



Hora and Cattle Owners of Maccaa Oromo in Ethiopia: an Analysis from Folkloric Perspective

Milkessa Edae*; Workineh Dirribsa; Terefe Mitiku

Department of Oromo Folklore and Literature, College of Social Science and Humanities, Jimma University, Ethiopia
Email: milkesaadae@gmail.com

<http://dx.doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v4i4.87>

Abstract

This research dealt with hora (salty mineral water) and its ritualistic aspect among the Maccaa Oromo. It aims at exploring the hora (salty mineral water) and its ritualistic contents in social and natural environments of the Maccaa Oromo. The study areas were purposively selected based on its historical background and valuable information related with hora obaasuu and its ritual and there are some hora sites in West Shawa zone. Accordingly 13 respondents from three Aanaas (districts) participated in the study. The respondents were purposively selected depending on their age and experience in using the hora. This study revealed that the major hora used by the Maccaa Oromo were hora Sanqallee, hora Amboo, hora Weessoo, hora Gur'uu Fadii, hora Bilandoo and hora Baaduu. According to the Maccaa Oromo's world view, hora (mineral water) is believed as clean and as extraordinary water with the purifying and curing power. However most of these horas and ritual which attached to them are being changed and under mind as well as they are being replaced by alien culture due to globalization spirit and its associative factors such as the introduction of foreign religion, modernization and bio medical drugs on cultural mix. So it is needed to conserve this natural resource with its cultural elements since hora is the indicator of indigenous people's investigation, belief system, wisdom, philosophy and culture.

Keywords: Hora; Obaasuu; Maccaa Oromo; Bokkuu; Livestock; Ritual

1. Introduction

Human, as any other species, are very much part of nature, dependent on the environment and natural resources for their existence. These natural resources included and amerced with different beliefs and indigenous practices that have traditionally existed system of environmental protection. In this sense water is fundamental element of natural resources in universe. (Dahl and Gemetchu, 1990) defines "role of water" as "It is the source of life" since as physical beings we all need water. Particularly, for the Borana Oromo however, water is more than a physiological necessity: it is a central ontological concern.

Water will be categorized into *bishaan maddaa*, 'literary mean spring water' *hora* 'mineral water' *bishaan lagaa* 'river water', *bishaan eelaa*, 'wells' *bishaan roobaa*, 'the rain water' and etc. Mineral water is the water which contains dissolved mineral salts or gases, and hence such water is considered as healthful to drink. Mineral water can also be water that has either naturally or artificially added minerals

(<http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-mineral-water.htm>). *Hora* literally refers to natural “mineral waters”, including water from all the categories of springs, wells and dams mentioned above. *Hora* is not only used for drinking purpose; however, it is also tied to a whole cluster of concepts associated with fertility (*hormaata*) (Dahl and Gemetchu, 1990). The point of concern here is that, ‘*Hora*’ used for livestock and sometimes for human being as medication. Again, the term ‘*hora*’ etymologically linked with Oromo terms like *horomoo* (the Oromo), *horoomsuu*, *horata*, *hormaata*, *horooroo*, *horachaa*, and *horsisuu* (Dahl and Gemetchu, 1990). It has to be noted that this etymological linkage magnifies the role and value which ‘*hora*’ has in the life of Oromo community.

The Oromo society had been using to the protect their own (and of course, their cattle’s) health from various diseases by using traditional medicines made from natural minerals. The Oromo have their own traditional rules and regulation regarding how to use ‘*hora*’. Any consideration of mineral waters has to begin with *tullaa*, the organizing concept in the Borana Law of Mineral Water. *Tullaa* refers to well-complexes or permanent waters. All mineral waters are traditionally categorized under rock wells and then in turn subsumed under the Laws of the well-complexes; (Dahl and Gemetchu, 1990). The people of the area have various wisdom and indigenous knowledge of utilizing *hora* (mineral water) in the passage of their life. This natural resource has helped them simplify their day to day life with wide, ritual purposes and varied use values.

In contrast to its cultural value and long age, the development and protection of this indigenous natural mineral water is hindered due to the expansion of farming land and pastoralism activities related with ‘*hora Obaasuu*’ and its use for ritual purposes have been degraded. For this reason, this folkloric study aims at exploring the ‘*hora*’-salty mineral water and its utilizations among the *Maccaa* Oromo of western Ethiopia.

