

THE SOCIO-CULTURAL ASPECTS OF COFFEE PRODUCTION IN SOUTHWESTERN ETHIOPIA: AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT: *This paper primarily focuses on the socio-cultural aspects of coffee production in Southwestern Ethiopia. The paper deals with the general review of coffee origin, expansion, its socio-cultural role and it assesses the life of coffee growers. Even though there are works that done on coffee, most of them are focus on the economic and agricultural aspects of coffee production and marketing. The attention given for the socio-cultural aspect is very little. Therefore, this work tries to fill this gap that left by other written materials so far and contributes something in enriching the Socio- Cultural role of Coffee. The paper deals with the general views of the origin and distribution of coffee, its production and the socio-cultural contributions of coffee for local people of the region and to the country as a whole. For the historical root of coffee and its discovery, there is no clear direction. Still it is a controversial one among different scholars. In southwestern part there are many local areas are considered as origin of coffee. The former Ennarya region of Limmu Awraja of Gomma district of Coccee Guddaa kebele at a site called 'katta muuduu ga'a' is said to be the historical root of coffee Arabica. For the expansion of coffee Arabica there are different arguments. It is believed that it was during the Oromo expansion of the 16th century that coffee spreading out in Ethiopia regions. Later, it was probably long distance Oromo merchants of the 19th century who disseminated the plant. It is also believed that coffee spread to the rest of the world from these local areas by Arab merchants and the European colonizers first saw the plant and spread to other parts of the globe. When and How first human beings domesticated coffee plant is also another controversial issue among scholars. Different scholars attached the issue to different ethnic groups. It was around 10th century A.D that coffee ball was first practiced by Oromo people and used for journeys. Art of making coffee is a central element of socio-cultural practices of many societies. When many researchers forget the role of coffee ritual practice and few individuals are attempted to study the issue. The coffee ceremony is an opportunity for social networking and sometimes called as school of socialization. It is during this occasion that elders pass the norms and values of the society (Safuu) such as proverbs, stories, as well as thoughts and customs of the community to the children. Coffee used during different ritual practices such as child birth, birth of a calf, sacrifice for the spirit of a dead, ateetee ritual, moggaasa and baallii (Taking and Giving power of Gadaa). It also serves as agents of Ethnic interaction in coffee producing areas. Many communities migrated from their homeland to coffee producing areas annually. But pushing factors are not well studied. Additionally, the impact of coffee production on coffee farmers and the benefit they obtained from coffee production is not received enough attention. They work day and night but obtained little.*

KEYWORDS: Coffee, Coccee, Awraja, Safuu, Production, Farmers, Buna Qalaa, District

INTRODUCTION

Ethiopia is the primary center of genetic diversity and the top coffee growing countries in the world. Coffee Arabica is the reward of nature to Ethiopian and Ethiopia in its turn to the world.

There are four types of coffee production systems in Ethiopia. These are: garden coffee, forest coffee, semi-forest coffee and plantation coffee farms [1]. As confirmed by many writers, garden coffee was mainly found in the southwestern, southern and eastern parts of the country especially Sidamo, Gedeo, South and North Omo, Hararghe, Wollaga and Gurage Zones [2]. The next type of coffee farm is known as forest coffee. It grows in the forest of the west, southwest and southeastern Ethiopia. These coffee farms are mainly found in Bale, Jimma, Illubabor and Qellam Wollaga areas [3]. Semi-forest coffee is partly cultivated by human intervention of forest coffee in manipulating through reduction of over growth of trees, removal of unnecessary vegetation and planting of empty spaces by transplanting naturally regenerated seedlings. This type of coffee farm is / was found in Illubabor, Jimma, Kaffa, Bench-Maji and West Wollaga zones. Semi-forest coffee production system is mostly found in the southern and southwestern parts of the country. it is / was also specific to Ethiopia [4].

