



Full Length Research Paper

The Historical Nature of Gomma Statehood

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Abstract

This study focuses on the Ethnography of the nature of Goma Statehood as one of the five monarchical administrations of Gibe. The main themes of this study specifically related to the trend of the state formation of the territory and the causes of its decline. Various hypothetical remarks on the state formation were the triggering motive for this study. To grasp the facts, the researcher employed the following methods. To begin with the tools, the researcher used interviews, focused group discussions, observation and field notes (diary records). As to techniques, purposive-snowball sampling was used as the subject required the details of the far-past experiences of the elders and knowledge of some relevant professionals. The interpretation of data also needs historical knowledge and experience of the elders. After the collection of the information, relevant data to the objectives of the study were identified, organized; the voice data were transcribed and translated into the language of the research, English. The analysis of the data considered in the study was undertaken by employing both emic and ethic perspectives. The emic perspective was employed to tap the folk knowledge of the elders to use it as a historic backing of justification while the ethic perspective was used to deploy written historical evidence to show the consequent realities. The findings of the study show three basic things. Firstly, the state formation of Gomma was neither influenced by the Yem, Ennariya, and Bosha nor by the influence of the Arabic governance structure. Secondly, it shows that the trend of Gomma state formation was influenced by the internal situation. To this end, the most gleaming fact which led to the monarchic like governance was the instability of the area that had, subsequently, empowered the Abba-Dulla to takeover monarchical administration control. This had consequently broken the norm of the Gada System (system of eight-year) peaceful power transfer in the governance system of Gomma. Thirdly, it also shows, the harsh operation of the feudal rule and the importance of the territory in cash crop production were the major causes for its decline.

Key Terms: *Gomma, Life-skills, Monarchy, Statehood*

Axareeraa

Qorannoon kun seenaa haala uummama Mootii Gommaa irratti xiyyeeffata. Maddi ka'umsaa qorannichaa, sababoota uummama Mootii Gommaa ta'an irratti falayaadawwan adda addaa jiraachuu isaaniti. Kaayyoon ijoo qorannoo kanaas, argannoo walabarratti hunda'udhaan amala uumama Mootummaa Gommaa fi haala diigama isaarratti agarsiisuurratti xiyyeeffata. Kayyoo kana galmaan gahuuf ammoo malleen qorannoo armaan gadii hojiirra oolanii jiru. Matad-dureen kun beekumsa buleeyyii kan barbaadu waan ta'eef, toftaaleen iddatteessuu mit-carraafi iyyaafannoo hojiirra oolaniiru. Meeshaaleen funansa raga ammoo af-gaaffii, marii-garee, dawwii dirreefi, yaadannoo dirreefa'iidha. Funaansa ragaalee booda ammoo odeeffannoon hawaasa keessa walitti qabaman keessaa kanneen kayyoo kanaaf bu'a qabeeyyii ta'an, foo'amani sagaleerra gara barreeffamaatti akkasumaammoo gara afaan qorannoon kun ittin qopha'e (Afaan Ingiliziitti) jijjiramanii qaaceffamaniiru. Malleen qaaccessa raga ammoo mala ilaalchaa xabboo (emic)fi mala ilaacha hayyoomaa (ethic)ti. Malli ilaacha xabboo ija (point of view) hawaasatiin ilaalee hiika kan kenne yoo ta'u ijji hayyoomaa ammoo ragaa xabboo sana raga barreeffamaatiin deeggaruuf kan hojiirra ooleedha. Qorannichis, barreeffamoonni tokko taokko Seenawwan barreessitoonni Mootota darbanii (chroniclers) jalli'sani irraa hubannoo dogoggoraa argataniin micciramanii wantoota rakkoo bu'uraa qaban adda adda kaa'uu isaani akeeka. Haala kanaan; kuun isaanii Sirna Mootii Yem irraa ergifatame yoo jedhan, kuun ammoo Sirna Bulchiinsa Gongaa (Inaariyaafi Boshaa) irraa madaqfamuu isaa akeeku. Kuun ammoo Seera Qaalluu irra akka madde ibsa. Kan biraa ammoo carraa seenaa yoota'u, inni dhumaa ammoo dhibbaa tuttuqaa ollaa irra kan ka'ee sirni Abbaa Duulaa danboobaa dhufuu isaafi sirni wal harkaa fuudhiinsa baallii hafuu isaarra akka madde akeeka. Qabxiin inni dhumaa sababa kufaatii sirna mootii gommaa agarsiisa.

Jechoota Ijoo: Goommaa, mala-jireenyaa, Mootomuu, Moonarkii

1 Introduction

Prior to the conquest of Menelik II, Gomma was one of the five Gibe States, which belongs to Mecha Oromoo, whose ethnographic facts were inaptly tracked (Mohammed, 1994; Guluma, 2014; Gemechu and Aneessa, 2019). One of the main reasons was, the domination of the history of will (chronicles) over the history of thought (historiography) in the past ideological journeys of Ethiopia (Abbas, 2014; Gemechu and Aneessa, 2019). Though chronicle is basically one of the most acknowledged historical archive in maintaining cohesive occasions and in many other cases, the hegemonic Abyssinian political influence with clichés of imperial ideology in it, had affected the fair representation of Gomma, Oromoo and some other Southern Ethiopian Nations in their national historiography (Bahiru, 2002; Abbas; 2014; Guluma, 2014). By referring to an Italian Philosopher Benedetto Croce, Gemechu and Aneessa (2019) tries to show the distinction that displays the fundamental strengths and drawbacks of both Chronicles and historiography in their own right as: “History is a living chronicle; chronicle is a dead history; history is contemporary history, the chronicle is past history; history is principally an act of thought; a chronicle is an act of will....” (pp. 156-7).

