

Negative Impact of Globalization on Indigenous Cultures: The Case of Salale Oromo, Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to assess the negative impact of globalization on indigenous cultures in general and North Shewa in particular. The research is conducted based on qualitative methodology which used in-depth individual interview and observation which helps to raise a better understanding about negative impact of globalization on indigenous cultures. The key informants were taken from selected five towns of North Shewa zone of Oromia regional state which include Fitchetown, Garba Guracha town, Gowa Tsion town, Tullu Milki town and Debre Tsige town of Ethiopia. The main objectives of this article is to explain the dimensions of the negative impact of globalization on indigenous Ethiopian cultures such as language, food style, dressing style, marriage, religion and history. In the process of globalization, there is an interaction of cultures and thus, there is a borrowing and transmission of cultures among societies. This is in itself not unusual. But unusual is the domination of one culture over the other. This is true of globalization which has generated a lot of controversy with regards to the rise of a global culture. In the rise of a global culture, Western norms are gradually being transported across the globe as acceptable way of behavior and Ethiopia is one of African countries affected in this regard. Those some valued indigenous Ethiopian culture has been diluted and some of them are totally cancelled. So, Ethiopia is fast running the risk of cultural atrophy consequent of the current logic of globalization. If pressing measures are not taken, perhaps indigenous Ethiopian cultures will soon run into extinction in the future.

Keywords: Globalization, indigenous cultures, negative impact, North Shewa Zone, Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia.

INTRODUCTION

According to Nsibami (2011), globalization is a process of advancement and increase in interaction among the world countries and people facilitated by progressive technological changes in communication, as well as interaction of cultural values, systems and practices. In line with this definition, Kwame² defined globalization as a process of linking regions or nations of the world which is facilitated by information flow (communication), encouraging changes in the pre-existing socio-cultural, political and economic structures and systems of nations and peoples’.

In the assessment of the impact of globalization on individuals, nations and the global world, many scholars and political analysts have expressed different views. While they all agree that globalization has a political, economic and cultural impact on individuals, nations and the world at large, they however, disagree on the nature and extent of this impact. While some

argue that it is all positive, some believe that it has negative impacts. Yet others see it as being both positive and negative (Kwame, 2007).

Therefore, it is difficult to determine whether globalization absolutely brings about the improvement of the global world. This is why some have defined it from a negative perspective. For example according to Aborishade (2002), argued that globalization is Western colonialism, particularly American imperialism that seeks to impose its hegemony on other subjugated and exploited nations’ threat of economic, culture, political or military coercion.

Currently, the United States of America dominates the current global traffic in information and ideas. American music, American movies, American television and American software are so dominant, so sought after, and so visible that they are now available literally everywhere on the world. They influence the tastes, lives and aspirations of virtually every nation, Wassim (2013). On the

other hand, the U.S. government has played an important role in promoting cultural exports; not only as a source of export income but also as a means of exporting beliefs, values, and practices that inherently favor U.S. based corporate capitalism (Mel, 2013).

The dynamism of culture casts doubt on the possibility of a global culture. Part of this dynamism is that each culture has its own personality. The fact that, we are all humans does not mean that we are all the same. To ignore this, would mean to destroy God's own beautiful rainbow made from the many colors of cultural diversity. But central to globalization is the idea of a global culture, Mel (2013). However, the idea of a global culture is imaginary or unreal. If culture means a collective mode of life or a collection of beliefs, styles, values and symbols, then we can only speak of cultures not just (one) culture, for a collective mode of life presupposes different modes and ranges. To this end, the researcher argues that, the idea of a global culture is practical impossible, except in ideal terms.

Key informants explained that indigenous cultures are joined by a host of additional cultural forms from abroad, presenting people with a confusing array of lifestyle options from which to choose. Established identities and ways of life are giving way to new forms of hybrid 'identity' composed of elements from contrasting cultural sources. Thus, Ethiopian young today might continue to be strongly influenced by western cultures and western popular culture has attained an immense global following. In Ethiopia, it is common to see that most adolescent living style which includes way of dressing, talking, dancing, eating; beliefs etc. are highly changed to western cultures. Most of youths' cell phones with audio and video player have wide various western cultural products. Thus, the exposure to these western cultural products makes the youth despise their own indigenous culture.