Another coffee farm was / is plantation or modern coffee farms. Plantation coffee system involved, coffee cultivated after land clearing and systematic soil and seedling preparation for planting. In this production system, agronomic practices like improved seedlings, spacing, proper mulching, manuring, weeding, shade regulation and pruning would be practiced. These farms have been distributed into seven different state farms in Limmu, Tepi and Bebeke areas [5]. The major coffee producing regions in southwest Ethiopia are Illubabor, Kaffa, Jimma, Wollaga, and parts of Benchi Maji zone [6]. Western and southwestern Ethiopia coffee type's are/were mainly, Lekemte and Jimma sun dried coffee, Limmu, Tepi and Bebeke washed Coffee are the main exportable coffee [7]. However, the change and continuities of coffee production *Oromo of* in Ethiopia got less attention from scholars. Due to population pressure and land scarcity good quality coffee production such as garden and forest coffee production are now on the way to decline.

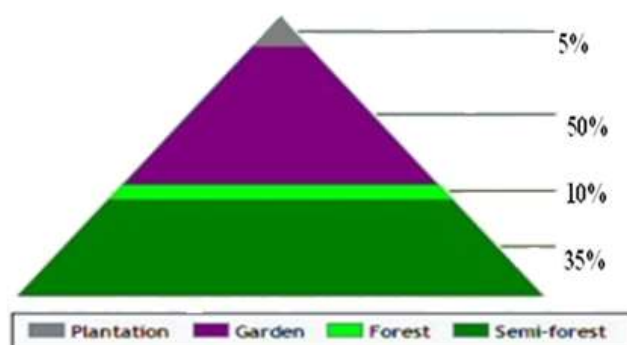


Figure 1: Coffee Cultivation pyramid in Ethiopia

Source: CPDC, 1972, p.47

Conceptual Framework

Historical Root of Coffee *Arabica*

For the historical root of Coffee *Arabica* and its discovery, there is no clear direction. Its exact origin has not yet been received definite historical study. There is general agreement among historians as first coffee was discovered in the forest of southwestern part of Ethiopia. However, locally in southwestern parts are open to scholarly debate. In southwestern part there are many

local areas are considered as origin of coffee. The former Ennarya region of Jimma and LimmuAwraja are said to be the birth place of coffee *Arabica* [8]. There are no satisfactory local sources to show the historical root of coffee *Arabica* in Ennarya regions. However, there are two competing local areas “Mankira of the present Kaffa zone and Coccee of the present Jimma zone”. These areas are part of the former Kaffa *Kiflehager* for a long period of the time and they separated since the past two decades and became part of distinct administrative zones, current Kaffa and Jimma zones, respectively [9].

The first locally oriented source about the origin of coffee is an account that reveals the current Kaffa Zone, South of Gojeb region with its special place “Mankira” in Bunno *kebele* was the birth place of coffee *Arabica* [10]. However, the second locally oriented source is the current Jimma Zone, Gomma district of *Cocce eGuddaa kebele* at a site called ‘*katta muuduu ga’a*’. Even if, contradicting locations are emerged between these two local areas in southwestern part of Ethiopia. Based on scholarly existing evidences, it is a clear that the former Ennarya regions of Limmu *awraja*, the current Jimma Zone, Gomma district of *Coccee Guddaa kebele* at a site called ‘*katta muuduu ga’a*’ was the origin of coffee *Arabica* [11].

Traditional Modes of Coffee Consumption as a food

It is still uncertain when and how coffee came into use as a beverage crop. There is no convincing evidence to explain when human beings first domesticated coffee. Different scholars attached the issue to different ethnic groups. Instead, there are various legends which stated the use of coffee as a beverage. In spite of these legends, different scholars have approved that it was the Oromo people who for the first time used coffee as food crop. The earlier use of coffee as a food, rather than as beverage was started by Oromo people who started using coffee as energy food long before its current popular use as a beverage. The traditional foods from coffee include *coffee ball*, *buna qalaa* and *qori*. Ripe coffee berries collected from wild coffee trees were ground with stone mortars, mixed with butter and formed into small balls. Coffee ball is rich in caffeine, sugar, fat and protein and one can provide energy for one person for a day. Warriors, farmers and merchants engaged in hard work or long journeys used to eat the coffee balls to overcome the problems of hunger and exhaustion. Some historians believe that Sudanese slaves in route to Arabia picked up this custom of chewing coffee and the coffee plant from the Oromo tribe southwestern of Ethiopia and introduced it to Harar and Yemen. For instance, Gutu states that “Around 10th century A.D coffee was chewed by nomadic Ethiopian people called Oromo who combine the ripe berries of coffee with animal fat which they form into round balls that they carry on their journeys for use as a food and stimulant effect”. But, this idea tells us the used as food and they did not begin to use as beverage [12].