Gemechu and Aneesa (2019, p. 157) specifically says: “To echo Croce, Oromoo History, is a living history.” This is the concept which might work for the overlooked and/or scanty description made on Gomma statehood. The researcher believed that Oromoo is one of the greatest Ethiopian (Cushitic) nation living in its own land of origin (Tabor, 2006/14). However, chronicles defined this indigenous society in a wrong way. On the bases of the Abyssinian pretended hegemonic assumption “...Menelik wrote the oft-quoted circular of 1891 to reclaiming his ‘historic territory’ in a bid to attain a colonial power along European conquerors.... In a decade that followed, imperial ideologues and official historians [chroniclers in this sense] used it as a base to render ‘strangers’ or ‘outsiders’ Oromoo and other nations and nationalities to the country.” (Abbas, 2014, pp. 60-61). This alienation strategy curtailed the real position of Oromoo Community out of which Gomma Monarchial Administration is one.

As Trimingham (1952) indicates the five monarchies of Gibe namely: Gomma, Jimma, Gerra, Limmu, and Gumma emerged during the second half of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. Whereas Greenfield (1965, p. 44) indicates that it was by 1569 G.C., those who are known to be the Gibe States were settled west of the Gojeb River. Though there is no confusion with numbers of the states, the time length since the formation of the States was made is still a question for this research.

Yet, as details on the time length of the state formations are not the agenda of this study, it is a good idea to leave it to the other historians. However, the issue of fact-finding on the nature of Gomma Statehood is the gist of this study that had demanded an extensive survey. The following portion tries to depict or clarify the biased arguments, which were the fundamental shortcomings of the past studies, on Gomma State formation and ultimately picked the reality out of the comprehensive arguments made at different pieces of literatures and the data. To this end this work has two objectives: (1) Explore the historical nature of Gomma Statehood and (2).Assess the decline of the Gomma Monarchic territory

2. Theoretical Considerations/ Frameworks

Several Scholars, (Asefa, 2010; Tabor, 2006/14; Ezekel, 2014) claim that, the biased Ethiopian History written by Chroniclers, which were promoting the lifestyle of the kings at any junctions of their delegates, lack genuine representation of majority Ethiopian (non-Abyssinian) nations at large. This was specifically indicated by Mohammed H. in his statement that says: “The written information on the early history of Gomma is limited and confused (1994, p. 116). Furthermore, Guluma (2014) and Mohammed (2014) signpost that the post 1920s feudal rule political sabotage made on Gomma in particular and the Gibe State at Large likely imprecise the historical nature of the earlier Gomma Statehood, which had subsequently confused the writers of post 1930s feudal era. This extended its impact on to the issue of the historical significance of Coffee Arabica in the Gibe Region (Tadesse, 2015; Endalkachew, 2014; 2018 (A) and 2018 (B)).

As commented by several scholars, the previously composed history of Gomma manifested many complications. Stocks of such predicaments need the keen attention of this research. To this end, a set of principles that is being used in this work is folkloric theory for the following reasons. Firstly, it was suggested that history and folklore became cooperative disciplines in

enhancing the effectiveness of research works in their Modern era (post 1970s) (Burke, 2004). Second, it is one of the most essential sets of principles to study the folk with late modern written documentation culture. In light of this, Bronner (2007, p. 53) also says: "... folklore is an essential way that cultural knowledge and wisdom is passed down from generation to generation and from peer to peer." Thirdly, it is commended as one of the best means to penetrate into the historic past of a nation and trace out many of the landmarks of communal identity (Bronner, 2007).

This set of principle was subsequently framed in to approach and used as the most preferred concept to track this study. This was made operative as it was proved important "...to relate historical and cultural information about a group, with the presumption that it is also a marker of a particularistic social identity.... For folklore is autobiographical ethnography-i.e., it is a people's own description of themselves... Folklore as a mirror of culture frequently reveals the areas of special concern" (Bronner, 2007, pp. 54-55).

3. Methods and Materials

This study used qualitative research methods. Interviews, focused group discussions, observation and field notes (dairy records) were used as tools for data collection. The selection of target participants in the case of an interview and focused group discussion was made with purposive -snowball sampling technique. Two forms of interviews- unstructured and semi-structured [in-depth] interviews were held with different community members that range from educated government officials to renowned community elders. In the entire field stay, fourteen in-depth interviews, which took an average of one and half hour with each interviewee, were conducted. A relatively short informal interview but essential communication was made with the two scholars at Jimma University. Four focused group discussions were also made at four settings with a collection of six in two destinations, and eight and seven members in the other scenes respectively.

Thirdly, the observation of some strategic corner of the Gomma was also made under the descriptive guide of the well-known elders, experts of the local elites who were native and had a good experience to the area and the gin-bank's experts respectively. The guided observation was used to perceive the environmental facts such as the natural resources composition of the area, protected shrines used as sacred sites of the Gomma Oromoo and the coffee spices of the area. A dairy record on those spots and at any points were taken in to a notebook and concurrently used with other data. Furthermore, a vehicle was used during the guided observation which had made the observation and conversation performance very simple and explicit. Each of the conversations made during the trip was recorded with audiotape. Some videos and photos of some important events and sites were also taken with a tablet camera.

4. Results and Discussion: The Historical Nature of Gomma Statehood

Gomma was one of the five Gibe States that had its own administrative autonomy prior to 1986. This section, henceforth, explores basic points on the historical development or the nature of Gomma Statehood as one of the five Gibe States of *Macha* Oromoo and the situation of its decline. The investigation indicates that, the historical nature of Gomma Oromoo statehood or

Gomma State formation had got five argumentative perspectives. Those are: (1) the historical consociate that relate the State formation of Gomma to the neighboring kingdoms-Sidama [Yem], Gongga (Enaria and Bosha clan), (2) the relation of its kingship to Islamic sentimental attachment and (3) the influence of the indigenous spiritual law (*Seera Qallu*) (4) the historical context of the time and (5) the incessant conflict with the neighbors and the tenacity of Oromoo War Leadership (*Abba Dulla*) respectively. The discussions are made from the less powerful to the more convincing idea. The final portion of it was about the situation of its decline. The details of each feature were described as follows.

4.1 The Influence of the Neighboring Monarchial States (First Argument)

This is one of the major arguments that was ascribed as an influencing experience to the states of Gomma as well as the other Gibe States. Within this section, two parallel ideas were claimed to characterize the Gibe States' formation. Those two points need due attention in this research as they need clarity to support the conceptualizations and judgments of the readers on those characteristics of the state formation.