Indeed, there are some researchers who have conducted research on some pastoralist parts of Oromia on the issues of water and related concepts. Additionally, some scholars have conducted on the *Maccaa* Oromo attaching the concept of *Hora* to blessing of peoples in various rituals. In this concern, (Dahl & Gemetchu 1990; Asmarom, 1973; Terefe, 2014; Bartels, 1983; Dejene, 2007) have tried to touch the fact *Hora is used for* various ritual purposes such as site for purification in paying the *gumaa*-the blood price of the slain; and symbol of *eebba* and *hormaata* (blessing and fertility related issue) among *Maccaa* Oromo. Furthermore, (Dahl & Gemetchu, 1990; Asmarom, 1973: 87), they all have investigated the meaning attached to the water and the facts that it is the source of the Oromo’s life in all aspects of their daily life. Specially, the way the latest two researchers’ have described the concept *hora* is different from the way the *Maccaa* Oromo understand of *Hora*- Salty mineral water. Terefe (2014) also has studied the role of *Hora* as the mineral water among the *Maccaa* Oromo of Ambo Area, and come up with positive immerse role of this mineral water drinking livestock and other purposes-He also revealed the name *Hora* has a great linkage with the nomenclature and historical background of the Ambo society; but he didn’t investigate the folk medicinal, spiritual and philosophical aspect of the *Hora* keeping livestock’s fertility and health among the *Maccaa* Oromo.

In general the intensions of the above researchers were about the importance of *Hora-mineral water* in pastoralist areas especially, the Borana Oromo and as the site of rituals of purification among the *Maccaa* Oromo. Furthermore, the researchers have been emphasized on the pastoralist parts of Oromia and not on the *Maccaa* Oromo. But at the same time, the *Maccaa* too have great relationship with water in general and with *hora*-salty mineral water particularly. Also since Oromia is wide in culture and topography, the change and continuity of this culture has to be studied. The *Maccaa* livestock drinks the normal water daily; but the *hora*- salty mineral water is an usual practice which is twice or once per year. Including the season of watering, the contents of the *hora*-salty mineral water, the ritual process, the oral poetry and food used at the day of watering *hora* (*Hora Obaasuu*), and other related rituals and performances are different from the other types of water which requires a study. On other hand, in line

with the change in the socio-economic and politics of the Oromo society, pastoralism is being transformed from time to time thereby the words, materials, practices and rituals related to pastoralist in general and *hora obaasuu* (watering *hora*-the salty mineral water) in particular is losing its folklore elements and cultural significance from time to time; from the folklore points of view forgetting all these folkloric element is a great risk. Therefore, this article is an effort to examine the status of *hora* and its utilization in order to fill the above gaps in knowledge and also to document this issue which is under a serious threat.

2. Literature Review

In this section, an attempt was made to review relevant folkloric and anthropological literature on the water in general and *Hora*- spring mineral water in particular. Different theoretical approaches on folk medicinal minerals, definition, its sources, various advantages, its ritual and philosophical aspects as well as the roles of the shippers have been discussed. Let us first begin by looking at some of the common definitions of water and *Hora*-salty mineral water.

2.1. The General Concept of Water and Hora-Salty Mineral Water

Due to its fundamental role in society's life, water has a strong cultural dimension. According to world health organization (WHO) Cultural differences play a key role in the way water is perceived, valued and managed in different societies. Water is probably the only natural resource to touch all aspects of human civilization- from agricultural and industrial development to the cultural and religious values embedded in society. The need and demand for water have been a driving force for health, for society, for economic prosperity, for cultural significance, and development throughout human history (3rd World Water Forum, 2003). According to K. Jinapala and P. G. Somaratne Water is mystical, religious, powerful, revered and feared. It is conceptualized differently in different cultures and sub cultures. Sinhala Buddhist culture which is the most prominent of Sri Lankan sub cultures conceptualizes water as one of the gift of the Rain-god, an element charged with magic, a symbol of fertility. The greatest importance given to water in Sri Lanka culture can be observed in different cultural, religious and spiritual functions. According to Eshete Water among the Oromo is one way and means in which the honor and omnipresence of *Waaqa* is expressed in addition to, human beings, animals, plants (trees), grasses and other objects. In Other hand there are humble worldview regarding water in Oromo culture. In the *Gadaa* rituals at the *Gadaa* centers three elements; water (rain), grass and milk) were usually available and aimed at interconnecting the natural and social order (Dereje 2012). Some scholars like Gemechu (1994); Lemu (1971); Dinsa (1975); Tesema (1980) relate the original water (*Walaabuu*) to out of which *Waaqaa* created all creatures. In the Oromo world-view, water is considered as a prehistoric substance, source of life. Before *Waaqaa* made (creatures), there was nothing except water. *Waaqaa* created all creatures out of water that was known as *Walaabuu*.