Among many travelers, James Bruce, who travelled in Ethiopia, between 1768 and 1775 also reported in the Merid’s work the same thing that “it was the Oromo people who first used coffee as a food from a beans which they mix with butter, which they claimed kept them in strength and sprits during the whole days tiredness, it is better than a leaf of bread or a meal of meat”. They used it during their long journey to help them to survive. Purification in the Oromo traditional religion comes from blessing of *Waaqaa*. It manifests itself in the fertility of human and animals, good harvest, peace and good relations among the society. Furthermore, coffee berries are also one of the important components of Oromo traditional food known as *Qorii/Chukkoo*. *Qorii* is prepared from roasted coffee berries and barley, which is mixed up with spiced butter [13].

Oromo farmers planted coffee trees around their homestead to take pleasure in the presence of *Waaqa* (God) with them. This is/was because the Oromo believe that coffee is/was different from other plants since it produced out of the “tears of *Waaqa*”. The chewing of coffee been among the Oromo people goes back to the ancient times when it was eaten for the energizing need [14]. As it discussed above oral tradition also agree as in the past the Oromo ate food processed from coffee berries. They collected the ripped coffee berries from wild coffee trees, ground them in stone mortars, and mixed the grounded seeds and pulp, with butter from which they formed small balls that they carried for subsistence during their long journeys. It has been reported that, the balls were eaten by warriors, farmers and merchants when faced with hard work or long journey by which they were able to overcome the problems of hunger and tiredness. In the second half of the 18th century, different scholars already noted that the Oromo people lived in Amhara kingdom used to eat roasted coffee powder mixed with butter [15].

It is believed that it was during the Oromo expansion of the 16th century that, the spreading out of coffee tree and coffee drinking habit expanded [16]. But in some areas of our country coffee drinking was not known until the end of the 17th century. Because, before the end of the 17th century the Ethiopian Orthodox Church prohibited Christians from drinking coffee, smoking tobacco and chewing *chat* [17]. Later, coffee is said to have been spread throughout Ethiopian high lands by long distance caravan merchants of the 19th century. It was probably Oromo traders who actually disseminated it to some parts of the north [18].

The Social Occasion of Coffee Ritual

The main purpose of this part is to analyze primary and secondary sources that many scholars give little attention but it plays a pivotal role in indigenous rituals. Indigenous coffee ritual, was/is one of the most respected and colorful social occasion. It gives pleasant atmosphere to get together and discuss about various issues ranging from socio-economic to minor personal issues. As an integral part of social life, coffee is drunk not only for its stimulating effect but also for getting together and good opportunity to having conversations about personal, local, and national issues [19].

Coffee Ceremony

Today, the culture of drinking brewed coffee is deep-rooted and widespread, known almost among all ethnic groups in Ethiopia. It is a social drink, and is normally shared with neighbors. The coffee ceremony involves sorting, washing and roasting the beans, and preparing boiled coffee in a clay pot known as ‘*Jabana*’. Coffee ceremony can also be organized at any time of the day if a guest comes, on mourning, conflict mediation or other social events. The coffee ceremony is considered to be the most important social occasion in many villages and it is a sign of respect and friendship to be invited to a coffee ceremony. Guests at a ceremony may discuss topics such as politics, community and gossip. There are also blessings for ceremony’s performer and praise for the brews she produces. Oromo people have started utilizing of coffee since the ancient times. The art of making coffee is/was a central element in their daily cultural practices[20]. In Oromo tradition, coffee is/was served as a principal part of daily meals. In the morning, it is made with breakfast as *bunaganamaa*, with lunch as *buna guyyaa* and with dinner as *buna galgalaa* every day by rural Oromo society. Rural society takes two to three cups of coffee along with roasted cereal grains known as snacks (*qursii*) every day. They link coffee traditions with traditional medicine, food and beverage. In this society, the coffee ceremony is an opportunity for social networking where elders pass the norms and values of the society (*Safuu*) to the children. It also called as a school of Oromosocialization. It is during this

occasion that the youth are told proverbs, stories, as well as thoughts, customs, and norms of the community [21].