As Gomma was one of those five Gibe States, the points mentioned in the eyes of the other (Gibe) States or monarchial administrations can mostly reflect the nature of Gomma statehood. To this end, the first argument says the Monarchic system of *Moti* in Gomma territory in particular and the remaining Gibe States at large were adapted from the long fusion of the communities to the former Sidama territory called Yem, which was presently confined as a special Woreda, and assigned to SNNP Region. The second idea states that the Statehood (Non-Gada administration System) of the Gibe Territories was emanated from the influence of Gongga Monarchial System-which was founded or formed by Ennarya and Bosha Clans. The following sob portions respectively give the details on the above-mentioned arguments.

4.1.1 The Influence of Sidama (Yem) Administrative System

According to this argument the monarchic administrative characteristics of the Gibe States were due to the cultural/administrative influence of Yem-the former territory of Sidama Kingdom. As Huntingford (1955, p. 12) says: "The former [Oromoo] monarchies of the Gibe (Referred to as the Gibe States or the Gibe Monarchies) comprising Guma, Gera, Gomma, Limmu-Ennarya and Jimma and the former state of [Yem]." Conferring to the above point, this possible relationship of the Oromoo Monarchies of Gibe area with Yem could enable them to share the experience of a new governance system called the Monarchic system of Yem.

Trimingham (1952, p.199) also tones "Each of the conquering [Oromoo] tribes settled in one of those regions (Gibe) and their rule became territorial. Gradually, as they settled to the agriculture economy, the [Oromoo] fused with the subjected Sidama and both unified in Gada System, whilst the [Oromoo] adapted many of the religious conception and institutions of Sidama." As it was stated in the above statement there is some sort of cultural interactions among the adjacent territories from both [Yem] and Oromoo community which had supposed to influence the administrative system of the Gomma in particular and the other Gibe States at large.

However, the reality shows that there was less socio-cultural interaction between the adjacent Gibe Staes and Yem. The irony is that the people described as Yem had had less spiritual relationship with the Gibe State at the time. As the researcher notes there were weak social interaction between Yem and the Gibe States which was fundamentally resulted from the spiritual differences as almost all of the Oromoo Monarchies of Gibe were Muslims while Majority of the Yem people converted to Christianity to get the protection of Abyssinian Kings from the authority of Muslim Leaders of the territories. According to some contemporary statistical data the religious distribution of Yem is highly dominated by Christianity; when it comes to its distribution pattern more than half (58%) of the total population are Christians, followed by indigenous (Ethnic) Religion which holds about 32% present of the total population. Only 10 % of the population is Muslims. This was likely the succeeded plot of King Serse-Dingel who introduced Christianity and used it as a social disintegration tool between the followers of the two religions (Greenfield, 1965).

4.1.2. The influence of Gonga and Bosha Monarchial System

The second argument used to say that the Gomma state-hood or monarchic State formation (Non-Gada System administration) of the Gibe state in general and Gomma state in particular were emanated from the influence of Gonga Monarchial System-which was founded by Ennarya and Bosha Clans. Scholars, (Trimingham, 1952; Laphiso, 1983/91) tone that, Gomma territory in particular and all of the other Gibe States territorial Administrative system at large were shaped or influenced by the Ennarya and Bosha Dynastic Ruling system. According to the argument of the aforementioned scholars, the State of Gomma was one of the five Gibe States or Monarchies which had given-up the Oromoo Gada Administrative System by submitting themselves to the newly exposed administration culture of Gonga. However, it was not possible to get the supporting evidence from the data of this research.

In their work, Trimingham (1952); Laphiso (1983/91) portray that Gomma had adapted the Gonga Monarchial System (the administrative philosophy of Ennarya and Bosha clan), who were living at the Central-Southern part of Ethiopia. Laphiso's statement says: "... የተወሰኑ የሚጩ ጸሎት ገሳዎች የቀድሞ የእናርያ-በሻ አገሮችን በቁጥጥራቸው ስር በመዋል ... የጊቤ መንግስታት ተብለው በሚታወቁ የሊሙ-ኢናርያ፣ የጎማ፣ የጎማ፣ የጌራና የጂማ ንዑስ ዘውዳዊ ግዛቶች ተደራጁ። (Meaning: Some of the Macha Oromoo Clan occupied the former Enaria-Bosha territories ... and organized in to the States called Gibe States namely: Limmu Ennarya, Gomma, Guma, Gera and Jimma." (Laphiso, 1983/91, p. 252). This may be reasonable as far as the history of Oromoo [re]expansion and movement was concerned. This statement looks a bit better than the above argument. One of its strength is that the people of Ennaria and Bosha had a very good spiritual and social relationship as compared to that of Yem. Similarly Oromoo of the Gibe State used to call the people of Bosha in their own term 'Garo' and Ennarya (Trimingham, 1952; and Huntingford, 1955).

However, when one can see the historical data this had also appeared to be weak as compared to the next arguments as there is a contradicting argument which was appearing in this work. Trimingham (1952, p.199) also indicates "...those who came up against the Sidama Kingdom of Bosha and Enarya called Garo by [Oromoo] of upper Gibie were transformed both in social

and religion.” This indicates that the smooth social interaction between Enariya and Bosha, and Oromoo of the Gibe state) had shown strong social and religious bonds which had still a strong positive impact on the contemporary strong relationships among the people.