Language is a prime area where the negative impact of globalization has been existing. For example, According to the estimation of English cultural council, the number of people around the world who are learning English reaches 1 billion and about 1.5 to 2 billion people are in contact with English. By 2050, half of the world's population will be proficient in using English. The linguists divide the people using English into three categories: the first category refers to the people, who are using English as

their native language, and usually it is their only language. These people mainly live in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Iceland, and South Africa. The second category refers to the people, who are using English as their second language. These people generally live in former British colonies and areas and regions which are greatly influenced by the United States, such as India, Nicaragua, Singapore, Philippines and Hong Kong of China. The third category refers to the people who are using English as a foreign language. Generally, these areas and regions do not have a close relationship with the United States (Jiao, 2013).

According to Afsaneh (2013), the world is a home of 7,105 living languages; among them 1,481 are in trouble and 906 are dying. As some statistics indicate, it is estimated that if nothing is done half of these languages spoken today will disappear in the future. Seemingly, with the extinction of unwritten and undocumented languages, humanity would lose not only a cultural wealth but also important ancestral knowledge embedded, in particular, in indigenous languages. Among all these languages "English" is the only language which is spoken by more people as a second language than a first language.

For example according to Raja, English is become dominant or official language in over 60 countries and is represented on every continent. It means English is used in every country, across the globe, more or less. Most of the scientific, technological and academic information in the world is expressed in English and over 80% of all the information stored in electronic retrieval systems is in English. In a practical sense, the knowledge of English is essential. In terms of the appreciation of language and literature, knowledge of English is extremely important in understanding some of the best writings offered, Mel (2013). In addition, according to Mbea (2005), the advent of colonialism gradually eroded the place of African languages in African economies by granting the highest prestige value to school education in colonial languages.

The extinction of language has been existing from the ancient time, but the problem is now a day its scale is bigger and speed quicker. According to Jiao (2013), due to cultural imperialism half of the languages will disappear in middle 21st century. This is why some countries such as France spend 100 million US dollars to promote French culture every year.

French scientists are clearly aware of the situation. They say that either they publish their articles in English, or die with French quietly. Thus, the non-English speaking countries will be faced with a dilemma, to integrate into the world to be modernized or to isolate them to maintain national character. In order to be modernized, it is necessary to integrate into the world, but this will certainly bring some changes to traditional culture. Further, according to Mahon, the minority languages which are natives become appropriate for use in fewer and fewer contexts, until it is entirely supplanted by the incoming new language (English language). This language shift or the act of dying happens gradually over several generations (Mc Mahon, 1994).

Finally, the current situation of globalization is leading to cultural imperialism or dominance of one nation's culture over others which are closely related to global communication. It is about imposing a culture of a 'superior' country over less powerful societies. Thus, cultural imperialism is the practice of promoting and imposing a culture, usually that of a politically powerful nation over a less powerful society and alienating people from their indigenous culture. Thus, the specific objectives of this article are to assess the negative impact of globalization on indigenous Ethiopian language, food style, dressing style, marriage, religion and history.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, the researcher used qualitative method of data analysis. Thus, the research tools used are open ended and in-depth individual interview and observation to analyze the negative impact of globalization on indigenous of Ethiopian cultures. The key informants were taken from selected five towns of North Shewa zone of Oromia regional state of Ethiopia which include Fitcha town, Garba Guracha town, Gowa Tsion town, Tullu Milki town and Debre Tsige town.

In order to find relevant data, the researcher had chosen snowball sampling which depends on initial contacts suggesting further people to be contacted by the researcher. Generally, as a primary source, the researcher used in-depth individual interview and observation with different key informants in order to feed the study with recent and updated information about negative impact of globalization on the indigenous Ethiopian cultures. Secondary sources such as

books, articles and research papers were also critically used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

If the culture is growing in a homogeneous character, it can be assumed to be a form of cultural imperialism. For example, change in language usage is usually considered as an indicator of cultural integration if the principal language in the community differs from that of the native language. One of the most common criticisms we hear about the impact of globalization of today's world is that it is producing mainly one culture, it is destroying diversity and it is bringing everyone into the same global culture.

In Ethiopia, currently domestic cultures are joined by a host of additional cultural forms from abroad, presenting people with a confusing array of lifestyle options from which to choose. For example, According to Getalem (2015), different western based satellites Television (TV) programs, which deliver most part of western cultural and entertainment products could negatively affects indigenous cultures of Ethiopia.

