



## **TUTSI OR TISTU? THE HISTORY OF OROMO DIASPORA IN THE GREAT LAKE REGION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The research explores about the Tutsi people whose history of origin trace back to Oromo realm of the Horn of Africa. The purpose of this research is to reconstruct pre- 13<sup>th</sup> history of Oromo based on spiritual and material culture that held in reserve among the diaspora. Firstly,based onarchaeological sources, similarity in place names, Sanga's line of dispersal and unique coffee consuming culture of the Oromo together with archival materials it had been found the societies that moved to the Great Lake Region were the Karsa people of Sennar(Sudan) whose original homeland was south western Ethiopia during the ancient and medieval period. Taking in to accountcompatibility of the period during which a traditionalist Karsa people arrived Sudan with the foundation of rock hewn church of Adadi Mariam at Karsa, the research had made known the people of Tutsi/Tisitu represents Oromo group who evicted from south western Ethiopiaby expansion of the Christian Highland Kingdom in the 13<sup>th</sup> century AD. Finally,based on Oromo's material culture well-maintained among the diasporastarting from the 13<sup>th</sup> centurythe research had confirmed the Great Oromo Nation was the birth place of coffee and Sanga type cattle.*

*Key Words: Tutsi,the Great Oromo Nation, diaspora,Karsa,Sanga, consumers of coffee*

## 1. Introduction

African Historiography, including Oromo studies, represents one of the most dynamic subjects whose research inquiry has been always in change due to shifting interest of its audience. Owing to its significance in emancipating humankind from any kind of domination, political history gets priority among researchers and their African audience up to the recent past. Political history had helped Africans as ideological weapon during the liberation struggle waged against colonialism (Philips, 2005). Just as political history renovated Africa's past glory, it also helped Oromo to invalidate unperceptive interpretation of Ethiopianist scholars regarding the pre-Menilik Oromo nation and its political authority (Kim, 2010; Alemayehu, *et. al.*, 2006).

Ethiopianist scholars had denied categorically the very existence of the Oromo nation before the conquest of Menilik II. According to Keller (1995), "There was never a single bureaucratic state that governed all Oromo clans and clan families" (p.624). The major point of their analysis was based on absence of a king with specified territorial extent. Among the Oromo, the existence of a nation had been not determined by boundaries, it was rather based on the ultimate sovereignty of each confederacy. Where ever the Oromo settled, it belongs to a nation which Burton (2006) and Salviac (2005) had described the Great Oromo Nation; a democratic nation established by the consent of all clans. As the authority of the Great Oromo Nation resides under the sovereign power of the people, representatives of each Oromo clans (ruling generation set) had willingly visited the land of *Abbaa Muudaa* holding myrrh (*Qumbi*), to express their loyalty to the people and *Waaqa* (God), not king. The periodic visit of each clan legislature to the land of *Abbaa Muudaa* had alleged as an exercise of loyalty to one political entity, which was evident before the conquest of Menilik II (Lewis and Jewel, 1976; Aadam, 2011). Therefore, based on indigenous knowledge of the Oromo, scholars had corrected negative connotations and historical mistakes as well as the adverse impression imposed up on the Great Oromo Nation.

Nevertheless, colonialism could not be perceived as a problem creator among the new generation when compared with severe socio-economic problems that seriously threaten their livelihood. Africans, including Oromo, are totally free from any kind of external political domination in these days. Internally, Oromo's participation in local and national affairs has been frequently increasing since the 1990's. The people of Oromo have been governed by elected officials who hold power through periodic election. Specifically, the ascendancy of Dr. Abiy Ahmed to the post of prime minister symbolizes Oromo's involvement in Ethiopian politics has reached its peak (BBC, 2019). The use of historical knowledge in restoring pre-colonial political order of the Great Oromo Nation was perceived as a watershed in the use of political history as an ideological weapon. Oromo scholars had started to think additional alternatives that historical knowledge could play in nation building. In other words, importance given to political history has been gradually shifted to social history due to priority given to deal with socio-economic evil of the society instead of colonialism; a problem of the past. In the last few decades, several researches have been conducted by scholars giving better attention to the social aspect of the ordinary Oromo, gender, religion, unemployment, migration and so forth (Asefa, 2002; Jeylan, 2005). Some other themes such as Oromo diaspora, which appears to be out of historians' comfortable zone, remain less studied issue.