2.2 Significances of Water and Hora-Salty Mineral Water

Water is what sustains us. Water is what brings us into this world, and water is what keeps us in this physical world. And so it's our life Anderson (2010). Anderson further explained the importance of water by relating water with health. Water and health relationship is direct and foundational; as he pointed out, all life is dependent on water. He underlined about how water is critical for maintaining life within the physical realm, commenting that the human body is mostly comprised of water and that without the

hydration that water provides we perish. Water is thus one of the most significant elements in maintaining physical health and well-being; a point which would likely be raised by most people if they were asked about the relationship between water and health.

In Yoruba culture Water have a special role in community worldview, myths and legends of the community are indicating that life would not have been possible without the basic element of water. Yoruba beliefs consider that water is a vital and sacred origin of life (Eva-Marita Rinne, 2001). In addition Rinne explained the significance of water for preparation of folk medicine. According to this explanation in Yoruba community it is common to use pure water as a constituent factor when preparing any kinds of medicine or medical tools. Water is also used when manufacturing tools and containers to prepare medicines. In addition to this Water is used in various ways by the traditional healers. They use Water before the actual healing process. Water as a basic element of life and as an essential factor in the Yoruba religion symbolizes the man's relationship to God, the lesser gods, and to the whole universe. The Yoruba believe water to be a symbol of force and strength; they regard it as more powerful than fire, another important element in the origin of life according to old mythologies. Similarly the use of water among the Oromo is beyond than its Physiological needs which goes to build their historical background and also helps to sustain their social relationship. Water, especially well in the case of Borana Oromo is used to symbolize solidarity (Dahl & Gemetchu, 1990).

Additionally, water in general and *hora*-spring mineral water has much significance among the Oromo. For instance, well of Borana are, in fact, a central feature of their collective life (Asmarom, 1973: 87).

Among the Borana Oromo collective life their highly attachment to their cattle is relied up on the existence of water which is impossible elsewhere. Cattle and small stock are brought to pasture in circuits of varying length, but generally require watering at least every third day. Water mainly means water for livestock (Dahl & Gemetchu, 1990: 24). Water among the Borana Oromo used to show respect. For instance the *kallu* (religious leader) of Borana may water his cattle where ever he chooses. He may use water that has already been drawn in to the watering troughs. According to Asmarom (1973), selling water is forbidden as of the Borana Oromo. Any Borana who sells water to another Borana shall be banished from the land.

Additionally, the various advantages of water have been addressed among the Oromo peasants as the pastoralist area too. Workineh (2005) indicated that Peasants use water for 'drinking, cooking, washing clothes, and cleaning household utensils, bathing and making local drinks. Moreover, water is essential for animals and plants. According to Bartels (1983), among the *Maccaa* Oromo *hora* (*mineral water*) is used as the holy site that enables to cleanse the sinners and they have also go to the *hora* to draw the pure and beneficial *hora*-water in new calabashes during ritual of peacemaking after homicide.

3. Methodology

This research is qualitative research. It describe the '*Hora*' the salty mineral water and its utilization among the *Maccaa* Oromo. This study utilized essentially qualitative data generated from both primary and secondary data sources. For that reason, primary data were collected *via* three mechanisms. The first mechanism is *Key Informants Interview (KII)*: 15 Informants consisting pastoralist local elders (5), and pastoralist knowledgeable women (10). In addition, the researchers were contacted experts of culture and tourism office of Ambo to obtain data related to historical background of the study area.

The second mechanism is *Focus Group Discussions (FGD)*: two FGDs are conducted each with five (5) local elders and two (2) shepherds. A wide range of issues have been discussed in line with the

FGD guide pertaining to the study objectives. The discussions were facilitated and led by the researchers by taking notes, and the audio records that were taken for transcription purpose and further analysis the study.

The final means was personal observation: field visits were made to some selected '*Hora*' sites; which enable the researchers to understand the issues never obtained through other tools of data collection, but which has high value in this study. In addition, this means enabled the researchers to take field work photographs that have the real sense of the practice and process of '*Hora Obaasuu*' and healing or treating.