Now a day individuals and groups trying to annex their cultures with new global practices based on what they have seen from mass media worldwide. As a result, Ethiopian cultures and values are highly changing over time and become more dependent on western cultures. In fact all western cultures are not bad but the problem is when Ethiopians are accepting all western cultures without identifying their negative impacts in their life. Globalization is hiding or at least underlings all previous ways of answering need and of dealing with changes of human life. According to Jeremy (2004), all other ways of life are diminished and marginalized at a stroke due to globalization. He considered globalization as a declaration of war upon all other cultures.

The following are dimensions of negative impact of globalization on indigenous Ethiopian cultures which further identified in this article.

Language

In fact, language is the carrier of culture and every language is the crystallization of each culture. It is the process of cultural exchange and cultural diffusion for people to use language to communicate with each other. However, according to key informants explained about the role of English he said that currently English is

spread and used worldwide; it inevitably becomes an important tool for the output of western culture and even a means of western countries to seek cultural hegemony. He adds, language users can gain a sense of cultural identity and social belongings through language. In general, the language of a nation is deeply rooted in national culture, and accompanied by national traditions. Language cannot survive, develop and improve without culture. Language is the core of culture. Conversely, the strong culture is always in a dominant position, and it can select and deploy other culture according to its own needs to strengthen itself.

When the researcher asked interviewees about the impacts of English on local languages they said that due to the western education and colonialism in the past some cultural values have been destroying. For example, the local languages for example (Gee'ez language in Ethiopia) became outdated because of its displacement by English language which is currently the most efficient medium of education especially at secondary and tertiary education. During colonialism, human development became valuable only when it was acquired in the colonial power's language and ability became only valuable to the national development effort if it acquired in the colonial masters language such as English, etc. Thus, colonialism influenced the world and changed radically in terms of culture, education, science, communication etc. The British colonialism introduced English language in the countries ruled by the British and now it has become a global language with the roots of the British imperialism in the past and the modern imperialism of America.

When the researcher asked about the extent of influences of English language over others languages the key informant said that, in Africa, English has become a highly influential language though some countries in Africa were ruled by France, Italy, Spain, etc. In this modern world, African countries are following English language particularly, South Africa, Nigeria and Zimbabwe have adopted English as their own language. Especially, amongst the educated, English functions as a lingua franca and is a primary language of government, business and commerce. Educationally, it is a compulsory subject in all schools and is the preferred medium of instruction in most schools and tertiary institutions. In terms of societal influence, it is clear that English has spread far beyond the domain of those of British origin.

Amongst the African majority, English has typically been seen as the language of liberation and black unity. Especially the mixing of English and another indigenous language is perhaps the strong indication of the impact of English.

Other interviewees explained about the extent of influences of English language over others languages he said that the influences of English language over others languages become increasing from time to time. For example, now a day's educational qualification in Ethiopian language became less value than qualification in the colonial language (English) because of the influence of westerns due to their science supported civilizations. The introduction of English language gradually eroded the place of Ethiopian languages in education. Even, sometimes it becomes difficult to find individuals who are more interesting to use their mother tongue especially at urban areas than English. Instead of using their mother tongue, they are highly interesting to use English which is not native for them due to the reasons that English is considered as valuable and highly necessary than other native languages of Ethiopia. This is why some Ethiopian languages (such as Gee'ez) are at the stage of dying.

Others key informants add, it has been established that a lost language is a lost culture, a lost culture is invaluable knowledge lost. In fact, the influence of English dominance on non-English speaking countries like Ethiopia may be contrary to the influence on English speaking countries. Its negative impact may be more than positive impact. The benefits brought by English are that people from different countries can communicate with each other freely. However, language is not just a communication tool; it is also the carrier of culture and signs of identity. Faced with the resistance of English dominance, many non-English speaking countries may feel helpless, and may also feel worried about the culture invasion brought by English dominance. Although the impact brought by English dominance is invisible and intangible, they indeed exist and can't be changed in a short time.

Other interviewees individuals said that even the current situations of using English language than any others local languages shows that there is a cultural imperialism which is the continuation of colonial policy, but the means is relatively civilized up dated. Especially for those minority

languages, the dominance of English can be devastating, and it may even mean for death of some language, culture and identity. The death of language has been existing from the ancient time, but the problem is now a day its scale is bigger and speed quicker.