Nonetheless, the researcher found that this argument is less convincing. The weakness of it emanates from the following realities. One, they used to describe Oromoo as the ‘new arrivals/invaders’. If that was the case, it was normal that in many other parts of the world, the new surrogates who are claimed powerful are always seen lending their own culture and identity by demolishing or eroding the other’s indigenous culture. Nonetheless, one of the basic suggestions of Laphiso’s work might seem to lack the above reality. The forthcoming statement is one of the arguments that might pose a query to the arguments of Trimingham (1952) and Laphiso (1983/91). Laphiso says: “በመሀል ምዕራብ ጠንካራ የእናርያና የበሻ ዘውዳዊ ሥርዓትና የፖለቲካ መዋቅር በነበረበት በጊዜ - ደዴሳ አከባቢ የሰፈሩ የሜጫ እርዎ ጎሳዎች ከጥንታዊው የጎዳ ሥርዓት ወጥተው የጎንጋ ዘውዳዊ ፊውዳሊዝም ሥርዓት ያዙ። (Meaning: The Mecha Oromoo who settled along the Dedessa-Gibe area at Western Central-where there was a strong Enaria and Bosha Monarchic Rule was existed, withdrew from their Indigenous Gada System and adapted or held the Feudal Monarchic Rule of Gongga”) (Lapiso, 1983/91, p.252).

On the other hand, Virginia Luting (1965) quoted in Asafa(2015, p. 3) says: “From the mid-sixteenth, to the mid-nineteenth Century the [Oromoo] were dominant on their own territories, no people of other cultures were in a position to exercise compulsion over them”. Greenfield (1965, p. 44) also states that, in their [re]expansion from 1522-1569, the Oromoo community who skirted along the two powerful local rulers of Kaffa and [Yem] were remained safe, but a rival Abyssinian King called Serse-dingel who sway for the time being did not extend his challenge though he had managed to introduce Christianity that ultimately broaden the rift of the unification between Oromoo and the two kingdoms- Kaffa and Yem. This indicates Emperor Serse-dengel was not successful in attacking the Oromoo people of the area but effective in separating the spiritual unity of these neighboring territories. Therefore, the nature of the Gibe States formation, which had not been diffused with the Abyssinian culture-Gomma for example, had manifested little or no influence of the other cultures. The Oral history from the elders also confirm that the state formation of Gomma Oromoo remained organic since the invention of Besha Abboye, the Abyssinian Warrior that had been sent by Menelik II to invade the inhabitants who occupied a huge territory from Nonno (the Southern rim of Southwest Shewa) to Maji.

Hence, facts from the observable socio-cultural behavior of the Oromoo community as well as from the above stated historical accounts confirm that the sustained monarchic or state formation of Gomma was not due to the influence of the culture of the other neighboring monarchies of Gongga and Bosha. Rather, the condition (the obscured problem of peace and stability) of/at the time urged the need for the protection of the temporarily occupied territory was supposed to be the cause/reason for the presence of or the establishment of the new monarchic like governance/administrative/ system in Gomma.

4.2. The Influence of Islamic Administration System

The second major point that claimed as the source of Gomma Administrative structure was the Islamic Administration System. Nonetheless one of the difficult parts in justifying it was lack of ample historical document. As Mahammed (1994), states, the limited written archives on the Gibe States lead to the scanty of written historical evidence about the state of Gomma. However, some literature state that the spiritual and trade relationship among Gibe State Territories and the other Muslim States were some of the possible causes for the (re)formation of the monarchic rule system in Gomma.

Mohammed (1994), suggests that, the administrative system of Gomma State was likely adapted from Islamic/Muslim tradition. However, he further portrays that the limited or scanty written information on the early history of Gomma Statehood had even led to confusion. As a result of this, some people who wrote with experience of Islamic religion used to relate the well-established history of the people used to write about the indigenous state formation of Gomma by framing it to abroad. For example, Beckingham and Huntingford (1954) suggest that the foundation of Gomma is related to a miracle-worker whose name was called Nur-Husain or Wariko, a person that was supposed to come from Mogadishu. Though he has a different idea with that of Beckingham and Huntingford, Mohammed (1994) also explains that the tradition around Nur-Husain was reflecting the fact that Gomma was the first state in the Gibe region that became the follower of the Islamic Religion.

Basically, Islam befitted the religion of almost the whole people of the contemporary State of Gomma. This shows not only the straight conversion of the people of the area to Muslims but also indicates as Trimmingham (1952) states, Gomma was the first of the Gibe Kingdoms to convert to Muslims. However, nothing was indicating that the Gibe State Administration System was adapted from the Islamic governance structure.

In this case, the trend of Moti (monarchic rule) was supposed to be a trend that likely seemed to be adapted from the Arab World due to the strong trade relationship between the two areas and the diversion of the people to Islam due to what Trimmingham (1952) calls *Qadiryaa* rule. According to some informants, the *Qadiryaa* Rule (locally known as *Seera Qadiryaa*) was a liberal approach used by one famous contemporary spiritual leader (Sheik) who used the wisest non-segregating and/or liberal preaching system that values the purity of any mankind and successfully converted almost all the inhabitants willingly.

However, the contemporary finding shows that it was not the conventional pressure that compelled the people to convert to Islamic religion. It was the liberal or non-conservative ethics of the then time *Qadiryaa* religious leader who highly respected the indigenous religious practice of Oromoo. This wisest approach had given a golden opportunity to attract the people to conventionally join the religion without any detest. This shows the Oromoo of Gomma were not occupied by spiritually orchestrated force, but by the liberal and affective spiritual affiliation. This subsequently resulted in conventional conversion to the Islamic sect that did not contextually/ by the time/ negate or withdraw the people from their indigenous worshipping system which had been still serving as a holly shrine area to '*Waqefata*' non-conservative Orthodox Christians and Muslims.

The odd administrative pattern in Gomma Monarchical Domain which was added to the Islamic spiritual affiliation is likely hint the modest influence of Arab culture perhaps. This logic had to arise from the realities of the Gada system of other Oromoo cultural territories. When and where ever the people were governed by the Gada system, there were no pattern of dynastic power-over-take between the father and his son. Nonetheless, there were no evidence that show a direct link of the administration pattern of the Arab as a result of which it became undistinguishable to the Arab/Islamic Governance System. Hence, the less strict domination of the Islamic religious and governance system enabled the people even to practice their own comprehensive communal religious ritual (*Waqeffannaa*) which was/is more sensitive and contradictory than anything else, leave alone the governance system.

