

Full Length Research

Socio-Historical Interaction: The case of Oromo-Harari Ethnic groups in the city of Harar

Chala Abdurahman

Salale University, Colleague of Social Science and Humanities, Lecturer, Department of History and Heritage Management, Fitcha, Ethiopia.

Author's E-mail: chala9816@gmail.com

Accepted 4th March, 2020.

Since incorporation under the new administration, the social and political was well cultural of the city was deteriorated. Hence, majority of the Oromo were engaged in agriculture and Harari was engaged in trades. Abort the Amir administration and accommodate the northern administration system in the city. Since incorporation, there is peaceful coexistence between the two ethnic groups in the city of Harar. The Article seeks to investigate in the multi ethnic place how such peaceful coexistence remains between the ethnic groups in the city substantially. In the Ethiopian history, undercurrent off and Antagonism were the main obstacles for the plural society. Hence, the situations were also occurred in Harar. To accomplish this idea, the researcher utilized qualitative research method. Both Primary and secondary data sources were used. Primary data collected from informants which is the most important for the objective was gathered through interview. Document analysis, group discussion and observation were part of this part. Then, data was analysis to find real socio historical interaction. This objective helps to avoid a common contention and instance for the others. Able to each other in contention and live together and develop a common term which is popular today on the society "Harar-ye-fikir ketema i.e Harar the city of love. Within other ethnic groups, the Harari and Oromo were shared the ownership of the city until 1991. The art of tolerance may lead the city be for a long necessarily peace.

Keywords: Harar, ethnic group, socio-historical interaction, Oromo, Harari

INTRODUCTION

Human beings pacify frequent several times to see the present appearance. At the same manner, conflict and mutualism were part of a human combination as well. "Despite the elements of continuity in the half millennium or so covered by the present volume..."¹ Among the places where dense human coexist and culturally tolerate within each other is the urban area. This is because... "Cities were centers where human cultures have reached maturity which laid the foundation for the present urban culture".² The above quoted refers the effort of socio cultural interaction, city play vital role and the structure of the city were prominent close to interact.

¹ Pankhurst Richard, social history of Ethiopia, (Addis Ababa: st Edmundsbury press, 1990), p, 273.

² Belew Worku, "Historical-Sociology of Interaction in the city of Dawa Dawa: The case of Oromo-Somali ethnic groups", International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, Volume 7, Issue 3, March 2017, p, 235.

A History of Harar had been called new city since the city expanded of settlement outside the wall and annexation to the Christian empire. While, inside Jegol, the historical city of Harar called the old city. Therefore, the Article only skims social ethnic interaction in the wall city of Harar emphasis on Oromo and Harari ethnic group. Historically, in the city were people gather live together, there are always has been a market. Forced, the city was open for all citizens and the product of the city was growth after conquest. Especially, the new like Christian were involved in the city and different construction in the outside wall which is previously inhibited was spread.³

After incorporation, the Harari⁴ lost their political and land holding. At the same time, political manners was run by the newly settler shewan. The Amhara and other ethnic group merg with the Harari and Oromo those live before. However, ethnic contention was not appearing, therefore, social interaction between the people going sanitary.

The Article focused on the socio historical interaction mainly between Oromo and Harari ethnic groups, and limited on the new city of Harar means since 1887.⁵ The Harari people, who call themselves *ge'usu* "city people", had good relation with a people those living with them in the city of Harar. Nowadays, tourist come to the city beside visit the Jegol wall, Museum and Harari architecture house, understanding the art of tolerance which existed among the ethnic groups.

Harar, one of the nine regional states in Ethiopia, located in eastern part of the country. In Harar, not only live with a human but the society of the Harar was live with a Hayne with a great tolerance.⁶ Art of tolerance flourished in the city between Oromo and Harari in the city. Therefore, main emphasis on the ethnic group interaction is discussed.

Historical survey of the Harar

The historical origin of Harar is obscure. Because of the highly valuable absence of written documents, oral tradition is the main sources of information. However, several nineteenth century author, Richard burton, Philip and robbechi give write tradition the beginning of harar. Burton describe this by book two volume by entitle the first foot steeps in the east Africa which published 1856.⁷ The history of Harar is a history of conflict with between Christian kingdoms. Medievely, the city considered the fourth most sacred center of Islamic center.⁸

The shape of Ethiopia today was made during the emperor menelik of shawa through his policy called the expansion. This was track was bounded in to two way. The first was peacefully and the last was through warfare. Because of the refusal of the peaceful resistance, make the fate of Harar the emperor second option was made on the city with the circumference Oromo clan. According to letter written by emperor Menelik which is founding in the Sherif museum, emperor decided to capture Harar and control the rich resources they have and trade that passed via Harar. In 1887, at the battle of *Chalanqo*, were several ethnic groups were participated on the side of Amir Abdulahi and leader of that battalion was from Oromo clan by the name Bakar ware.⁹

³ Ahmed Zekaria, *A short history of Harar in the Harari revolution*, Harari National Congress, Addis Ababa: fana democracy publisher, 2000.pp, 89-90.