In Ethiopia, English has been taught as a subject for students starting in primary school since 1994, when a new education policy was implemented, Jeremy (2004). In addition, most universities in Ethiopia use English as the language of instruction because, as one informant explained that, “90 percent of academic resources we get in Ethiopia come from the West and this is almost done in English language,” Bogale (2009). Thus, English can be considered the language of academia, and therefore, English proficiency is a necessity for success at the tertiary level. However Bogale, using qualitative research results in several regions of Ethiopia, argues that inconsistent language teaching practices and under-resourced teachers make the effectiveness of English language acquisition in the younger grades often inconsistent. These inconsistencies can make success in the higher levels of school more difficult for students, because they do not have the English language skills necessary to succeed. Despite these challenges, Bogale reports that population surveys reveal that both students and their parents recognize English as the language of education. In this sense, there is a strong shared understanding of the importance of English language acquisition (Bogale, 2009).

Ethiopia, one of the oldest independent nations which have its well-developed language of Amharic, also has used English as a language of instruction at high schools and post-secondary schools since modern education started in the country after 1920. What makes the Ethiopian use of English language unique is that as one key informant said, for example in Oromia region English was given as a second language from grades 1 to 8, and when students transfer to grade nine and above, the language of instruction will be changed to English and this is continued all the way to colleges and universities while Ethiopia's working language remains Amharic. On the other hand this caused for low academic performances of students' in school (ibid).

The new government structure of Ethiopia emphasizes self-determination of people based on their linguistic and cultural identity and

created nine regional states and two special administrative zones. Among the nine regional states only Amhara and the Southern Ethiopia regions use Amharic as their working language, which is also the working language of the federal government located in Addis Ababa and the Diredawa special administrative zone. Hence, this federal arrangement and freedom of language use for local language necessitated adopting English as well as Amharic as an official working language by the federal government of Ethiopia. However, as one of key informant said that, the fact is that in Ethiopia English language is become more influential and the killer language of other native languages of the country.

In order to decide whether English is a killer language or not, we have to look at language death in general. Whenever the language of a dominant nation is introduced into a less powerful society, the indigenous population may regard the new language as more prestigious than their native tongue (i.e. people who speak the former fluently have more access to authority) and therefore gradually turn bilingual. The country's indigenous language is in time abandoned or incorporated into the foreign one that is English language. Further, 'the minority language then, becomes appropriate for use in fewer and fewer contexts, until it is entirely supplanted by the incoming language and the minority language then shift or the act of dying will be happens in the future.

Food Style

When the key informants asked about the negative impact of globalization on food style, they said that the eating styles of Ethiopian societies are changing due to globalization. By cultures most Ethiopians were eaten organic food than inorganic which are expensive and genetically modified foods that are imported. On the other hand eating more cultural diets instead of expensive and genetically modified foods that are imported is healthily very important. In addition, an increase on consumption of Ethiopian cultural foods will catalyze and increase international trade in such commodities, and thus helping to economically empower Ethiopian people.

Other interviewee said that many Ethiopians are waved with western food style such as pizzas and burgers which were not known in culture. Now a day's Ethiopian people prefer to eat Pizza than Injera and drink different alcohol and

soft drink than water. Generally, the most popular and cultured food habits had been changing to western cultures due to the effect of globalization.

Religion and History

It is true that globalization has also negative impacts on religion and history. When the key informants asked about the negative impact of globalization on religion, they said that in Ethiopia, currently due to negative impact of globalization many people become disappointment and regressed from their original beliefs. But in Ethiopian religion and culture was stand fora better chance to offer alternatives to address rising corruption, crime and other violence. For instances, the Oromo Gada system was the Oromo traditional institution involving political process, economic, cultural, ritual, spiritual, social and administrative system based on holistic ideas of participatory and representative democracy. It has its own principles in which power is both vertically and horizontally distributed, balanced, checked, controlled and limited. Such mechanism of power distribution and limitation was crucial to prevent or to solve conflict, to maintain political, economic, cultural, social and institutional stability like that of modern democracy.