The existing historical literature regarding the diaspora of Oromo have been characterized by unevenness and mostly elitist in nature. Some historical sources, which are at our disposal, had confirmed that huge number of Oromo diaspora arrived in the Middle East and Red Sea area in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Owing to their largeness in number, they were frequently heard while communicating with *Affan* Oromo. Even if they were dispersed across wider areas of the world, notable diasporas like Onasimos Nesib (Wallaga), Akafedhe (West Shawa), Billile or Machbuba (Gibe State) and others had never stopped thinking about the way they could help their fellow Oromo who resides in the homeland (Salviac, 2005; Schmitt, 1994). For example, Onasimos Nesib, who pioneered in translating the Holy Bible into *Affan* Oromo, had been reported while devoting his energy and time to educate Oromo children using vernacular language as medium of instruction.

Likewise, it had been reported large number of the Oromo diaspora were appeared along the Swahili coasts of Kenya and Tanzania, French island territories of the Indian Ocean and Zanzibar

(Salviac, 2005;Behrend and Luig, 1999). According to the account of Behrend and Luig, (1999) Oromo religious institutions had been publicly worshiped in the court of Zanzibar at about the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. These days, Oromo religious institutions such as *Ayana* or spirit possession had been defused along the Indian Ocean littorals through the Oromo diaspora (Behrend and Luig, 1999). Others like Abushiri, an Oromo diaspora at Zanzibar's court, had made expeditions into the interior part of east Africa. Finally he made known the possibility of traveling in to south western part of Ethiopia from Zanzibar heldcoasts of African (UNESCO,VII, 1981; Garretson, 1980). In other words, Abushiri's inland trade route was intended to link the Indian Ocean coastal territory of Zanzibar with the hinterland Kingdom of Jimma in southwestern Ethiopia. The best evidence which justifies this argument is a throne that has been kept at Jimma Museum (Najib, 2019). Using Abushir's inland trade route, the Sultan of Zanzibar had sent a luxurious throne for king Abba Jiffar II to express his willingness to establish diplomatic and trade relation with the kingdom of Jimma.

Relatively speaking the above presented history refers some information about individual Oromo diaspora who moved to these lands at about the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century as referred in colonial documents. Most of the time, it discusses about the history of few well fated Oromo diaspora who get the chance to educate themselves, those who get the chance to get married with European and Swahili court dignitaries (Salviac, 2005). Nevertheless, the diaspora of Oromo were not only represented by individuals but also had some element of those who moved out of the Oromo land in groups UNESCO, Vol.V (1981). So far we couldn't able to collect sufficient source about Oromo diaspora but the documents in our disposal tells us the movement was started since antiquity. Therefore, the main focus of this article is to investigate the history of diaspora who currently lost their language identities, but survived their identity through preserving some Oromo socio-cultural and economic institutions.

There are several groups of people in Africa who claim their place of origin to be in the Horn of Africa (Salviac, 2005; Odhiambo, 1977). Among these groups, conducting research on the history of Tutsi people had attracted the interest of scholars. Scholars have a mixed feeling about the growing interest of scholars to conduct research which examine Tutsi-Oromo fraternity. For most scholars like Fiquot (2007), gives the impression of dangerous business which may perhaps widens difference among societies of the Great Lake Region. However, this does not rationalize

the denial of historical inquiry pertaining to the Tutsi's claims of blood relation with Oromo people of the Horn of Africa. Historians as professionals are not expected to record only positive events neglecting destructive human actions as did by chronicles of kings. Leave alone Tutsi's early history, the history of Rwanda's genocide has to be recorded as part of human tragedy in order to educate the coming generation not to get involved in similar crime. Regardless of such speculations, the study on history of the Diaspora becomes major area of interest among scholars in Africa and the world at large (Khalid, 1992). The reason why people favor to carry out study on history of the Diaspora varies depending on the interest of individual researcher. However, in most cases it focuses at strengthening socio-cultural bond that cemented by common origin, cultural or religious similarity in order to bring socio-economic unity of both parts.

## **2. Research Method**

### **2.1. Research Area, Source Type, Data Collection and Data Analysis Methods**

The research explores about westward movement history of Northern Borana; a sub branch of Oromo in western Ethiopia whose history extends to the Tutsi people of the Great Lake Region. The history of some Oromo group from western Ethiopia which first moved to eastern Sudan and then southward to Nilotic southern Sudan before they finally arrived the Great Lake Region, has been written not only through archival tradition which favors the west and the Middle Eastern societies, but also completed by using spectacular sources ranging from, place names linguistic sources and archaeological evidences together with some colonial ethnography of Tutsi. To ensure the reliability of the data, attempts had been made to examine and carefully cross-check each data with a globally recognized UNESCO's findings. All the data collected through field observation and library work were interpreted and analyzed using historical data analysis or content analysis method.