Secondary data were used as part of the literature review for further analyses of the basic concepts and theories involved in the study. This task has been accomplished via retrieving various materials on the subject matter such as: books, journal articles, magazines, newspapers as well as internet sources.

The sampling method chosen was judgmental or purposive because it is intended to capture the necessary and detail information and the views of the people in study area. In this sense of the Oromo communities, only one, i.e. *Maccaa* is purposely selected for the case analysis, as this site is among the most historical background and valuable formation of Ambo is highly related with '*Hora*', and also for the sake of the widely functioning of indigenous Oromo religious institutions and *Bokkuu*'s (center of *Maccaa gadaa*) which may have a crucial relationships in protecting and sustaining the water especially, *Hora*–salty mineral water.

4. Results

4.1 The Concept and Definition of '*Hora*'

Hora is the salty nature mineral water. As mentioned by Gemechu (1994), the term '*hora*' has high linkage with concepts like '*hormata*' (Fertility), *horii* (cattle) '*horsiiisa/horsiiisuu*, (breeding), *horooroo* (Ritual tree and/or stick) and *horata* (one of *Gadaa* party). Among the people of the research area, *Hora* is used for both secular and spiritual purpose. *Hora* is used for health benefit and fertility to different cultural rituals and practices purpose. Regarding the cultural importance of *Hora*, Workineh (2001) wrote the following:

On the fifth day, of *ateetee* ritual the husband will take his cattle to the place where the cattle will drink *hora* (mineral water). On mid-day, the husband will return cattle to his premises. When the cattle return home, the woman will milk and pour the milk on the back of cows. This is believed to help cows breed well (pg29).

From the above extract on can understand that *hora* have high association with rituals and breeding in Oromo culture. In the daily life of the community there are many oral expressions associated to *hora*. This indicates extreme linkage between the community socio-economy and *hora*. In the performance of ritual of purification after homicide the killer and the kin of the deceased wash their hands by *hora*. This is because in Oromo culture *Hora* is perceived as holly water and as it has the power to cleanse the miss did. In addition to this hidden truth of serious crime like organize robbery and disabling will be investigated beside *hora* spring. This is done to impose the suspect to reveal their crime in respect and fear of *Safuu* (moral value) of *Hora*.

Few Instances of Oral Expression Related to Hora!

Blessing

X= the elder who start blessing

y = the respondent elders

(General principles) X starts, Y responds

<u>X</u>	<u>Y</u>
Badhaadhii hora ta'i	Ta'i
Let you be prosperous as hora	Let you be it
Muldhadhu gaara ta'i	Ta'i
Let you be visible as mountain	Let you be it
Hora ta'ii waan mara qabaadhu	Qabaadhu
Let you have all as hora	Let you have
Haadha ta'ii obsa qabaadhu	Qabaadhu
Let you have patience as mother	Let you have

This blessing poem shows the concepts of *hora* in relation with prosperity and richness in content. In addition to blessing there are also proverbs that show the relationship between Oromo life and Hora. Few examples are in the following **Table 1**;

Afaan Oromoo Version	English Equivalent
<i>'Hora bu'aanii dhoqqee hin lagatan'</i>	One who go to <i>hora</i> never sacred mud
<i>Horiin koo huuqate jennaan; hora hin obaafattuuree jedhe'</i>	One asked him as his cattle is faced food deprivation and He replied why you don't water them hora
<i>Horaa galanii boojjii hin nadhan'</i>	No appetite for Boojjii ¹ after hora trip
<i>'Horiin Abbaa gaarii hin qabne horarra dhaabateet mar'ata'</i>	Cattle belongs to careless owner yell in wish of hora while really its is near to them
<i>'Hora dhaqaniit nadha bahan'</i>	Satisfaction of Hora comes after arriving to its source
<i>'Kan horetu waa'ee horaa dubbata'</i>	Only the one engaged in herding can speak about <i>hora</i>
<i>'sa'a hora dhugetu annaan mirgisa'</i>	Hora drinking cow bear more milk
<i>Loon hora male namni horii malee hin jiraatu</i>	It is difficult to survive for human without cattle and for cattle without hora.

