national to international level until Gurage people demand for regional self-determination has been gets an appropriate response.

Rousseau argues testifies many of the unjust phenomena in the world today (where power imbalances between states are evident) are caused by injustice. The formal principle and reality of popular sovereignty is only when government power can be confirmed in formal constitutional democracies. Therefore, in conclusion, many texts, historical testimonies, legal experts and even philosophical ideas testify that denying the self-determination of the Gurage people is unjust and unconstitutional.

## 5.2 Recommendations

- As Rousseau stated, the greatest conflict of modern society is the phenomenon of inequality, as a free born we should avoid injustice. As a representative of all, it would be better that the government treating peoples equally. Because, the government system is a solution to civil conflict and war.
- According to Rousseau, in the modern governments tyranny must be rejected in order to embrace freedom and democracy, and rulers must uphold human rights without violating the constitution. Therefore, it is better for the government to check and review the constitution to implement things that are better to ensure people's sovereignty.
- Rousseau points that; the political success of a country can only be achieved when it solves the basic political problem, ensures the security of its members and realizes autonomy. Therefore, it is good to give immediate solution that follows the sovereignty of the people until the demands changed to violence, destruction and harming the lives of innocent people.
- As Rousseau argued small states are better than large states in order to maintain the conditions set by the legislature and the common goals of society. Therefore, the government should respect each level of administration; from the regional to the kebele.
- According to Rousseau, the governments should not be oppressive and tyrannical; because, arrests, detentions, dismissals, restrictions on political activities and deprivation of other human rights (arbitrary rule) against innocent people who raise legal and constitutional questions will be the basis of revolution.

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## **APPENDIXES**

### **Appendix-I**

#### **Interview guidelines**

##### **A. Interview Questions Guided for Local Government (at least one FGD)**

1. Did you know that the people of Gurage asked for self-determination? How do you see it?
2. How does the federal government of Ethiopia view the questions of self-determination?
3. What lessons can we learn about self-determination from the Federal Constitution?
4. How far can the demand for autonomous independence of the Gurage people extend?
5. What looks like the unity and determination of the people in relation to the question of self-governance, and what are the challenges?
6. If the government does not respond the demand for self-determination of the Gurage people, what is the next step?
7. What do you think about the best measure for the claim as a representative of the people of Gurage?

##### **B. Interview Questions Guided For Oppositional Parties**

1. How do you see the self-rule claim of the people of Gurage?
2. As a public concern, what kinds of infancies are given by your Parties to the people of Gurage claim?
3. How your party understood the Gurage people demand from the view of the constitution?
4. What do you suggest the people do to get answers to the questions?

##### **C. Interview Questions Guided for the Community (at least one FGD)**

1. What do you think about the appropriateness of the demand for self-rule claim of the Gurage people?
2. As a member of the community, what do you think about the request for autonomy for Gurage?
3. Can we accept that the ideas of the district leaders in the community are the ideas of everyone?
4. What is the source of difference of opinion between the leaders of the zone? What should be done to eliminate the differences?
5. If Gurage is a region, what will it contribute to the people?

#### D. Interview Questions Guided for Scholars of Philosophy

1. What is the philosophical content of the self-determination question of the Gurage people?
2. How is Gurage's question of self-rule examined by Rousseau's concept of autonomy and sovereignty?
3. In the ongoing struggle of the Gurage people, two types of approach can be observed on the part of the administration, how does Rousseau view it from the point of representative democracy?
4. How much Rousseau's concept of social contract is relevant for the struggle of the Gurage people?
5. Rousseau argues that sovereignty belongs to the people; can we say the people of Gurage getting their sovereignty?
6. How can you evaluate the Gurage people demand for self-determination through Rousseau conception of General Will?
7. In terms of Rousseau's concept of law, what should be the appropriate response to the question of autonomy, and what kind of action should be taken if it is not answered appropriately?

## Appendix- II

### List of Informants and FGD Participants

<b>N<sub>o</sub></b>	<b>Interview's Code</b>	<b>level of education</b>	<b>Place of Interview</b>	<b>Date of Interview</b>
<b>Local Government Officials</b>				
1	LGO-1	A Member of Woreda Administration	Butajira	31 March, 2023
2	LGO -2	A Member of Woreda Administration	Butajira	03 April, 2023
3	LGO -3	Chief of Woreda Administration	Butajira	03 April, 2023
4	LGO -4	Chief administrator of Sodo Wereda	Buee	04 April, 2023
5	LGO -5	Ex-Sodo Woreda council member	Buee	04 April, 2023
6	LGO -6	Ex-Sodo Woreda Chief Administrator	Buee	04 April, 2023
7	LGO -7	A Member of Woreda Administration	Buee	04 April, 2023
8	LGO -8	Ex- Gurage Zone Administrator	Wolkite	April, 2023
9	LGO -9	Chief administrator of Meskan Wereda	Wolkite	25, April, 2023
10	LGO -10	Ex-Zone council member	Wolkite	23, April, 2023
11	LGO -11	Ex- Gurage Zone Administrator	Wolkite	23, April, 2023
12	LGO -12	A Member of Zone Administration	Wolkite	25, April, 2023
<b>Scholars of Philosophy</b>				
1	SP-1	MA in Philosophy	Addis Ababa	09 April, 2023
2	SP-2	MA in Philosophy	Worabe	01 May, 2023
3	SP-3	MA in Philosophy and MA in Social Anthropology	Addis Ababa	14 April, 2023
<b>Opposition party informants</b>				
1	OPP-1	Member of National Party	Addis Abeba	30 April, 2023
2	OPP-2	Member of EZEMA	Addis Abeba	30 April, 2023
<b>Community informants</b>				

1	CI-1	Residence of Bek'e Beshanjelba	Kella	1 April, 2023
2	CI-2	Former Chair Person of Bek'e Beshanjelba	Kella	1 April, 2023
3	CI-3	REsedence of Agena	Agena	19 April, 2023

### Focus Group Discussion Participants

<b>N<sub>o</sub></b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>Kebele of Habitation</b>	<b>Level of Education</b>	<b>Place of Discussion</b>	<b>Date of Discussion</b>
1	FGD	M	31	Gurage	Agena	MA	FGD-1 Wolkite	12April, 2023
2	FGD	M	27	Gurage	Gubre	MA		
3	FGD	M	28	Gurage	Wolkite	Dgree		
4	FGD	M	32	Gurage	Wolkite	MA		
5	FGD	M	30	Gurage	Emdebir	Dgree		
6	FGD	F	29	Gurage	Butajira	Dgree		
7	FGD	M	32	Gurage	Kella	Diploma	FGD-2 Kella	18April, 2023
8	FGD	M	43	Gurage	Bek'e	Diploma		
9	FGDP	M	39	Gurage	Butajira	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade		
10	FGD	M	45	Gurage	Gogete	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade		
11	FGD	M	32	Gurage	Buee	Deploma		
12	FGD	F	30	Gurage	Kella	Diploma		