Oromo believe that whenever the coffee ceremony takes place properly, *Waaqacomes* nearer to them and would give them peace and whatever else they need. Coffee ceremony would also serve as a forum to reconcile quarrelling parties. Furthermore, not attending of coffee ceremony by invited neighbor is/was a sign of disrespect and gap between the invited and the inviting. Items needed are may be vary from rural to urban areas and from family to family, it depends on economic capacity of the households[22]. While roasting, coffee emits its aroma and the roasted coffee beans are shaken turning a dark brown and its wonderful smells moved around invited individuals. For instance, roasted coffee is presented to the head of household to smell it, it believed he may face good luck. The roasted coffee are crushed by mortar (*mooyyebunaa*) and small pestle (*ilmoomooyyee*) and coffee powder boiled in the *jabanaa*. The powdered coffee is/was added to boiled water into coffee pot (*jabanaa*)[23].



Figure 2: roasted coffee

Source: [25]

Coffee is finally poured into small coffee cups put on a big tray (*rakabot*) before given to the attendants[24]. Sugar or salt and sometimes milk would be added to the cups based on the availability and interest of the drinker's. Ritually, sometimes after preparation the head of the household would pour the boiled coffee on to the ground. The purpose is said to create peace with the "god" of the earth. While the ceremony takes place, people engage in different conversation by eating snack (*qursii*) such as *qollo*(roasted barley), bread (*dabboo*) and sometimes *injerait* depends on the economy of the family[25].

According to oral tradition, there are three successive names of coffee preparations. These are *Abol*, *Tona* and *Baraka*. *Abo l* is/was an Arabic origin from *awwal* which means "first"; *Tona* was Afan Oromo root means "harmony, good quality"; *Baraka* was Arabic origin means "blessing". They are used to refer to the morning, midday and evening meal[26]. In Oromo tradition, it is up to Oromo mothers, to teach their daughters who to make coffee and undertake the ceremony. Every daughter at the age of making coffee is/was expected to run all of the ceremony independently. If she fails to do so her mother would be blamed for failing to train her daughter upto the expectation of the society. The making of coffee is also one of the main

criteria for selection of girls for marriage [27]. It is the culture of Oromo people to invite a guest, even to a meal saying “would you please drink a cup of coffee”. Almost all inhabitants have made it a custom not to leave their home without drinking coffee. Many believe that not doing so would bring bad luck [28].



Figure 3: Traditional Coffee Ceremony

Source: [28]

Buna Qalaa Rituals

The common coffee meals that have continued to the present time are *buna qalaa* and *Qori*. *Buna qalaa* is prepared from green beans. The green beans are roasted in a pot on fire, and mixed with butter while still on fire. The roasted coffee enriched with butter is served as food. Currently, *Buna qalaa* is served on special occasions like birth of a child, wedding, thanks giving and other events of high cultural significance. *Qori* is prepared from roasted coffee beans and barley, mixed with spiced butter. *Qori* is served as snack, especially during coffee ceremony. According to Oromo oral tradition, the *buna qalaa* (“slaughtering coffee”) preparation appeared approximately during the 17th century [29]. *Buna qalaa* is prepared from green or dried coffee berries, which are washed and opened by the teeth or knife. Opened coffee berries are added and roasted in a pot on fire of earthen stone. The split coffee beans are added to the *waciitii* (a small bowl shaped pot) and then mixed with melted butter. The *buna qalaa* is served from the same vessel and all participants eat together. Having *buna qalaa* from the same *waciitii* is also a reflection of social unity. Oromo traditionally believe that eating from the same dish is an indication of unity (love). One of their sayings says, ‘*kanwaliinnyaatewal-hinnyaatu*,’ which literally means ‘those who ate together, do not harm one another’ [30].

Buna qalaa is/was also important during other ritual practices such as child birth, in celebration for the birth of a calf, sacrifice for the spirit of a dead, *ateete* ritual (female ceremony in which they pray for health and fertility), *moggaasa* (naming newly born baby) and *baalli* (Taking and Giving power of *Gadaa* [31]). *Buna qalaa* has a strong symbolic attachment with women and women’s fertility. Informants said that, “the biting opening of the coffee bean is a symbol of the first sexual intercourse on the wedding day”. Moreover, it is also related with the idea of slaughtering which represents child birth [32]. It is worthy to note that the coffee beans are eaten in the context of prayer and in memory of the tears of *Waaqa* from which the coffee plant sprouted. A request for blessings and the offering of coffee beans to *Waaqa* and *Buna Qalaa* is ritualized. Coffee also symbolizes women [33].