### **2.2. Objectives of the Study**

The major objective is to reconstruct ancient and medieval history of Oromo based on spiritual and material culture that held in reserve among the Oromo diaspora. Specific objectives are to:

- ✓ Examine the inherent relationship between the Horn of African societies and the Tutsi people of the Great Lake region.

- ✓ Explore the probable direction of pastoral Tutsi's movement out of the Ethiopian region.
- ✓ Identify socio-cultural and economic institutions and practices maintained by Oromo diaspora of the Great Lake Region since the 13<sup>th</sup> century.
- ✓ Appreciate the developmental ideas that kindled by Oromo diaspora since ancient times

### **3. Result of the Research**

#### **3.1. Tutsi People of the Great Lake Region**

The people of Oromo had no shared boundaries with the Nilotic speakers before the 13<sup>th</sup> century AD. At about 1250 century AD, some of the Nilotic groups, most probably Eastern Nilotes were moved to south eastern part of the present day Republic of South Sudan, around Mount Imatong and mouth of River Omo. During that period, the territory around Lake Turkana had been settled by Eastern Cushites, more precisely Borana Oromo. According to the account Johnston (1912) inhabitants of these lands had been a notable agriculturalist in antiquity. This new development eased cultural contact between Eastern Cushites and Eastern Nilotes (Oliver and Atmore, 2001), the region which was no more important for hunting and subsistence farming like the wetter land of upper Nile. The shift of Eastern Nilotes from the wetter upper Nile region to Lake Turkana area, which was the land of pastoral Borana at least since the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, had required them to regulate themselves with the new environment. The movement was noticeable not only by ecological shift but also resulted in direct contact with African's Early Iron Age society of Oromo which traces back the root of its civilization to the Cushitic Meroe.

As stated above, one of the Nilotic speaking branches; that is the Eastern Nilotes, had shifted its center from central part of southern Sudan or upper Nile region to Lake Turkana area in between the second half of the thirteenth century to the fifteenth century. Logically, it could be possible to conclude that the newly emerged neighborhood between Nilotes and Cushites civilizations would be followed by cultural diffusion among Eastern Nilote like Maasai and Eastern Cushite like Borana Oromo. However, what makes surprise is the existence of Oromo and Oromo cultural values among Western Nilotes and Bantu population of the Great Lake region, which means beyond the border that divides Nilotes and Oromo. In addition, the settlement pattern of Tutsi appears a little bit different from traditional African settlement pattern. Ould-

Abdallah(2000), the UN special envoy to Burundi in 1990's, had asserted that Tutsi represents the only ethnic group in Africa which has no territory of its own. Since they are considered as intruders, the people of Tutsi used to live among indigenous people known as Hutu. The appearance of Oromo's cultural value among the Tutsi, unique nature of their settlement pattern and difficulty to locate the exact place of Tutsi's origin has attracted the attention of scholars to conduct research on the history of this people.

The people of Tutsi, whose livelihood depends up on cattle herding, constitutes one of the major ethnic groups that resides in the central highlands of East Africa known as the Great Lake region. The Tutsi, also known as AbaTutsi, WaTutsi or WaHima , have been reside in Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania and Eastern Congo. Linguistically, Tutsi and others Luwo speaking groups have been categorized under the Western Nilotes(Shillington, 1989). Little scholarly work has been produced so far on early history of Tutsi. Most of the research works, which carried out on the people of Tutsi, gave emphasis to the post-19<sup>th</sup> century period. The available researches, which are characterized by special in scope and more fragmented themes, had been collected from travel accounts and missionaries. Among these scholars, Speke (1864) had been pioneer in writing Tutsi's ethnography. He attempted to answerer Tutsi related basic questions like who they are and their place of origin. This is because; Speke (1864) was among the few Europeans who get the chance to analyze cultural practices among both Tutsi and Oromo in their natural setting.

In between the year 1843- 1872, Speke (1864) had visited the Great Lake region and the Horn of Africa where Tutsi and Oromo are settled respectively. Having visited this part of Africa, Speke (1864) had concluded that, Tutsi belongs to Oromo group and shares similar cultural values. Based onthe 19<sup>th</sup> century travel accounts, UNESCO, Vol.V (1981) had stated that, "An Oromo invasion between the sixteenth century and eighteenth century ... made the region (the Great Lake region) a second Ethiopia"(p.804) to specify when and how the Tutsi had arrived the region. Except fallacies in periodization,Speke's argument, which is supported by oral traditions, has great input in transforming research works that focused at Tutsi and Oromo relation. Speke's eye witness account has great significance to accept that the Tutsi are Oromo. This is because of its time relevance to discover unmixed culture of the Tutsi before colonial conquest.