⁴ In this article, the writer's used the term Harari interchangeably with the term of self-reference, *ge usu* ("city person").and in somewhere, to refer culminated the whole ethnic group live in the city.

⁵ Chala Abdurahman. "Harari-Oromo Inter-Ethnic Interaction in the city of Harar from 1887 to 1991" MA Thesis. (Bahir Dar University, 2010), p, 37;

⁶ For centuries, people in Hārār have lived side by side with hyenas, one of the world's deadliest land predators. They call them young priests. Every new year in the Arabic calendar, they make porridge feast for them in the four corners of the city

⁷ Richard Burton, *First Footsteps in East Africa: An Exploration of Harar*. Vols.I and II.New York: Dover Publications, 1956.P, 76

⁸ Ibid, pp. 34-37.

⁹ Ahmed Zekaria, p,47.

The renaissance of the city was gradually estimated because of the Djibouti –Addis railway. However, related with the changing direction via Dire Dawa, the estimated commerce trade was mirage. Harar remained the political and social interaction as well as cultural center. Since after incorporation of the Harar under the emperor Menelik administration system, the city lost sovereignty. The Amir Administration system which is confounded by the Harari descendant and since the coming of Egyptian in the area was suffered. Hence, was culminated by the Shewan ruling system once a last. During the Italian occupation, significant changes were held and reconstruct the architecture. Informants indicate, the city center called *Gideer Magala*, was constructed by the Italian.¹⁰

The wall city of Harar, with a 48ha registered in UNESCO by fulfilling II, III, IV and V. from these criteria in the second one conclude “expressed in the social and cultural development of the city enclosed within the otherwise Christian region”. at the same manner, the city has considered has two manner, old and new city.¹¹

The city served provincial capital of hararghe since from the Italian until the military government in 1974. 1991. Then, served as Harar awraja zuria during the Derg regime to transitional government. Post 1991, in political arena, both ethnic group share equal in the regional parliament. But in the recent phenomena regional vice president selected among the Oromo, while president from Harari. Ethnic diversity in the city characterized a peaceful coexistence and positive relation between two ethnic groups.¹²

The people of Harar

The total population of the Harar is 183,415. (Of which 92,316 male and 91,099 female) it make the only Ethiopian region were most people lived in urban i.e., 99,368 or 54.18% is urban inhabitants. The city had composed of 36 kebele, out of which 17 are rural and 19 urban. Beside the Oromo, Harari and Amhara, the city was diversified by various ethnic groups, Such as Argoba, Somale, Gurage and Tigre. These multi ethnic nations were lived together for a long time. To be suit for managing the objective, the researcher main point viewed on the Oromo and Harari ethnic groups. Agriculture and trade was the prominent and dominant economic activities among the people of Harar since the early time.¹³

According to oral tradition, Harar has different quarters with different name which is suit with historical ethnic groups. Therefore, socially and culturally exchange between ethnic groups were held in terms of language, way of life and idea. Historically, for a long period of time, Oromo and harari were had constant ethnic interaction. Despite, the name of the city, Harari and Oromo had used their own terms. Among the Oromo they called *Adare biyo*; while, among the harari named *Gey*. The contention was not only on the city name; rather they called each by the term derogatory. The Oromo called Harari as *Adare* at the same manner, Harari called *Qottu*. Harari call their way of life *Gey ada*; the custome of the city. While, outside the wall called the *Derga usu*; wild or uncultured people. Therefore, Islam which both groups follow play vital role to connect to many surrounding people.¹⁴

Inside the walled city of Harar, the inhabitant people of the Harari were involved the unique urban culture center.

¹⁰ Informant; Afendi Ahmed, expert at the bureau of culture and tourism in the region and personal communication with a group of local elders

¹¹ Wehib, Ahmed (October 2015). *History of Härär and the Häräris (PDF)*. Häräri People Regional State Culture, Heritage and Tourism Bureau. p. 274. Retrieved 7 July 2017

¹² Ibsa Ahmed.2007. A History of the Itu Oromo 1880s-1974. I (M.A. Thesis), Department of History, Addis Ababa University, pp.25-26

¹³ Chala Abdurahman, pp. 1, 2 & 5.