The above details merely show the effective pervasiveness of Islamic religion which was due to peaceful interaction between the people and the spiritual teacher whilst there was less administrative system influence on to the area. In this regard, it is good to consider the words of Cerulli which was quoted in Trimingham (1952, p.199) which confirms "...the survival of [indigenous] beliefs in the Islamization practiced by those people resulted in giving little evidence in those early time of change of religion." Hence, the structural concurrence of the statehood of Gomma to the Islamic Governance system was not due to the influence of the Islamic crown system rather it was formed due to the need of the territorial protection that consequently empowered one wing of Gada- structure called *Abba Dulla*, which ultimately established a similarity with the Islamic administrative tradition.

4. 3. The Influence of Indigenous Spiritual Law (*Seera Qaallu*)

In Oromoo Worldview '*Qallu*' is the carrier of the Sacred (Holy) Spirit. According to the Oromoo Religion and Belief System, *Qallu* is a lucky being who received the spiritual force of God and fairly guide and lead the people with the supervision of that Spirit (of God). Therefore, the Rule of *Qallu* had served the community by representing *Abba Gada*.

As Eshete (2008) reveals, *Qallu* Institution is the ritual institution which provides a system of moral codes and rules that characterize spiritual values. The Oral history from the elders (*Abba Garo Abba Garo and et.al*) also indicates the wellbeing of Gomma State, at the early formation of it, was guided by the rule of prophet (*Seera Qaalluu*). The *Qallu* Institution has a similar characteristics with *Moti* System as it couldn't involve an eight-year ritual of peaceful and democratic power transfer. As indicated by oral sources, one of the unique characteristics of Gomma State structure was its foundation made by a well-known *Qallu* called, '*Uwallani*' (*Abba Dikko*). The finding further shows, before the establishment of Gada System, five indigenous prophets (*Qalluwwan*) became the consecutive leaders of Gomma State; out of the total fourteen governors of the State prior to feudal annexation, the former five leaders were organized under the systemic value of *Qallu* Institutions which were used to maintain the wellbeing of the community and the monarchical domain.

The five prominent *Qalluu* Leaders/Figures of Gomma State were: *Allayyo*, *Caree (Charie)*, *Waaruu*, *Waarukko* and *Abba Bookee*. According to the findings from interview and FGD, *Abba Bookee* was the transformative *Qalluu* (Prophet) Leader who started establishing the base for the subsequent Gada System in Gomma State territory. This concedes the contemporary

reality of the community of the area as the accommodative nature of Gada System was remained to serve as a comprehensive bond for Muslims, Christians and *Waaqeffata* (Indigenous religious followers).

Thus, the other secret but not noticed in the case of Gomma State formation was the characters of the leaders in the area in its early stage. According to the Oral Sources of the elders, the area was first established by '*Uwallani*', a person who has such a Spiritual Grace called *Ayyana*. In the Oromoo Worldview the title of *Moti* (*moticha*) not only given to kings but also meant for the hauler of the Sacred Spirit which is known as *Ayyana* or *Awulia*. The Spiritual leaders who used to serve with such grace of God are also labeled as *Moti*. Therefore, the pattern that had rendered the similarity to the Moti System was the *Qallu* Institution that had been stayed for long like the inherited governance system of kings. This made it odd to the pattern of Oromoo Gada System Governance.

4.4. The Ancient Historical Experience of Governance in Oromoo

A. Moti-Qallu-Abba Gadaa: The fourth argument asserts that the nature of Gomma Statehood or administrative structure was chiefly emanated from Oromoo Indigenous system of self. In many case, Gada System was presumed as the sole Governance System of Oromoo. However, there were certain historical spots that could show the existence of '*Moti*' System '*Qallu*' Institution prior to Gada System and Gada System itself. This remembers anyone about the facts on the folk-narratives of Borena Oromoo. While indicating the eldership of '*Moti*' to '*Qallu*' and Gada System, Tadesse Barisso (on his presentation of a year anniversary of Gada's record as World's intangible heritage by UNESCO) (2016) used to pretense the following narratives:

Money years ago, Oromo used King (*Moti*) administrative System which involves the male and female *Moties*. But once up on a time, the *Moti* System become more difficult. This was found to be more difficult to the fancy or mindset of Oromo indigenous social mores of humanity. Then, elders used to pray to their *Waq* (God). Consequently, *Waq* heard their prayer and sent them the *Qallu* (prophet), *Kallacha* (A sacred symbol of judge truth), *Ruffa* (mark of grace) and some other sacred materials. While stabilizing the community the *Qallu* was given the wisdom to select the Wise man from the Elder Clan and anointed the *Abba Gada* and passed over the message of *Waq* to the first *Abba Gada*. Then, the *Gada System* became a highly Democratic Governance System of Oromo.

This implied that, though there were no evidence tracked on its beginning of governance with *Moti* or Queen (*Motiti like Akko Manoye*), the administrative system of Gomma seemed to share the early trend revealed in the above narrative. Even if the certainty of the conversion of Gomma Oromoo to Islam was/is convincing, the lately emerged religious outlook did not seem to affect the earlier administrative systems of the state of Gomma. It had rather shared the real transformation of the administrative system of Oromoo i.e. from *Qallu* Institution to *Gada System*. The rule of prophet (*Seera qaalluu*) was the law that not only assumed the role of *Qallu* but also the role of Leader (*Moti*). In this case, out of the total fourteen governors of the State, before the feudal invasion, the former five leaders were organized under the systemic value of *Qallu* institutions which were followed by the nine *Sami-Gada* leaders. In this case the establishment of *Gada General Assembly Center* at *Odaa Hulle* (Between 1730-1938) in the era

of *Robale Gada* (Jireen, 2009/17, p. 5), as the comprehensive epicenter of the Five Gibe States (*Shanan Gibe*) prior to the Feudal invasion was one of the evidence in this regard.