Buna Qalaa designates killing at which blood is shed. A coffee-bean also metaphorically represents a female reproductive organ. The coffee fruits are bitten open and stewed in melted butter. The butter is a symbol of the cow which in turn is a symbol of female fertility. In addition when the berries, in the end, split open they represent childbirth. The opened coffee fruits are added with melted butter to a pot called *Waciitii*. The butter is a product of the cow, which in turn is a symbol of female fertility. The *Waciitii*, which is shaped from several handfuls of clay, symbolizes lineage cohesion[34]. During the ceremony of Ateetee on coffee program, elder participants often recite the prayer: ‘*Ateetee Buna fi nagaanuufkenni*(Ateetee gives us coffee and peace), *Manaa fi ollaannuufcoli*(bless our home and our neighbours) ‘

In addition, the women who are hosting the ceremony often hold up hot *jabanaa* on their palms and pray: ‘*Ateetee Gubaansiif baadhagubaa nu oolchi, Ateetee* (I am carrying hot for you glory, protect us from hot) ,*Guutuusiif dhaabna guutuu nuufgodhi, (We rise full for you make us full) ‘*[35]



Figure 4: *Buna qalaa* ready for eating

Source: [36]

Coffee as the role of Indigenous Medicine

Coffee is also used as a medicine in the Oromo traditional society. Primarily it is used for the treatment of discomfort and illness such as a headache. In this regard, a person suffering from a headache is advised to drink cups of coffee. In case when the traveler encounters any illness they first smell the coffee berries and placing the berries in their nose for the betterment. If this does not bring change the berries are chewed and swallowed. Again roasted and ground coffee is believed to be a medicine that could cure wounds. When a person would wounded, coffee powder would be placed on the wounded part and covered with the leaves of *croton*[37].

In addition to this, roasted coffee powder mixed with honey is also believed to treat a person with diarrhea. Moreover, coffee is viewed as a preventive medicine that protects people from any illness and the smoke produced during roasting is said to kill vectors and eliminate any cause of sickness. Again ground coffee leaves mixed with honey and boiled is believed to purify blood circulation and to cure asthma and to serve as pain killer. The medical benefits of coffee are debatable. If it taken in excess it is believed that, it would cause some problems such as blood pressure, stomach, ulcer, heart failure and problem of addiction. However, recent studies recommend and described beneficial effects of regular coffee drinking such as reduced risk of

diabetes mellitus, Parkinson's disease, hepatic cirrhosis, rectal cancer, suicide, and cardiovascular disease as well as an overall reduced mortality [38].

The Role of Coffee as Agent of Ethnic Interaction

Coffee is a plant that play big role in interacting different ethnic groups during its production and marketing. However, many writers did not give attention to the role of coffee as agent of ethnic interaction and only few scholars studied very shallow attempts toward the issue. From large section of Ethiopia, different people moved from their homeland to major coffee producing areas for different purposes. Many factors might have pushed these people to migrate to this area. For instance, population growth, lack of employment opportunity, poverty, famine, scarcity of land in their home land areas and etc. On the top of these factors, the rapid growing of coffee plantation attracted this community [39].

According to informants some of the seasonal laborers came to the area temporally as seasonal laborers, while others came to settle permanently in the urban and rural areas. Among them, most of the seasonal workers came during coffee picking season to the state farm or local peasants' farms [40]. According to Yonas, these migrants could be categorized into two: long and short distance migrants. Thus, long distance migrants were those who came from northern and central part of Ethiopia at different time[41]. The short distance migrants, particularly from neighboring woredas. Young unmarried men moved to the rural and urban areas of Coffee growing regions for the purpose of getting money for marriage, education and other purposes [42]. It was also during 1960's that the imperial government declared the resettlement scheme and many landless peasants from Showa region came and settled in this areas [43]. It was in the *Derg* era that some Southern peoples began to acquire lands in the villages and settled down. At first, most of them came to the areas as laborers in the state farms, which offered those houses and some small plots of crop fields in the workers' village.They earned some money as salaried laborers on the state farm and finally bought lands in the area from local farmers. Then after, they operated as traders or farmers in the area where they settled.As a result of this, the present day inhabitants most coffee growing areas are made up of diverse ethnic groups [44].