¹⁴ Ibid, pp 9, 12-15. The Oromo and Amhara used a term Adare to refer the Harari. At the same manner, Harari used term Qottu probably for a century to an Oromo. *Qottu* is a label used for the Muslim Oromo of the Harar Plateau. In Afan Oromo it implies cultivation of the soil. Actually, Oromo themselves called themselves by this name before 1970's. currently the term is considered as pejorative.

The people of Harar were one of the sophisticated communities because of trade they engage and make contact with the outside. Because of engaging on trade, Harari were among the modernized community even before incorporate. The shewan those capture the city were learned and amalgamate with the culture of harari. With the residents of Harar city and Teshale Tibebe aptly depicts this fact in the following words:

...The Gabbi Lebash Showan had to learn the sophisticated urban splendor of Hārāri Civilization. It was a contest between Orthodox-Christian-parochialism against urban-Muslim-cosmopolitanism. The Showan won militarily, but not civilization; the Hārāri lost militarily, but won civilization. Twentieth century Ethiopia followed the urban-civilization path of the nineteenth-century Hārār. To this day, Hārār implies urban, civilized culture. Compare Hārār with say, Debra Markos...?

According to old and eminent informants, Socio activities, ways of life in city were still alive and respected. One of the interesting notes, the inside the wall city were reflected the culture of ethnic background lived in the city especially Harari and Oromo. The historical jegol wall of city has five portals (gates), each gates has the name by two ethnic groups (Oromo and Harari) beside, the Amharic which added after the Shewan settle in the city.

Table 1: shows the names of the five gates by the three tongues.

Harari	Afan Oromo	Amharic
Argo bari	Kara erer	Erer ber
Asum bari	Kara falana	Felana ber
Asmadin bari	Kara hamareisa	Shewa ber
Badro bari	Kara budawa	Buda ber
Suktat bar	Kara Dofi	Senga ber

Inside the city, each quarter were related with the ethnic groups. Those quarters named among the Harari Toya. With the exception of andegna menged and Amir uga, the rest of the quarters may keep the tradition way of activities. However, these two markets have had to be adopted urban system in the city. Having a very alley narrow existing in the quarters, when two peoples met and pass at the same time they must touch each other, so, that kinds of alley called Megerawiger; Peace maker alley. Harari Elders mention the alley play vital role to personal relation and make unsaturated between individual who feud each other.

Beside, Jami and Jumma mosque, 140 mosques and shrine existed in Harar. The 19th century holly saviour and holly trinity, several Christian churches were built in the city. Admirable, the shewan destroyed the Sheikh Bazikh Mosque and change to the church by the name today called holy trinity (*medanialam*). Inside the wall city, being one church that destroyed the second biggest mosque and changed some feature of the gates by the shewan had described by the Waldron pointed demographic feature of the Jegol was changed. The Amhara especially, the shewan, were given the '*dem-bet*' (the house of blood ransom) to the Jegol.

In any case, the in the city a culture of ethnic conflict between a groups were uncertainty in the new city of Harar. The way of life, social history and of religious respect in the city was exist. Social organization popularly known by Afocha was dominating the social life of the people. Under the next sub-title, accommodate widely on the social structure. The Harari is distinctive Semitic language, while they called their language *Gey sinan*; city language. And it speak only in the walled city until the Harari diaspora popularly expanded mainly in Canada, Australia and USA recent time. In terms of linguistically, Harari is polyglots. Almost all of the Harari people are fluent in Afan Oromo. Beside this many men who engaged trade was fluent in Arabic and Somali language.¹⁵

Oromo Harari ethnic interaction

To princely define the socio historical interaction of both ethnic group, the Oromo are the productive of the city, even though at a time live outside the city and permitted to live around the wall. While, Harari those owner of the farmland and some were engaged in the trade. Historically, Oromo are servant and laborers on the harari farm land. For this they received either percentage of crop that they gain or for their effort, received only for food and lodging.

¹⁵ This is realized by the writer's because he born and rise in the city, so, the observation made and comparison with the elders informants.

anyhow, the Article did not go into the detail of these early ethnic interaction, rather it briefly consider and focused on the interaction between two ethnic groups after incorporation.

Numerically, the Harari are smallest ethnic group, although they have big historical role in the Ethiopian history. While, Oromo are a people, those dismantled almost in enter part of the country. So, both ethnic groups were long and broad historical evidence.