It is likely due to this unique wisdom of the community in a way that they were able to create their leader of unique nature as well as prayer life-style. This unique context had supposed to create a unique mindset by which people of Gomma Monarchical Domain-both Muslims and Christians still used to pray in non-Muslim and non-Christian wholly shrines which were established by the leaders (*Moti/wayyuu/hayyuu*) of a time. This shows there were some indigenous elements of Oromoo leadership and spiritual (*Waqeffanna*) practices existed in the community. Some of the enduring signs of such practices are still observed by standing the conformist ideologies of both Christian and Islamic religions. This consequently enabled the presence of persistent social solidarity, love, and understanding among the community that was not influenced by any social and religious differences.

B. The Contextually reformed form of governance System: in its early stage there were a two entities which manifest a sort of cultural repeal to each other. Those are the leadership of Qallu which was dependent on hereditary and spiritual manifestation. The second was the Gada System of Governance which was non hereditary and non-spiritual in its trend of power transfer. The dual influence from both sides had eventually produced a new leadership system.

The oral history from the elders further ensures that, as the state had established its Gada system, those *Qalluu* were consequently replaced by hereditary kingship (*Moti*) non Qallu figures. Many of the abovementioned realities were also described in different literatures. For example, Mahammed (1994) states that the first King of Gomma was Abba Boke. However, Beckingham and Huntingford (1954) state his son, Abba Manno, had the honor of kingship. This shows the transition of leadership was made from *Qallu* to *Moti*. Then, Abba Boke had gained control over all of Gomma territories. Abba Manno was later able to annex the missing territory of the state during his reign (c. 1820 - 1840), and promoted Islam by patronizing Muslim religious teachers, as well as enhancing the activities of the Qadiryia order (Trimingham, 1952). The information from Informants (Abba Garo Abba Garo and his colleagues) also argued that Aba Boke was the fifth and the last *Qallu* leader, but his regime was supposed to be the transitional period between the leave of *Qallu* institution leadership and the establishment of Gada system Leadership. Such a system was finally labeled as the Leadership of Moti. After the foundation of Gada-led *Moti* System and before the invention of Menelik II, Gomma was governed by nine locally emerged kings (*Motota*). Those kings were 1. Abba Manno, 2. Abba Reebuu, 3. Abba Raagoo, 4. Abba Jifaar (of Gomma, the Namesake of Abbaa Jifar of Jimma), 5. Abbaa Gomol, 6 Abba Qerep'e (Qerephee in Afaan Oromoo), 7. Abba Dulla the Son of Abbaa Qerep'e, 8. Abbaa Boogiboo and 9. Abba Raagoo II. The egalitarian values'ethos of Gada that had completely established by Gada System was an odd tradition even in the custody era of Abba Jifar II since 1932 (Guluma, 2014). Its originality was also a live evidence revealed in the nominations of different official positions with their own local names "... such as *Abba Mizan* (minister of trade), *Abba Dula* (war leader), *Abba Kella* (father of the gate and defense), and *Abba Koro* (province governor), and *Abba Fugno* (father of cord or village head)... *Abba gandas* (village administrators) (Dagim, 2017, 295).

C. The Warm Pledge of Gomma with Kaffa: The other element that shows the prevalence of Gada System in the area at the time was the presence of Oromoo indigenous *gudifacha* (adoption) system. The discovery also shows that *gudifacha* (adoption- one of the Oromoo egalitarian socialization). It was one of the keynote incidents that had created a suitable kingdom of Gomma by which 12 progenies of Kaffa were rendered not only Oromoo family-hood but also honored all required privileges of ownership of land and other resources in Gomma Monarchial Domain. This had, in turn, created a strong bond of oneness among the people. As it accommodated the new community a leader with good experience from the majority (Gomma State) pursued its collective leadership system

However, the feudal cultural imperialism and the unconsciously appeared social class formation in the name of a feudal lord (*gofta*) and slave (*garba*) social class(ification) that had overtaken the philosophy of Gada System ultimately transformed the liberal thinking of Gomma Oromoo to the acute divide, social stratification, and alienation. The emerged social stratification had systematically hosted systematic segregation between/among the people. Bahiru (1991, p. 18) and Eshete (2010, p. 54) say the emergence of feudal acculturation facilitated the way for cultural imperialism of the conquerors when the *Moti* and other members of the system (*Abba Lafaa* and *Qoro*) emerged as powerful forces to serve the interests of the feudal conquerors and began attacking Gada democratic structure of collectivism or egalitarian ethos in favor of a totalitarian culture of Abyssinian empire builders.

a. The Incessant Conflict with Neighbors and the Tenacity of Abba Dulla

As stated by some elders and scholarly works the resilient Gada administrative system of the Gibe States was affected by the rival attempt of assault from the neighboring territories. As the level of consciousness, confidence, honor and sense of competition emerged among the neighboring territories the peace and stability of the Gibe States across the border kingdoms became a very furious temptation of Gomma and the other Gibe States.

One of the most considerable strengths of Oromoo Gada System was/is its strategy of territorial and cultural protection. When, Abba Gada (the owner of Power) had completed his governance timespan, one of the basic successes that had been promoted in a commemoration anniversary called '*Dachi*' was/is, his achievement in maintaining territorial uprightness and stability. According to Danald Levine in his article entitled "Oromoo Narratives" appreciate that '*Dachi*' system was one of the ideological-sharing scene that had protected the Oromoo Pride while it had born a challenge to the other invaders like Abba Bahrey. This '*Dachi*' system, Oromoo Folk custom of decree at the assemblage of Gada power transfer (*Gumi Gaayyoo*), was one of the binding decisions with hidden or clandestine legacy at the far back that is being used to block any cultural as well as physical interference from anywhere; but it was not yet realized explicitly in many of the historical explanations. Due to this communal philosophy, the Oromoo of the Gomma were also used such a system to maintain their peace and stability by strengthening their defensive structure.

As any interference from any external bodies were sensed at anywhere, the military wing of Gada structure known as Abba Dulla were empowered to block any danger of domination. Such external push also affected the peace and security of the area. Consequently, the revival of the

monarchic system in the Gibe region was emerged out of the insistent conflict between the Gibe Oromoos and the neighboring territories of Kaffa and Yem and others. The spiritual alienation made by King Serse-Dengel between Oromoo and non-Oromoo –namely Kaffa and Yem was supposed to be effective in sparking fire of conflict between/among them. The strong friction arisen from such socio-ideological difference demanded the strong leader of the defensive body for Oromoo which was locally called Abba Dulla. This was a long phenomenon among Oromoo community.