The interviewees add that sometimes due to negative impact of globalization knowingly or unknowingly people are seems forgotten the past history and religion which signifies that Ethiopian cultures and history has been destroyed and diluted. But the past is very important, that is the major reason why history is being studied as a subject. The past can never be considered as a burden towards solving present day issues and as such should not be ignored. For instances, there were traditional conflict prevention and resolution such as Oromo Gada system which is much recommended even among civilized society. Sometimes there are cases which the modern court cannot solve, but can be solved easily through society's beliefs and norms only and this showed that society's beliefs have great role toward ensuring peace and stability in a modern society. However, due to impact of globalization these all society's beliefs and histories are changing, weakening and losing its power of solving society's problems.

Other key informant adds that due to the impact of globalization, multicultural nature of Ethiopian society has been ignored. Most individuals have

been failing to recognize the enriching value of diverse cultures of their societies. It is tempting to deny this diversity consciously or unconsciously. Cultural shift is common effect of globalization and Ethiopia is also not an exception. The major Christian sects orthodox and protestants prohibits consuming alcohol, smoking and free sex in Ethiopia. But due to globalization people perceive them as fashion and following all those ills such as consuming alcohol, smoking and unlimited and unwanted sexual intercourse.

Dressing style

When the key informants asked about the negative impact of globalization on culture of dressing, they said that looking a good generally is an area of great interest to many people especially the youth. Over the years the youth have tried to be fashionable and have exhibited clothing which is influenced to a large extent by foreign fashion in the wake of globalization. The extent of this influence affects the youth and the local (domestic) fashion industry negatively. They add, the Ethiopian clothing style has become an adaptation of western fashion trends. European and American influence has become so widespread and so invasive across almost every activity; from education, religion, politics, social change, and fashion is no exception.

Other key informant explained about the negative impact of globalization on dressing style by saying that fashion which is the result of globalization can expose individual to have unwanted sexual intercourse. Other interviewee said that most of the time young people are focusing on dressing style of individual to decide about their personal quality than their actual skill and knowledge. Many people said that somebody is attractive, good, smart, etc. simply by looking their dressing style without considering their knowledge and skill which may have its own negative implication. In addition dressing style of many Ethiopians are transformed to western, the cultural way of dressing can be seen only during festivals, especially those people who are living at urban areas of the country are completely waved with western way of dressing style than rural areas.

When the researcher have asked female interviewee about their dressing style, they said that most of the times they like to wear very fashioned trousers than other cultural dress. In addition they said, sometimes they forced

themselves to get new fashion to dress and get the makeup on. When they asked the reason for using makeup they said that primarily that is to attract men to fall in love because now a day looks are become more important than personality and skills they said. Thus, as such ways girls can easily find themselves in horrible situations and engaging in sexual activities much earlier than the previous generation which may be attributed to the fashion industry's effect and globalization.

In addition other key informants said that girls who start wearing makeup at an early age are also at increased risk of developing different health problems and they are vulnerable to the toxic ingredients used in cosmetic products. The fashion and makeup industries are working hard to keep us blind to the dangers they pose. Most cosmetic products contain different dangerous ingredients which can pose health risks. Therefore, individuals have to give place for their cultural clothes than foreign dressing style.

When the interviewees asked about the solution for such problems they said that society should be taught the value of culture, the value of self-respect, love for themselves and their natural selves, before they start hiding in makeup. If we are not careful, the innocence of our children will dissolve due to the overwhelming pressures of the makeup and fashion industries to look a certain way. People also need to be more aware of the toxic ingredients lurking in most cosmetic products we use; everything from toothpaste to hair color. Lastly, there should be laws as to what ingredients can be put in cosmetics and they should be treated as strictly as food and drug laws.

Other key informants add that now a day dressing style of Ethiopian society is changing especially people in urban areas are shifting towards Western wearing style. Some girls are started almost walk necked. This is extremely tempting for young men which is not much less than that of watching pornography. The hair making style is changing. Boys and girls can now kiss each other in the taxi, on the bus, on the road side and so on. It was not like this few years back. If pressing measures are not taken, perhaps indigenous Ethiopian dressing style will soon run into extinction in the future.