It in to their culture, Oromo and Harari passed through interaction and acculturation. Among some are Afoch. That means helping each other like during the funeral and wedding. Harari had both men and women Afoch. one may also engage in the religious ceremony. Mainly Afoch was active and fame among the women in Harar. Oromo and Harari had their own Afocha, but, during funeral (burial attendance) and encourage deceased family were common among the Harari whatever he/her Afoch members.¹⁶ This means although all members of the group predominantly Muslim. However, despite all this interaction, the Oromo ancestor join the Oromo Afocha, while, the Harari join Harari Afocha. The day to day Afocha activities, ways of life and other were similar among the Oromo and Harari social background. The major different in the Afocha were uses of linguistic, their self-identity. When Afoch meet at the events, concerning the affairs of people and discuss about it then they may put solution for each raised issue. Tradition resolution mechanisms were among the part of the Afocha in both ethnic groups in the city.¹⁷

Having multi Multiculturalism in the city, between Oromo and Harari ethnic groups were a reason to live peaceful coexistence and harmony. Like somale, Argoba and other eastern Ethiopian ethnic groups, Oromo and Harari had having long and interrelated interaction. Sharing cultural acculturation and amalgamation was common between two ethnic groups. Among that aspect diffusion they face day to day in three social activities, while in acculturation, some Harari were their culture similar in some way with Arab and Indian dressing style men and women respectively. However, dressing style of Oromo women dressing called "*Dirya*" and "*Gogora*" which is similar with Somale and Argoba. *Marxo* and *Shamiz* were also common among the men in Oromo in the city of Harar.¹⁸

The other type of interaction was trade with each other. A historical photo avail in the Arthur Rambo museum indicate, the Oromo women wearing the common cloth of rural Oromo people in surrounding the city, carrying the basketry on her head and merchandize carry on donkey (cat, charcoal vegetables...) Beside this, on the walled city some place were label by the Oromo language; like "*Bakka dhadha*" better place, in this market the Oromo women's sell better. In all gates, multiple exchanges between peasant and trader were accomplishing in all market day. The two prominent center of the city were *faras magal* and *gidir magal*. Reversely, the Oromo saleswomen buy product sold by the trader like ironwork, cloths plastic shoes...and carry on her empty basketry and donkey again. They leave at the end of the day or next day.¹⁹

Writer, Waldron indicated their no intermarriage between two ethnic groups. However several Harari historical sources show the existence of intermarriage. Mahmmmed hassen's excellent thesis, point out the Harari Amir marries from the Oromo who lived surrounding the city. Some were their mother from Oromo ethnic group, so this indicate there was an existence of intermarriage between two ethnic groups.²⁰

Taking efforts from this, which take an example the researcher, agree with existence of intermarriage between two ethnic groups. Attending religious festival together was common in the city.

In Harar, people were not fear to talk each other eve they don't know each other. Orally, the as long as person is Harari that person is not a strange. Chewing chat is common among the people of Harar. People gather according to

¹⁶ Informant: Ato Mohammed Abdule. Over all, the structure of Afocha is more similar with the *iddir* which practice by the Christian and it also mutual aid

¹⁷ Informant *Gisti Zeynaba Kamil*, She is working under the female's Afocha leader

¹⁸ Belew Worku, p, 238.

¹⁹ Informants: Abdalla Sherif, Arif Hassen. The first informant he is an owner of private sheriff Harar museum.

²⁰ Mohammed Hassen, "The Relation between Harär and the Surrounding Oromo 1800-1887" BA Thesis. HSIU .(Department of History, 1973) , pp.45-47; Sydney. Waldron, —The Political Economy of Harari–Oromo Relationship, 1559-1974/ *Northeast African Studies*,

Vol. 6 (1/2), p. 9.

their age and chewing chat with discussing rise different issue.²¹ Currently, chat ceremony is known as *barca* among the Harari.²²

Challenges of interaction

In a place like Harar, where multi ethnic nation live together for the long time, there was a challenge which tryout their interaction. Among the challenge, which the intensive by the researcher were mentioned and skimmed; historically, Harari were dominated in the politics arena, therefore they imposed superscript notion on the territory where the Harari numerically a minority. Orally, the Harari consider the Oromo to be potentially dangerous, and this is not without Historical basis, After the Ahmed Ibrahim Ali Ghaziwar until the coming of Menelikk, Harari believed Oromo rebels killed Harari farmers and occasionally raided the city itself.²³

In the above elsewhere, I attempted to elucidate the previous social activities which they engaged, while when the farmer those serve farming Harari land come to visit in the home of land owner, he must sit on the floor. However, the case was not an ethnic animosity, rather undermine person by his work Farmer. Ultimately, the disinclined abase turn in to call to through an unnecessarily names. Presently, the name is derogatory, but not such as pejorative in the area.²⁴