Moreover, this had also not only significant to defend the neighboring community but also the European explorers who come to exploit the resource of Ethiopians as well as the Other African Countries. The two giant scholars, Gemechu Megersa and Annisa Qassem had the following to say:

The Arrival in the late fifteenth century of our era, of Portuguese prospectors for gold, ivory, and slaves and their strategic economic and religious alliance with local Abyssinian rulers against the Oromo and Somali and their allies brought about a major disruption of this trading network in the sixteenth century. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, monarchies began to be created by the former military leaders (Abbaa Duulaa) in the northern and western part of Oromia to take control of the lucrative commerce generated along with the internal and externally linked market centers and trade routes. The earlier separation of the Mecha Moiety from the Tulama one and its move into western Ethiopia may have been motivated by the same factor ...”. (Gemechu and Anessa, 2019, pp. 78-79)

Therefore, the formation of monarchic like administrative structure of Gomma and other Gibe States, which were slightly different form of administration system, was not an adapted form of the neighboring territories. Rather it was due to persistent conflict or war that could be the cause of the corresponding administrative formation. This can vividly indicate some of the possible trends of Gomma Monarchic like administrative formations was abruptly set in the challenging situations of the time.

As drawn by considerable numbers of scholars, the point that says the Gibe Monarchic State formation was by the influence of the neighboring community, might poles apart from the objective reality of Oromoo folk-life (Mohammed, 1984; Asmerom, 1973& 2000; Makuria, 1996; Bahiru, 2002). Unlike other societies, Oromoo did not be influenced by any religion, leave alone politics. As Cerulli cited in Trimingham (1952, p. 199) says “The straight diffusion of Islamic culture and the survival of [indigenous] beliefs in Islam practiced by these people resulted in giving little evidence in those times of change of religion.”

Though he used it differently, Bahiru (2002) had the following. In his words he portrays: “...in the course of their [movement] and settlement also tended to strengthen the power of the *Abba Dulla* (the War leader in the *Gada* System) at the expense of the *Abba Bokku* (the traditional titular [supposed] head of the Oromoo Community). The evolution of the monarchial power was in two regions. The first was in the area of Gibe River, hence the name ‘Gibe Monarchies’.”

This is supposed to be real as a result of the following reasons. One, as Asafa T. (2015, P. 415) indicates “From 1554-1562, during the *Michille Gada [Bara Gadaa Michillee]*, the Oromoo

occupation of the Gibe Region began, by the time when they moved from... Bali and now remained in the new territories occupied.” However, the strong resistance from all neighboring territories, the power of Abba Gada was posed and the *Abba Dulla* used to hold a stronger position (Bahiru, 2002).

This shows the slight deviation of power transfer from Gada System to the other form of power occupation was happened due to the contextual importance of having a strong military command to challenge or withstand the challenges of the rivals that were from the neighboring territories. This had consequently lent a contextual opportunity to *Abba Dula* (War Leaders) to be a fully empowered leader to maintain the statuesque of the Communal strength in the presence of war from the neighboring territories and any externals.

In a nut shell, the illusive argument that says “the State formation of Gibie were influenced by the Yem or Gongga monarchic seems to lack a strong base, Similarly, the second argument claims that the trend of state formation of the territory was influenced by Islamic Religion. Nonetheless, the second argument is also less convincing than the third one. The third, fourth and the final points namely: the existed historical context the law of *Qallu* and the tenacity of military power are supposed to be the strongest or said to be more binding than that of the other points.

4.6. The Decline of Gomma Statehood

The Specific nature of the imperial administration was determined by a number factors such as the level of initial resistance, the economic and political condition of the territory, the location of the province and the strategic interest of the empire. (Guluma, 2014, p. 93)

Before the near-term of the external colonial political, religious and social influence, Oromoo had a strong egalitarian and republican system of socio-political organization (Bahiru, 2002). This was also common to Gomma State, which enabled the contemporary inhabitants of the territory democrat and uncensored. These mores were highly revived as a result of the existed egalitarian structure of the Oromoo democratic structure which was/is called Gada System. Nonetheless, out of the main causes stated in Guluma (2014, p. 93) Gomma was oppressed for three main reasons. Those are the initial resistance or confrontation, economic and political conditions.

The study indicates that Menelik II used to invade Oromoo land from Nonno, (the intersection point which lies Southwest of Shewa, Southeast of East Wollega and North and northeast of Jimma) to Maji, (the present-day SNNPR) mainly for political interest which was narrated as ‘unification’. Some scholars used to describe such approach as polarization. Hence, while some natives who were made loyal to the imperialism sentiment were assimilated and accepted imperial ideology of polarization, they were favored and rose to participate in the imperial system whilst the other resistant group were highly intimidated and subjected to slavery. Those who wisely admitted the Abyssinian colonial order were relatively saved and systematically empowered to stand against their neighboring clan territories. Abba Jifar II, the well-known King of Jimma, one of the Gibe States Territories, was benefited from it as a result of to his

peaceful approach to the Feudal System. In the light of this Guluma in his work on JSTOR, Northeast African Studies (ISSN 0740-9133) Vol. 9, No. 3 (2014, p. 53) says:

Because he submitted peacefully, Abba Jifar II of Jimma was able to negotiate with Menelik II and receive autonomous status for his kingdom. The details of the agreement between Menelik and Abba Jifar II are not fully documented, but it is widely believed that Abba Jifar II was allowed to rule his kingdom in return for loyalty and regulate the regular payment of fixed annual tributes from the rest of Gibe States or monarchies who remained resistant to the contemporary ideological transformation and subsequently crumbled forcefully.