Marriage

The data obtained through interview showed that in the past, Ethiopian culture was not

allowed free sex (unlimited sexual intercourse) and even looking pornographic film by itself was not taken as cultured. The cultures of societies were highly encouraged only one to one marriage. However, now a day looking pornography and having unlimited sex partners become expanding by weakening the original norms and values of society. For instances, when the researcher asked a key informants about why they watch pornographic movies from their mobile device they have responded that young Ethiopians are living in the same global village with the other countries in the world and need to know all things. Thus, the growth in information and communication technologies contributes for the propagation of the western values and discouraging indigenous culture of marriage.

The researcher fear is that those pornographic movies that come to Ethiopia via internet are very dangerous for the wellbeing of the youth. It further introduces homosexuality, gay marriage and lesbianism. From the abovementioned testimonies, therefore, it can be argued that most of the informants believe that pornography contradicts with the moral, cultural, ethical, and religious values of Ethiopia, besides putting the physical health of the people at risk. Especially, for those young people at '*fire age*' pornography might have a direct influence because it urges them to practice sex without planning. As a result, young generations are capturing some of the alien cultures, at least some of the sexual acts perceived in the pornography, as well as rushing to unplanned and early sexual practices [sex before marriage] activities that obviously disgrace the traditional value of virginity.

The key informants said that several young Ethiopians who are employed, educated, men and women, married and unmarried have seen pornographic video and downloaded it. Many people end up becoming regular customers of looking pornographic movies in secret due to it is not allowed by Ethiopian culture. However, many young people are become attracting to such western values and norms. The supporter of pornography argued in Ethiopia where sex is not liberated, sexuality issue is taboo, and where there is no formal sexual education is provided at schools, watching pornographic media help them to find answers for their questions and curiosities. It also helps them "to break the silence" about sexuality at least in their own minds and among their peer groups.

When the researcher has asked key informants about their feelings the next day they see pornography, and also how it influences their daily life activities and their interaction with people; especially of opposite sexes. One of key informant said, "I hate to see women the next day I watch pornography because women appear for me as an animals, but not as humans. Sometimes, very fat and ugly women appear on the porn. It makes me dislike women."

One of key informant have described about new sexual practices he had seen. He said that there are a lot of new things I saw in pornography. I have come to know about different sex position. Culturally, it is not common and acceptable thing. Once I have also seen sex between the same sexes. I do not like when I see sexual activity between similar sexes. This is not totally in line with Ethiopian culture. It is unacceptable thing. It is ugly. I cannot tolerate such kind of movies. I remember once when I switched my mobile device because I was not comfortable with it.

Finally, such kind of western norms may negatively affect good culture of marriage and resulted in dehumanized women as sexual objects or commodities; or women are presented as sexual objects who experience sexual pleasure in being raped or women are presented as sexual objects who enjoy pain or humiliation; or women are presented as sexual objects tied up or cut up or mutilated. Therefore, if important measures are not taken in this regards indigenous Ethiopian cultures of marriage will become changed in the future.

CONCLUSION

Ethiopia has to keep up its culture because of its goodness and richness since ancient times. For instances, Ethiopian culture is good regarding sex except the silence about it. Women should be faithful to their husbands, and only opposite sexes should marry each other. But women should not do sex with many people like that of the Western women and young girls should remain virgin until they marry to their permanent husbands as it is normal in culture. These days, it is risky to do sex with many people. Girls are victim in this regard. They may get pregnant, infected with HIV and other sexual transmitted disease. They need to be cautious about this. It is better to value virginity, sticking to the old tradition of our society.

Finally, with regard to the nature and extent of the impact of globalization on cultures, the researcher argues that the negative effects of globalization have been much more than its positive effects on Ethiopian cultures. Personal assessment reveals here that, if pressing measures are not taken, perhaps Ethiopian cultures such as language, food style, religion and history, dressing style, monogamy, etc. will soon run into extinction. Therefore, it can be argued that some of the 'old' and 'good' culture of the nations is threatened by western values and norms.

Thus, there should be parental explanation, transparent discussion about sexuality and reproductive health issues with children and youth will keep them not to seek information about sexuality from wrong places like pornographic media. In order to prevent the attraction of the youth to Western pornographic media products sex education must be encouraged in high schools or secondary schools and also needs to be included in curricula.

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Citation: Zewde Getahun, "Negative Impact of Globalization on Indigenous Cultures: The Case of Salale Oromo, Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia", *Journal of Cultural and Social Anthropology*, 1(2), 2019, pp. 28-36.

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