The challenge of ethnic interaction was the assumption which they have each other. The Harari, the first acceptor and followers of Islam was conglomerate assumed that we are superior moral and sophisticated ethnic group. The next, in the modern ethnic interaction, school play vital role to those practice different culture religion and value. Two schools were predominantly known on the issue of two ethnic groups in the city of Harar and its environs by the name called *Gey Madrasa* and other *Sangabar*. The first was, as the name indicates “Gey” majority of student were from the Harari, whereas *Sangabar*, a school dominantly Oromo child studied it since late 1990’s served as an Oromo school with the medium of instruction becoming Afan Oromo.²⁵

CONCLUSION

Historically, in the multicultural society, ethnic relation may types of peaceful or conflict. Amalgamation and share the culture and values with each other were the common among the ethnic groups in the city of Harar. The Harari Having an engage in the agriculture and later trades, make open contact with outside society. Mainly those previous live outside the wall Oromo. They interaction has long time and one of the peaceful coexistence. This people live together work together and discuss their issue of the city particular to keep peace of city. Yet, these peoples different clan, however, live with ethnic harmony. In the day to day social activities and they face in the socio political aspect. Among the most important ethnic group Harari daily contact is Oromo.

After conquest, the administration of the city was distracted; however, ethnic composition was begun to expand. This move formed a large population in the city. Having a long history in the history of the country, Harar a place where densely population and where majority of the population living in the city. Indeed, socially, Oromo and Harari share common identities. Communication, almost all Harari speak Afan Oromo, therefore, sharing information each others are simple in the market places and everywhere else.

Currently, ethnic identities examined the stability of the people in the country. In the city of Harar bring different ethnic background and live harmony together, and make the city one of human stages. That kinds of ethnic tolerance may bring paradigms lesson for the other peoples as well, it stimulates generation to keep that interaction. In any case,

²¹ Ezekiel Gebissa, “Consumption, Contraband and Commodification: A History of Khat in Harärgé, Ethiopia 1930-1991”, (PhD Dissertation, Michigan State University, 1997), pp.21-22.

²² The writer also realized that as being participant-observer.

²³ Chala, pp,62-63

²⁴ Informants: Ato Abdulatif Ahmed and Ato Umar Xirso

²⁵ Ibid

the study has argued that ethnic conflict or ethnic contention was not raised in the city. Overall, the historical Oromo-Harari ethnic group has been one of mutual exclusion in the city.

REFERENCES

- Afaandi Mutaqi. *Härär Gey: Ethnographic Survey of the Town and its people (Amharic)*. Härär:Häräri Culture Tourism and Heritage Bureau, 2012.
- Ahmed Zekaria, *A short history of Härär in the Häräri revolution*, Häräri National Congress, Addis Ababa: fana democracy publisher, 2000.
- Belew Worku, "Historical-Sociology of Interaction in the city of Dawa Dawa: The case of Oromo-Somali ethnic groups", *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, Volume 7, Issue 3, March 2017
- Chala Abdurahaman. *Harari-Oromo Inter-Ethnic Interaction in the city of Harar from 1887 to 1991* MA thesis. Bahir Dar University: Department of History, 2010.
- Burton, Richard. *First Footsteps in East Africa: An Exploration of Härär*. Vols.I and II. New York: Dover Publications, (1956)
- Ezekiel Gebissa. —Consumption, Contraband and Comodification: A History of Khat [*Ĉhät*] inHärärghe, Ethiopia.C.1930-1991.II Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1997.
- Ibsa Ahmed. —A History of the Itu Oromo 1880s-1974.II M.A. Thesis Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University, 2007.
- Mohammed Hassen. —The Relation between Harari and the Surrounding Oromoll Senior Essay Addis Ababa University: Department of History, 1973.
- Teshale Tibebu, *the Making of Modern Ethiopia 1896-1974*, the Red Sea Press Inc.1995
- Richard, Pankhurst. *Social history of Ethiopia: The northern and central highlands from early medieval to the rise of emperor tewodros II*. Addis Ababa: st Edmundsbury press, 1990
- Wehib, Ahmed (October 2015). *History of Härär and the Häräris (PDF)*. Häräri People Regional State Culture Heritage and Tourism Bureau. p. 274. Retrieved 7 July 2017

Authors

Chala Abdurahman (MA in History), Salale University, College of Social Science and Humanities, lecturer: Department of History and Heritage Management, Fiche, Ethiopia. Email: chala9816@gmail.com, Phone:+251 9 10 14 98 16