Meanwhile, the study of Speke (1864) had limitations in defining the term Tutsi and how it could be related with Oromo vocabulary. It seems not easy to get the direct meaning for the word Tutsi in Oromo language. However, it could be possible to conclude the origin of the term based on the research works of some scholars and the experience of local people in adopting new terms. According to Cerrulli(1956), in the older times when the number of cattle had got increased, the Borana used to import shepherd from the neighboring ethnic groups. When the Borana imports these children, they gave heifer for each family of the children. They also adopted them as their own children not as slaves. In those days, southern Borana used to call them as “*Titse*” whereas northern Borana call them “*Tisitu*”, which means shepherd in *Affan* Oromo. Since then, the surrounding non-Oromo communities had started calling any cattle rearing individuals or pastoralists in its garbled form as Tutsi, associating with Titse or Tisitu of Borana(Cerulli,1956). The use of garbled form as a substitute of unfamiliar vocabularies appears common in southern border lands. For Example, the use of terms like “*Zeraco*” instead of ZeraYa’ecob(UNESCO, V, 1981), and “*Lusagade*” instead of LeulSeged(Mude, 1969) had been reported in the peripheries. It might be resulted from the complexity to pronounce the original term in local language. When the physical stature of Tutsi has been analyzed, of course, it resembles Cushitic speaking societies of the Horn of Africa. Nonetheless,the comparative analysis of archaeological sourcesin association withSanga culture and Oromo’s unique coffee consuming culture,the articleconfirmedthe fact that the people of Tutsi/Tistuhad been originally from the Great Oromo Nation before the 13<sup>th</sup>century.

### **3.1.1. Dispersal of *Sanga* Type Cattle in the Great Lake Region**

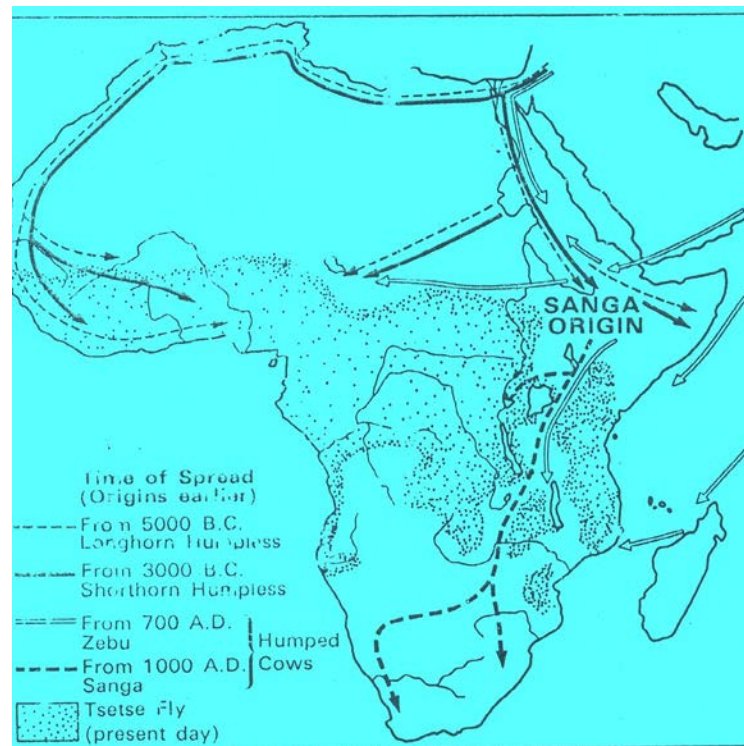
The best evidence which justifies Tutsi’s origin to be in the Great Oromo Nation has been associated with their arrival in the Great lake region with a unique type of cattle known as *Sanga* , a typical fauna of Oromo land. According to the proponent of this assumption, the drift of some Oromo groups in to the Great Lake region had been followed by a subsequent diffusion of *Sanga* type of cattle which was very crucial for Arabs as well as Nilotes of the Sudan and the Great Lake region. *UNESCO*, II, (1981) had well described how the coming of cattle to the lake region benefiting Nilotic Sudan as follows:

*In Eastern Africa in the widest sense, the historical movement of pastoralist expansion was probably linked to the diffusion of breeds of humped cattle -*



*Sanga - better adapted to the dry heat than other breeds. ..., so far as we knows at present, they are to be found only after 1200 in the White Nile region ...One author links the expansion of Nilotic pastoralists to the acquisition of this type of cattle after 1200 and also sees it as the stimulus behind the expansion of the Maasai in East Africa and the Arabic-speaking Bakkâra in the Nilotic Sudan, also after 1200(p. 753)*