As it had been observed from the data, while the state of Jimma remained safe due to the submission of the King of the day (Abba Jifar II), Gomma was one of the five Gibe States which became the victim of Menelik II surmount. The Other written archives also show that in 1886, Gomma was conquered by Besha Abue, who defeated the Gomma State on behalf of Emperor Menelik II. Guluma (2014) further states that, in 1887, due to his established loyalty, Abba Jifar II was given custody of the territories of the deposed leaders such as Limmu, Gera, and Gomma while Menelik II campaigned in Gondar which had given an amicable relationship between Abba Jifar II and Menelik II during their effective supremacy from both sides. This shows that the divide and rule policy of the Menelik II regime was the unfortunate era for the State of Gomma.

This shows the case of Gomma had no difference from the real incident happened at the other Oromoo cultural territories who attempted to confront. In this case, it is good to refer to Mohammed H., (2014). He further portrays: "... Menelik's unbridled ambition to 'exploit the green and lush Oromoo Land and their boundless commodities (gold, civet, ivory and coffee) and their prosperous market' was the primary motive for his empire-building venture, which resulted in the one-sided mass killings of Oromoo." (Mohammed, 2014,p.188). Gomma was one of the Gibe territories, where the basic intention of exploitation of the feudal rule was successfully attained.

As a whole, the secret of the decline of the political autonomy of Gomma was taken off by Basha Aboye in 1886 and given as custody to Abba Jifar II in 1887. However, the total political and identity deconstruction of Gomma was buried deep after the death of Abba Jifar II in 1932. Their being under the custody of Abba Jifar II was somehow extended their spare of freedom until the end of Jimma's autonomy when Haile-Selassie I destroyed Jimma's Autonomy in 1932 (Guluma, 2014). As Guluma (2014) further describes: "Haile Selassie's decision to end Jimma's autonomy in 1932 was part of a long term effort to control the coffee wealth of the kingdom.... In 1926, Charles H. Bentinck, British Minister in Addis Ababa, reported that Tafari's intention to build a road to Jimma was to tap 'the rich coffee plantation near to Jimma and eventually extend the road and railway to Gambella.'" (Pp.103-104). One of those rich coffee plantation-that was/is found near to Jimma, which was claimed as the origin and the initial homeland of coffee Arabica, was/is Gomma. This was clear that Aggaro, the present-day Capital of Gomma district was highly promoted as a high Coffee market center by Warji Oromoo Merchants since 1918 G.C.

5. Conclusion And Recommendation

5.1. Conclusion

Five basic arguments were claimed to determine the state formation or the monarchic characteristics of Gomma. The first basic argument says the state formation of Gomma was influenced by either of the two neighboring monarchic territories. One of those is the Sidama [Yem] monarchial system while the other version used to take it to the Gongga monarchic system. Nonetheless, there were little evidence that had shown the influence of any of those monarchies.

The other argument also used to relate the characteristics of Gomma monarchic structure to the Arabic Emirate System as it was likely introduced with the Islamic Religion. However, some of the historical facts only show that Gomma was the first monarchic territory which was totally converted to Islamic Religion due to the Liberal approach of *Qadiry* Rule. However, as a result of the scanty/nope political influence, the comprehensive footprint of Oromoo Indigenous Religion had been sustained- by which Muslims, Christians and *Waqeffatas* were able to have a conjoint Holy shrine that enable them to warship together.

The third basic argument that was claimed to influence the Gomma State administrative system was the Law of *Qallu* (*Seera Qaalluu*). Unlike the Gada System the *Qallu* Leadership shows a sort of similarity with that of the polarized hierarchical structure of Kingship as it was sustainable for long to the decease of the hauler (figure) once it was/is introduced.

The fourth basic argument associates the state formation of Gomma to the ancient historical experience of governance in Oromoo. This implies that, the administrative system of Gomma was originated from the authentic situation or development of ancient Oromoo leadership organization: *Moti-Qallu-Gada* System. This means, *Moti* system was also one of the earliest tradition of Oromoo Governance system that had to be contextually applied in the case of Gomma. As compared to the above two, this was relatively acceptable as there were worthwhile data that had shown the administrative formation was locally originated from the folk knowledge of the owner of the territories.

The last and the most important influential factor that had determined the nature of Gomma Statehood was the persistent conflict with the neighbors and the tenacity of *Abba Dulla*. The finding shows that the need for the territorial defense used to enhance the sustainability of the local defense force leader known as *Abba Dulla*. This is to mean that the contemporary sustainable tension had empowered the *Abba Dulla* to maintain both the authority of military and monarchial administration.

As a whole, some say that the *Moti* tradition in the five Gibe states had very odd characteristics to the Oromoo. However, as to the understanding of this research, the *Moti* System of the Gibe State was not adapted from anywhere. In its original connotation to which *Moti* is given to a creature from any kind like: a plant which is the biggest and/or tallest of all, any animal species which win all of its offspring other species and a man or woman who had a supreme quality to lead the society with good faith. Furthermore, the title of *Moti* is also given to the hauler or the owner of Spirit (*Ayyana*) to signify someone who is uniquely selected for the graceful gift of

God. In this case, it is likely sound to consider the historic founder of Gomma state-a well-known *Abba Ayyana/Qallu/* (Owner of *Ayyana/Spirit*) *Uwallani*. From that day onwards the term 'Moti' was used among all the Gibe Monarchic territories to express respect, holiness, love, and special consideration.

The last point that was discovered in this paper was the decline of Gomma Statehood. To this end, three reasons were identified as the main cause of the decline of Gomma Sate. The first reason was their earlier resistance to the invention of Menelik II. The second basic causes was economic reason which was related to tributes and extracting of precious indigenous resources by the king as well as other new settlers which had indirectly weakened the indigenous structure by assimilation and cultural diffusion, The third is political which consequently ended up with the introduction of the new hegemonic Ideology of Abyssinians.

5.2. Recommendation

As stated by different scholarly works, the time of State formation of Gomma was filled with high ranges of controversies. While Tabor put it in to 13th century, Greenfield (1965) took it to 1569 G.C., whilst Trimingham (1952) describes as it was formed between second half of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. The researcher calls up on the other scholars to give their attentions to feel this gap.

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