¹ Salty soil found around Hora spring

According to local elders *hora* (the salty water) is the unique water in nature. Furthermore, its ritualistic consumption also makes exceptional from other types of water resources. In the study area the nomenclature of the *hora* spring/sites has direct relation with cattle and milk. There are many *hora* springs in the area these are *Hora Annannoo*, *hora Caancoo*, *Hora Gur'i fad*, *Hora Bilandoo*, and *Hora Hadhoo*. Except *hora Hadhoo*, the nomenclature of the remaining *hora* are derived from cattle and milk production, for instance *Annannoo* from *annaan* (milk) *Guri' fad* (expander of cows bosom), *Bilandoo* (massive) make cattle huge and massive, *Caancoo* (Extreme White) make milk white. *Hora Hadhoo* is named after the person explored the spring. According to the oral narration from elders *Hadheessaa Dhugoo* is an innocent and righteous person among the community. He was directed by *Waaqaa* (God) and he was the person who never breakdown the *seeraa* of *Uumaa* (rules of the community) and *uumama* (the law of nature). Therefore *waaqaa* obey him to bit the *lafa* (earth) by *bokkuu* (ritual stuff); immediately after he done so the *hora* flowed from the spot he hit.

From the discussion held with elders it possible to understand that the economy of the Oromo was depend on animal husbandry in past and also partly in present. Many research participants described that the utilization of *hora* traced back to the time immemorial when people start herding cattle. It is believed *Hora* was given to the Oromo from *waaqaa* with livestock. It is perceived as the blessing from *waaqaa* (God) or *Uumaa* (creator).

4.2 Significances of 'Hora'

In addition, the Oromo began to watering *hora* or *hora obaafachuu* before the emergence of biomedicine. This means *hora* is as ethno veterinary medicine used for the health and fertility of their livestock among the community since a long time.

Beside its cultural and ritual significance *Hora* plays a significant role in the economy of Oromo community, particularly for pastoralists and semi-pastoralists. Regarding husbandry the advantages of *hora* can be classified into two; medication and fertility (Insuring the health and improving fertility of the livestock).

Before the development of bio medicine Maccaa Oromo uses *hora* to protect the health of their livestock. In their belief livestock must drink *hora* twice par year in spring and winter season. During summer season livestock consume *caffee* (squashy grass) which will be the cause of different disease. So, they water *hora* at the end of both spring and summer season to prevent and treat livestock disease. In this sense *hora* clean up the stomach of livestock in the form of repetitive urine and waste.

In addition the *qarruu* (mixture of *hora* and soil) has played vital role in the curing of external or skin related problem. They extract *qarruu* from the bottom part of *hora spring* and rub on the body of infected livestock more than three or five days. In other hand they attach *hormaata* (fertility) to *hora*. *Hora* smooth and speed up *hormaata*; Even the terminology such as *Horu* (prosper), *hormaata* (fertility/prosperity) *Hore* (prospered) are interconnected to *hora*. Most of time *korma* (bull) which have drink *hora* become eager to mount *raada* (heifer); heifer is also active to conceive after drinking *hora*. Furthermore it is at *hora* site that many cattle come together and there is the probability of getting more effective/fertile *Korma* Since at the stage of *hora obaasuu* the cattle will come from different place with different breed. In this process there will be a chance to exchange cattle genetics or species.



Fig. 1 Hora Caanccoo spring and its Boojjii (Salty soil) near Ambo Town

In other hand Hora *obaasu* plays crucial role in establishing Social solidarity. The stage of *hora obaasuu* is rich with folklore genres such as material culture, spiritual culture, performing folk art and oral poetry. Accordingly, on the opening day of *hora obaasu* (probably in mid-of September) people will come with *bokkuu*, *okolee*, *kallachaa*, *callee*, *mijuu* (ritual stuffs) fulfill the ritual according to their culture and custom. On this day *Abbaa Hora* (Owner of the hora), sacrifice bull on the spring bless it for the communal benefit. Following the libation will make. Blessing and libation will accompanied by *jaarsa* (elders [men]), *jaartii* (elders [women]), *durba qarree/duudaa* (virgin girly). After the blessing the Clan of *Abbaa hora* waters their cattle before all. On other hand, the stage allows the user to communicate with each other and strengthen their social solidarity. In earlier time people came from far place to water *hora* and stayed for two or more days in the place. During their stay they would share food and shelter, and also protect themselves and their cattle from beast jointly. This enabled them to exchange information regarding their living style, their clan, economy and oral folklore elements. They exchanged their good wish for new season (Birraa) at the stage by saying ‘*Baga booqaa birraa geessan!*’ (Thanks God that you are in the new bright season).