**Map 1:** Origin of *Sanga* type cattle. (Adapted from Davidson, 1974)



**Photograph 1:** Early Domestication of Cattle from LagaOda dated back to 7,000 BP (Adapted from Dire Dawa Culture and Tourism Bureau, 2008)



The research work of some scholars like Davidson (1967) and Pankhurst (2008) had made positive contribution to the study of Oromo cattle known as *Sanga*. Pankhurst (1974) had debated that cattle were exported from the Horn of Africa to Asia since ancient time. Davidson (1967) had contended that, the origin of *Sanga* cattle has to be the hinter land of the Horn of Africa known as the Great Oromo Nation. According to the proposal of Davidson's (1967), domestication of *Sanga* type cattle was evolved in the Great Oromo Nation after the 10<sup>th</sup> century AD. Furthermore, data collected through consultation of archaeological, linguistic and the recent scientific sources had confirmed that Oromo pioneers in discovery and development of cattle breeding dated back to 7 Millennial BP (Cervicek, 1971; Cervicek and Braukamper, 1975; Alemseged, 1989). In the Great Oromo Nation, sites such as Laga Oda, Malka Kunture, Laga Gafra and so forth have enormous significance in the study of cattle domestication.

### **3.1.2. Diffusion of Oromo's Exceptional Coffee Consuming Culture**

The second evidence, which justifies the Great Oromo Nation to be the original homeland of the diaspora around the Great Lake Region, was associated with the diffusion of Oromo's beverage crop known as coffee. The argument which says Oromo had played a great role in the diffusion of coffee could be justified by two evidences. The first evidence is the prevalence of Oromo's coffee consumption culture in the Great Lake Region. Coffee in Oromo nation has been not only served as tea, but also consumed like margarine. Oromo's unique coffee consumption culture had been confirmed by European travel accounts of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to Burton

(2006) coffee had been consumed like the modern margarine among the Oromo of Eastern Hararghe. His account also witnessed that other people have no coffee consumption culture which is comparable with Oromo. In the Great Oromo Nation, the use of roasted coffee together with butter is ordinary. It is used during religious rites and some other special ceremonies. Subsequently, Odhiambo(1977) had stated that, “Coffee berries were used on certain ceremonial occasions to establish blood-brotherhood between individuals or groups,”( p.59)to illustrate the familiarity in culture among the inhabitants of the Great Lake region. Therefore, the similarity in coffee consumption culture among both Oromo and the people around the Great Lake area could not be expected without cultural contact between the Horn of African indigenous societies such as Oromo. As discussed above, the Great Oromo Nation is center of origin and center of diversity for coffee. Coffee and coffee culture was originated there before it had been diffused to the Middle East and other Ethiopian region. In trying to analyze this logic, it could be very clear who brought this culture to this region; coffee and coffee culture brought to the Great Lake region through the Oromo diaspora like Tutsi or Wa-Hima.

### **3.1.3. Colonial Ethnography about the Origin of Tutsi**

The Oromo identity of Tutsi or WaHima group is not only characterized by similarity in physical stature and herding culture, but also has the support of oral traditions as well. According to the Tutsi’s oral tradition, their original homeland was Ethiopia (Prunier, 1995).However, there has been strong fragmentation of sources on how and when the Tutsi detached from their Oromo brethren and through which direction they interred the Great Lake region. The existing colonial travel accounts have discussed that it could be through two directions. The first argument, which is based on the assumption of Speke (1864), pushes the period in between the 16<sup>th</sup> century to 18<sup>th</sup> century AD. According to this scholar, the Tutsi had invaded the region from the east or Lake Turkana area and become masters of the land and the people (UNESCO, V, 1981). When we analyze the language type currently spoken among the Tutsi, it could be too difficult to accept the idea that the Oromo had invaded the Great Lake region. For some other scholars like Shillington (1989), Tutsi had been depicted as invaders who came from North. According to the premise of these scholars, Tutsi had invaded the region in between the 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century AD from the northern direction. He also argued that the Tutsi speaks West Nilotic language during their arrival in the region. The idea which says Tutsi invaded the Great Lake region from the

north was also supported by scholars like Philip Curtin and others. Curtin had noted that, “The Tutsi may originally have been a separate people with their own language and culture, who long ago swept down from the North and conquered the tillers of the soil...” (Curtin, *et al.*, 1999,p.168). According to these people, Tutsi has its own language before its arrival in the Great Lake Region. Meanwhile, all assumptions of scholars have failed to answer one logical question; is there any place in north Sudan that has been associated with Oromo’s early inhabitation? This and other related questions need to be answered through the consultation of Oromo place name together with movement history of the Oromo.

#### **3.1.4. Oromo Place Names along Tutsi’s Line of Journey**

Place-names have great implication to conduct comparative study of Oromo history. Oromo uses similar terms to indicate several places which are located in different parts of the Great Oromo Nation. Probably, it could be because of similarity among the two places or Oromo’s need to commemorate its past settlement area. In the Great Oromo Nation, where populations had been repeatedly forced to move out of their original home either by alien pressure or in search of good pasture, they have taken the name of the old place with them into the new territories and given it to their new home. Oromo place name Karsa (Qarsaa), which has a great historical significance in the study of the diaspora around the Great Lake Region, is also apparent in south west Shawa, Jimma, Wallaga and Sennar of Sudan((UNESCO, IV,1981; MahbereKidusan, 1999).

Local and Arab sources maintain that the Christian Highland Kingdom was repeatedly attacked by the Oromo since the 13<sup>th</sup> century AD. At the same time, it had been reported that a serious of population movement had interred Nilotic Sudan whom they call the people of Karsa (UNESCO, IV,1981). Three centuries later, after the disappearance of the Karsa people of Sennar from historical discourse of the region, Oromo settlement in the Sudd region of Southern Sudan had been reported by some European writers (Lienhardt, 1955). However, the devastation and looting of Abyssinia by some Oromo groups, Oromo’s appearance in Sennar region and then in the Sudd region reveals westward movement of Oromo was started first from Ethiopia to Sennar of Sudan, then to Sudd region of the present day Southern Sudan and finally to the Great Lakes

area. Based on written sources and foot print direction of Oromo's movement history, it could be possible to conclude that, the Tutsi represents the striking force of traditionalist Oromo who devastated the territories of both the Christian Highland Kingdom and Christian Nubia, and deflected their movement southward to the Great Lake region.

Accordingly, before the 13<sup>th</sup> century Tutsi had been settled in the territories of south western Oromia, more specifically at a place called Karsa. In this region, there are several places which are known by the name Karsa. To mention some, Karsa of south western Shawa, Jima and Wallaga are the most important of all. Among these, Karsa of south western Shawa has the most exciting connotation to justify the pre- 13<sup>th</sup> century history of south western Oromia and identity of the diaspora who moved out of the region. The new idea, which argued that all proto-Oromo groups of the Great Lake region were moved from western part of the present day the Regional State of Oromia, has also the support of local as well as Arab and European sources.

From their original base, which means the present day south western Ethiopia, they first moved to Sennar region of Sudan and settled there at a place called Karsa, to memorialize their original home land in the Great Oromo Nation. Then after, as a result of the fresh attack of the Bakara Arabs in the 15<sup>th</sup> c, they were expelled from Karsa of Sennar and deflected the direction of their movement southward (UNESCO, IV,1981). After they expelled from Sennar, another Oromo settlement was reported in upper Nile by Lienhardt(1955) and Bruce(1964). Lienhardt(1955) had argued that some groups of Oromo were settled among the Nilotic speaking people of Shiluk before the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a place which is covered with flooding vegetation that means the Sudd. Oromo presence among the Shiluk, a place where most scholar like Shilington(1989) argued the probable home land of Tutsi, had great significance in indicating the direction of Oromo Diaspora's movement. Perhaps, the long journey across the Nilotic territory could be the reason which forced the people of Tutsi/Tisitu to be Nilotized linguistically before they arrived at the Great Lake Region.

### **3.2. Discussion of Major Findings**

The article has two major findings; it asserts pre 13<sup>th</sup> century Oromo existence in southwestern Ethiopia(Jimma, Illu Abba Bora, Wallaga and south west Shawa) and makes knowntourism heritages and resources of the Great Oromo Nation through revitalizing their center of origin and

route of dispersion as witnessed by the diaspora. To begin with the major findings, this research disproves the Ethiopianist thinkers who denied the very existence of the Oromo in south western part of the present day Ethiopia in a place believed to be coffee's center of origin (Merid, 1971 and Tadese (1972). In order to convince their audience about their claim, Ethiopianist scholars had appeared while appreciating pre-colonial kingdoms of Oromo such as the five Gibe states, Leqa Qelem, and Leqa Naqamtewhich says nothing about Oromo inhabitation in these regions before the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In order to disprove such mystifications of history that based on Solomonic legends, the researcher had consulted socio- economic and heritages of the Oromo that preserved among the diaspora since the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