4.3 The Season of Hora Obaasu (Watering the Hora)

According to data obtained from FGD, the *Maccaa* Oromo has particular season for *hora obasuu* ritual. Since summer is the rainy and cold season and autumn is when the spring is dried up watering hora is takes place in the winter and spring season regularly. In summer period *horas* will mixed with flood and other marsh that minimize the healing quality of the *hora*.

In autumn it is not normal to water *hora* for the weather condition is dry and rare availability of grass. Beside the absence of spring it is not advisable to water hora in this season. In this period the cattle cannot get enough grass to consume very well since the hora appetite them. If livestock drink *hora* to empty stomach, it could affect their health. The two seasons preferred for both the presence and quality of the *hora* itself and availability of enough grass.



Fig. 2 Area of Hora and its setting during the dry season

Source: Photograph, taken by researchers, February 2015

Most of time watering hora is takes place by male. Except on the date of opening ceremony and other ritual purpose, on which elders and other ritual leaders participate, any male can take cattle to hora. According to data obtained from interview and FGD *abbaa loonii* (owner) and *tiskee* (shepherd) are frequently engaged into the activity. The participant of hora receives worm welcome at home after the trip. Cultural food, porridge accompanied with butter and cheese will serve. The day is known as *guyyaa quufaa* (satisfaction day) both for human being and the livestock. Even the caw is not milked on that day because the calf has to satisfy as of other cattle and thereby they would get the mineral of *hora* through the teat of cow. Because they believe that, ‘*cattle are there because of the good shepherd*’ the shepherd is respected not only on trip of hora but also in entire year on season. The shepherd had special place and respect with the Oromo.

4.4 Oral Poetry at the Occasion of Watering Hora

The stage of watering *hora* is rich in oral poetry. This may include *faaruu loonii*- song of cattle praise, *eebbaa* –blessing and praying. On the opening ceremony of new season of hora obaasuu *abbaa hora* open the event by praying. The content of the praying consist the wish of prosperity, fertility, peace, and stability for the attendants and community as a whole. It takes place as follows:

The prayer

Yaa ayyaana oromtichaa nu milkeessi!
 You the spirit of Oromo give us success
Horri kun kan hormataaa yaa ta’u
 May this hora- basis for our fertility
Waatiif maatii nu tiksii
 May our family and calves safe
Kan horrermaa nu bulchi
 Keep us in safe with our property
Kan dhabe haa horu

The mass

Nu milkeessi!
 May it be
 Haata’u
 May it be
 Nuu tiksii
 May it be
 Nu bulchi
 Let it be
 Haa horu

Let them have not's prosperous
Kan hore irra haa bulu
 Let the owner be in safe

Let it be
 Haa bulu
 Let it be

The content of this pray and bless show that, the wish of the Oromo for fertility, productivity, and safety for community and their livestock.

The other genre of oral poetry which is observed on the *hora obaasuu* occasion is *faaruu loon* (cattle praise). It is expressed the following:

Ururuumee ya loon ururuumee
 Ururuume oho the cattle Ururuume²
 Arfaasaan yaa roobuu bonni yaa gabaabatuu
 Let the winter come with rain and autumn be short
 Saawwan gooftola koo akka hongeen isin hin dhoofne
 Oho cattle my master may the drought don't get you
 Ururuumee yaa loon ururuumee
 Ururuume oho the cattle Ururuume...

Including the above one the contents of cattle praising poem are revolve over *hormaata lellisuu* (appreciation of fertility), *jaalachuu* (loving fertility), *hawwu* (wishing fertility), *faayidaa loonii* (the significances of livestock), *gabbina* (upward), *badhaadhina* (development).

4.5 Safuu (Moral Value) of Hora

As mentioned above, *hora* has high linkage with Oromo worldview. There are some spiritual elements attached to it. Basing on the spiritual attached to it Hora water is used in different cultural practice like Gumaa, Irreechaa and Shanan Gadaa. This is directly connected (*Waaqeffannaa*) Oromo religion and belief system. There are many dos and don'ts on the occasion of *hora obaasuu*. Even the usage of the stream has its own rules. Cattle should have to manage by the owner so that the streams are not jammed. They say '*horri qananiidha*' (*hora* deserves respect. On the date of overcrowding, the users order the sequence according to their arrival. Interrupting the sequence is not norm. Through these collective understandings, values and practices the protection, sustainability and peaceful utilization of *hora* is maintained.