The same as west African historians disproved western claims through examining wearing styles, musical memories and religious traditions of African-American, the study of Oromo heritages in the Great Lakes Region such as *Sanga* and coffee consuming culture could provide similar significance in correcting misconceptions of south western Oromia's history (Davidson, 1967). The starting point of analysis about the significance of Oromo Diaspora in the Great Lake region has been directly linked with the widespread experience in rearing *Sanga* type cattle and coffee consuming culture, which are totally Oromo in its origin (Odhiambo, 1977). Besides, identity of the people that entered Sudan at about the 14<sup>th</sup> century was indicated with an Oromo term, Karsa. Literally, the term Karsa refers to stone tool devised to sharpen knives spears and other metallic utensils. It also denotes clan name and place- names that found in Jimma, western Shawa, and Wallaga and elsewhere in Oromia (Muhammad, 2012). As discussed in UNESCO, IV (1981), the people of Karsa, who moved out in to Sennar of Sudan and then deflected southward to the Great Lake region, were originated from western part of the present day Ethiopia before the 13<sup>th</sup> century AD. Analogically, if we accept the Oromoness of *Karsa*, *Sanga* and coffee, the pre- 13<sup>th</sup> century inhabitants of south western Ethiopia, from which the Karsa people had been detached, were the people of Oromo. Hence, the description of Karsa people in Sudan, an Oromo group similar with Karsa of Adadi Mariam, make known the fact that it was some Oromo groups who were evicted from these lands by southward expansion of the Christian Highland Kingdom 12<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> centuries (Mahbere Kidusan, 1999; Tesfaye and Sisay, 2007). The finding is also affiliated with works of notable Oromo scholars like Alemayehu, et al., (2006) which asserted that south western Ethiopia had been inhabited by indigenous people known as Oromo *Duro* in the classic.

The second major finding, which could have brought a number of socio-economic significance, is associated with identification and development of natural and manmade heritage of the Great Oromo Nation. Americans with European background have very much interested to know about the history of their ancestor's home country where as European nationals also feel that America is the continuation of western civilization (Garvier, 2009). Recently, West African historians had also on track to conduct research on history of African Diaspora in the New World. As stated by Thornton (1992), the major aim of these researches has been to write the pre-colonial history of West African societies such as Senegambia, Congo and countries around the Gulf of Guinea. Based on the similarity in archaeological finding, cloth selection and cloth naming habits of Africa and the New World, historians had concluded that cloth manufacturing of western African societies such as Senegambia had been not inferior to that of Europeans before western domination of Africa. Similarly, investigating the accounts of slave population residing in the New World, historians had also managed to identify the type of African musical instruments and indigenous religions during 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries (Thornton, 1992)

The research that conducted in the fields of Oromo diaspora has brought multidimensional worth for both societies leaving in the Great Lake region as well as the Horn of Africa. First of all, any research that has been conducted in the field increases our knowledge about inhabitants of the Great lake region. Logically, when people in the Horn of Africa showed growing interest to understand history and culture of central Africans, such mutual respect strengthens fraternity among Africans in order to improve Socio-cultural, economic and political integration, which Europeans inhabiting on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean have benefit from. Some scholars like Metasebia (2013) who relayed on northern legend, had concluded that coffee was discovered in Kafa. However, it has been not supported with evidence. On the other hand, indigenous inhabitants of the horn of Africa reported while eating coffee at about 10<sup>th</sup> century AD which gradually developed in to major beverage crop of the World (Goodwin, 2019). The second assumption seems correct since coffee consuming culture survived among the Oromo groups only. Analogically, Oromo has not only the precedence in domestication of coffee in the world but also in dispersion of coffee to Harar, Habasha, Arabia and the Great Lake region. The custom of chewing coffee beans was later on brought to Harar and Arabia by Oromo and Sudanese diaspora at about the 15<sup>th</sup> century (NCA, 2019; Goodwin, 2019). Therefore, the research has declared that the Great Oromo



nation to be the cradle of coffee Arabica where one found forest coffee and unique coffee consuming culture that dated back to the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

The research also has great significance in asserting the fact that the Great Oromo Nation has been a center of domestication for *Sanga* type of cattle in the world. So far, there is no consensus among scholars concerning the contribution of Oromo cattle which has sounding effect to Africa's economic development. Oromo's achievement in technique benefited not only the Oromo society, but it has significance for Africa and the world at large. In Africa, it increased land efficiency at least since the begging of the first Millennial AD and facilitated human settlement in drier parts of Africa, mainly along the coasts of East Africa and the Great East African Rift Valley System (Davidson, 1967; UNESCO, V, 1981) Perhaps, it could be after domestication of drought resistant cattle and subsequent water conservation technique that the drier part of the Horn of Africa including Somalia, North Eastern Kenya and South Eastern Ethiopia had converted in to major center of human settlement. This innovative achievement of the Oromo has been given recognition of UNESCO, V, (1981) as follows:

*“The rapid expansion of the Western and Eastern Nilotes southward and eastwards may therefore be linked with the spread of intensive cattle keeping made possible by the introduction of humped cattle and combined with cereal agriculture. This combination provided a means of food production suited to drier areas which enabled the Nilotes to occupy many areas...”* (pp.192-193).