On the other hand the *hora* is believed as clean and as extraordinary water with the purifying and curing power. Therefore, anybody who would go there has to be sincere too. People regret bad action at *hora* spring and swear to not repeat it. Reconciliation will be made at the stream side of Hora. If one reversed the promise he/she made at *hora* stream, it is believed it have negative impacts on the individual and his/her fertility. Hora stream is among the sacred place or land among the people of the study area. The spirit of forgiveness and the culture of peaceful coexistence are common among the users.

² Tune of appeasing especially for baby

4.6 The Current Status of Hora

For the fact that, the lifestyle of the community is diversified, different cultural values and elements are under threat. The usage of Hora is also not exceptional; the utilization of hora in contemporary time has undergone considerable changes. The expansion of agriculture and expansion of urbanization caused shortage of grassing land and forced the people to limit the number of cattle the own. The absence of cattle in turn caused the demise of folklore surrounding hora and its utilization. Furthermore, the introduction and expansion of new worldview in community caused devastation on indigenous culture. The norms, values, practices, and the folk elements have neglected as evil and devil works among the followers of newly introduced worldview and backwardness among mechanized agriculturalist.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Water in general Hora in particular has extraordinary linkage with Oromo worldview. According to various writers mainly Workineh (2001), Dahl and Gemetchu (1990), Asmarom (1973) and Lemmessa (2012) water and/or Hora plays crucial role in explaining Oromo cosmology and enhancing the economy of the community. Lemmessa (2012) explained the way Horroo Oromo got their hora after they are affected by serious catastrophic disease of livestock. According to his discussion they got the hora after long pray of woman called Badhaatuu. The researcher explained Waaqaa (God) gave the Hora for Badhaatuu and her people to save their cattle. On other hand according to Gemetchu (1993) the importance of water in Oromo cultures may be connected to the ancient Egyptian cosmology of the universe in a watery chaotic first principle. Water is the first principle of Egyptian cosmology but the second principle of Oromo cosmology. The Oromo sky God Waaqa creates the universe out of pre-existing water called Wallaabu. In addition, Bartels (1983) states that the Oromo creation was begun with the element of water.

In support of these literatures this research addressed the socio-cultural importance of Hora among Maccaa Oromo. As of Horroo Oromoo stated by Lammessa the Kuttayee are well dependent on hora to treat the health of their cattle and also attach some cosmologic view to it. They believe that water exists before every creation. As agreed by previous social researchers like Megerssa (1993), Bartels (1990), Tesema (2006) and Dereje (2012), Oromo creation myth confirm that in the beginning there was Water. This water is called *Walaabuu* or *Bishaan Ganamaa*, was divided into the Bishaan Gubbaa (Water of Above) and *Bishaan Goodaa* (Water of Below). Starting with water and rocks, going on through the vegetation and animal world to man.

Similarly Gemechu (2013) mentioned that Oromo belief of the existence of Waaqa is based on observing what they call his works, such as the presence of various seasons, rain, sun, darkness, growing of crops, existence of water bodies, mountains, trees and other living things. Additionally he explained the role of Hora by focusing Arsadi in Oromo thanks giving. From his writing one can understand the role of Hora in Oromo culture which is also depicted in our research.

More of the tie of *Hora* and Oromo cultures can be explained by the please given for it and social interaction made to use or to own it. In Oromo culture there are many Oral compositions that show the importance of Hora. Asafa (2015) discussed the graveness Conflict over water which has causes the dispersals of people. In addition, Badilu (2014) explained one oral narration focuses on the importance of Hora in Oromo culture. According to the narration, a leader of one clan sacrificed himself instead of the Bull to assure the ownership of Hora spring for his clan after the elders bribed his justice. Similarly Zelem Abera Narrated similar story in his poem titled '*Korma hin qabu Morma hin dhabu jedhe Diggaa Saqoo*' meaning 'I have no bull but I give my throat'. In the poem Diggaa Saqoo lost to his competitor for the

fake made by the so-called mediators. Diggaa also cut his throat instead of bull to assure hora spring for his clan. From this Narratives one can understand that the importance of in Oromo culture.

Broadly speaking in the *Gadaa* rituals at the *Gadaa* centers three elements; water (rain), grass and milk) were usually available and aimed at interconnecting the natural and social order. This is because water that comes from the sky promoted the growth of grass; the grass was food for cattle, which produced milk. During rituals or prayers, this cycle appears to be reversed: milk was powered over grass to pray for rain. This reveals that performing *Gadaa* rituals was aimed at achieving fertility, growth and prosperity (Huntingford, 1955 as cited in Dereje, 2012). In contemporary time most cultural and economic importance of *Hora* is on its frail stage because of differ reasons. Among the reasons, as pointed by Lambert (1983), the influence of two world-religions took the lion share. Other factors are also affected Oromo life in many ways. As mentioned by Lambert (1983), the impact of trade and cash economy, a gradual shift from cattle-holding to agriculture, the effects of western education and technical skill, as well as urbanization and the growth of the population are the main factors that are observed during this study.

To conclude, the communities in the study area have an indigenous knowledge of the utilization of *hora*. There are rules and regulations, wisdom, belief system, norms, and philosophy of using it.

Acknowledgement

Our genuine gratitude goes to our informants (local elders, *abbaa gadas*, and participants of *Bokku Cittuu*) for their cooperation during the data collection. Furthermore, we would like to acknowledge Jimma University, College of Social Science and Humanity Post-graduate and Research Coordinating office for financial support.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest among the authors.

References

- (<http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-mineral-water.htm>).(accessed on august 23rd, 2014 Addis Ababa.
- Allison, Howard Appleby, Rachel Appleby “et al.”
- Anderson K (2010). *Aboriginal Women, Water and Health: Reflections from Eleven First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Grandmothers*.
- Asafa D (2009). *Eela (History of Oromo Literature)*.Addis Ababa: Far East Trading PLC.
- Asmarom L (1973). *Gadaa; three approaches to the study of African society*: Landon Free Press.
- Assefa T (2015). *Ethnography of Resistance Poetics Power and Authority in Salale Oromo Folklore and Resistance Culture Ethiopia, Northeast Africa Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women’s Health*.
- Badilu A (2014). *The Expansion of Protestantism and Culture Change among the Sayyoo Oromo, Western Oromia*. A Thesis Submitted To the School Of Graduate Studies, Addis Ababa University.

- Bartels L (1983). Oromo religion. Myths and rites of the western Oromo of Ethiopia-An attempt to understand. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag.
- Dahl G, Gemetchu M (1990). The Sources of Life: Boran Concepts of Wells and Water' in G. Palsson (ed.) From Water to World-Making: Anthropological Studies of Arid Lands. Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies. Reprinted with the permission of the Nordic Africa Institute.)
- Dejene G (2007). Conflict and conflict resolution Among the Waliso Oromo of Macha the case of Guma, Addis Ababa.
- Dereje H (2012). Historical Significances of Odaa with Special Reference to Walaabuu. Science, Technol. Arts. Res. J. 1(2):81-90.
- Gemechu J (2013). Pilgrimages and Syncretism: Religious Transformation among the Arsi Oromo of Ethiopia. A Dissertation Submitted To University Of Bayreuth
- Gemetchu M (1994). Identity, Knowledge and the Colonizing Structure. Ph. D. Dissertation, University Of London, School Of Oriental and African Studies.
- Jinapala K, Somaratne PG (2002). Relevance of Cultural Knowledge and Practices for Efficient Water Management in Today's Context (Benchmark conditions in Ruhuna River basins in Sri Lanka).
- Lemessa M. (2012). The scene doesn't speak: The Demise of Odaa Bulluq sacred forest Horo Guduru landscape north western Oromia Ethiopia; J. Oromo Stud. 19:1 & 2.
- Macmillan Dictionary. Chinua Achebe, Patrick Adams, Mark Allen, John.
- Terefe M (2014). Roles and statuses of Oromo grave taboo in environmental protection: the case of kuttaayee Oromo. A thesis submitted to the Jimma university college of social science and law school of graduate studies.
- Tesema T (2006).The Political Economy of an African Society in Transformation: The Case of Macca Oromo (Ethiopia) (Wiesbaden: HarrassowitzVerlag,) Conflict and Integration.
- WHO (2003). 3rd World Water Forum. Water & Culture the International Decade for Water 2005-2015.
- Workineh K (2001). Traditional Oromo attitudes towards the environment: An Argument for environmentally sound development.

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).