The depletion of natural resources and global warming has been among the challenges we faced in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is partly associated with increase of human and cattle population. It is also marked by the increasing need of the world, especially the West for cattle breed which withstand resources limitation and provide maximum product. Today the West has understood that the only possible way which fulfills the ever growing human need could not be expected without exploiting the fruit of Oromo Civilization. Farmers in the New World are on the verge of enabling to supply sufficient food for their cattle. Nowadays most farmers of the civilized world turned their eye on Oromo cattle calling it 'Boran'. The need for Oromo cattle has been sky scraping because of its unique genetic composition, less feeding price and the quality of meat. The fruit of Oromo Civilization or cattle domestication, which they prefer calling “Gift of God”,



attracted farmers of the New World like USA, Republic of South Africa and Australia(Aynalem, *et al.*2011). This fact has been witnessed by the commercial farmers of the west as follows:

*“We have witnessed over many years how over feeding, over management, greed and shows has led to the downfall of many cattle breeds. There is disillusionment of the commercial breeder in our stud animals and a desperate search began for breeds that will meet the challenges of world in the 21st century. ...Commercial farmers are desperate to lower their input costs and the price of feed has become unaffordable for annual use. To the rescue we believe has come the Boran breed. A true gift from God to cattle men”*(Aynalem*et. al.*,2011, p.18).

So far, the Great Oromo Nation has been not recognized as world’s original places where domestication of cattle was evolved. Even if Oromia possess sufficient archaeological evidences at a places like LagaOda together with the apparent unique genetic composition which justifies cattle domestication, the world have never stopped tracing back to old assumption which says, “Origins of all domesticated cattle can be traced back to two main centers, Asian (*Bosindicus*) and the Near East-European (*Bostaurus*)”(Boran Cattle, 2013). Therefore, the new development could benefit Oromo in two ways if exploited properly. First of all, they recognized the fact that Oromia to be the center of origin for a cattle type known as *Sanga/Borana*, which have unique physical and genetic composition as well as traceable archaeological evidences. Secondly, it provides an opportunity for farmers to improve the productivity of their herd without losing its original trait. During the colonial period, the west had been forcing Africans import that of European breed considering local cattle were primitive. Now it appears the entire world has come to learn from Oromo’s indigenous civilization which is proved by its drought resistant nature, docility and unique genetic composition (Aynalem, *et. al.*,2011). Hence, the research has a vital significance in bootingtourismindustry beyond reconstructing the early history of the Great Oromo Nation.

## **CONCLUSSION**

African historian, including Oromo scholarship, had shifted their research focus to social history instead of the old political history which alienated them to address social evils and harnessing development agenda. In social history a wide range of themes has been studied including history of Oromo diaspora. This research begins with discussing the contribution of individual Oromo

diaspora that dispersed across the Middle East, Zanzibar, and Europe as well as along the coasts of the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea. Then it embarked to other diaspora group who moved out of the Great Oromo Nation in a large numbers since the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Accordingly, due emphasis was given to societies residing around the Great Lake Region who have common manifest identity with Oromo's socio-economic values such as *sanga* type cattle and coffee consuming culture. Finally the article had also identified Tutsi's place of origin to be Karsa of southwestern Ethiopia where enormous traditionalist Oromo had been pressurized from coffee growing areas of Karsa of Jimma, Karsa of Wallaga and Karsa of south west Shawab before they moved in to Sennar (Sudan) renaming the new homeland as Karsa to commemorate their place of origin.

The article has spectacular significance for policy maker and those who interested to discuss historical premises that led to the eviction of some Oromo groups besides correcting imposed historical mistakes perpetuated up on indigenous inhabitants of the region. The scope of the article has been not only confined to point out west ward dislocation of cattle rearing and coffee growing traditionalist Oromo group since the 13<sup>th</sup> century, but also out shines the significance of the diasporas around the Great Lake Region in enhancing trade and tourism through promoting the initial contribution of brilliant individuals such as Onasimos Nasib, Abshiri, Akafedhe and Billille (Mahaboub). Accordingly, the study about Oromo diaspora of the Great Lake Region could be a breakthrough in linking the growing necessity of Ethiopian to have strong economic and political ties with sub-Saharan Africa. Hence, this work has long lasting merit of harnessing sustainable developmental issues; promoting co-operation, fraternity and integrity among fellow Africans and African countries at large.

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The writer of this article guarantees that there is no conflict of interest

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#### Interviews

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