Informants also say, first these populations came to this area as a seasonal laborers from different area to work on coffee during coffee planting and harvesting periods. But later when some of them returned to their homeland and others started to live permanently in this area. Now they made intermarried with the local population and many of them were converted to Islam [45].The growing population and coffee production were socio-economic necessities that created pressure on land use. Furthermore, this massive movement of population caused land scarcity. As a result of population growth, large areas which were once under forest, bush and grazing land are now changed to cultivated land. As the area became over populated, land began to be fragmented and the farmers are obligated to cultivate on hillsides and steep slopes. As a result of this natural and human factors exposed the area to erosion and it has lost its fertility [46].

Coffee Risks Management Strategies

Agriculture, the dominant sector of Ethiopian economy, is mainly characterized by smallholder production system and traditional farming practices. The poor agricultural performance have been the sum total of poor soil fertility, variable climatic conditions, poor infrastructure, environmental degradation and land scarcity. All these have resulted in low crop yield and low

income. Rural societies live with naturally risky environments [47]. Additionally there are some sources of risk for coffee production and marketing. These are climate change and coffee price fluctuation, which have unpredictable impact on output. Price risk is common type of risk, which occurs in agriculture due to time gap between the decision to plant a crop and to harvest it. It is clear that market prices at the point of sale are unknown by the time when production decisions are made [48]. Price and production of coffee on world markets go up and once down. The drop in earnings is particularly harsh for those countries such as Ethiopia where coffee provides a large portion of export revenues [49]. This type of risk is more serious for poor coffee growing farmers where there is a serious information gap and market limitation. It can affect the life of the coffee farmers in many ways their health, their children education, access to food, sanitation, clean water, increased livelihood insecurity and income. Due to shocks, many households sell their assets at low prices and forced to borrow from local money lenders at very high interest rate. Farmers know as coffee production is profitable but it is risky [50].

Drought is the most serious natural hazard to coffee production. Farmers in many study sites identified drought as the most serious shock item that affects coffee production [51]. Many scholars also reported that coffee diseases have been major risk factor for coffee production [52]. There are various risk management strategies. It includes diversifying income source by intercropping, shifting or modifying the environment, selling assets, sharecropping, borrowing money from various sources, uprooting the more risky coffee trees and replacing them by other less risky trees [53]. Intercropping is one of the traditional cropping systems used to diversify and increase crop production per unit area of land. The economic reason behind intercropping is that if one crop fails the other may substitute and the household may compensate the loss at least partially [54]. But it is possible to multiple crops grown with coffee in coffee growing areas side by side with cereals, fruit trees and vegetables as a source of food for small holding farmers on the same plot of land [55]. Therefore, since each crop has different capacity to resist drought, and disease, it is important that coffee diversification program can help the peasant to minimizing risks of depending on coffee as a single cash crop [56].

Another ways of surviving coffee risk is depleting Property what they obtained in good times from coffee sale. They use up these saved resources during shortage of supply for consumption. The plan is after they survive today, they can obtain that property in the future when things improve [57]. If the households unable to absorb shocks by liquidating assets, the next option to manage the situation is to borrow money from rich landlords and merchants [58]. Credit is one means through which farm households survive during income fluctuation due to various shocks. More than half of coffee farmers are borrowed money from various sources to minimize the rate of shocks. Scholars also agree that credit from formal or informal sources is a very important risk reducing method during bad days [59]. Credit can also smooth household income and consumption when crop fails, oxen die, asset is destroyed by fire and income is lost due to a reduction in output price [60]. Inter-household cooperation is one way through which poor farmers get access to community level resources. Under such conditions, agricultural mutual assistance groups are very common risk sharing strategies [61]. It supposed Cooperatives play an effective role in supporting coffee farmers by supplying the price information, providing inputs and capital that small coffee farmer's lack. It also helps coffee farmers to aware proper ways of using their resource and manages risk better. Cooperatives also serve as a strong negotiator than an individual farmer in the international market [62].

Impact of Coffee production on Individual Coffee farmers

The forest of the Gibe region was suitable environment for coffee production [63]. There are many factors which contributed towards the growth of coffee production in these areas. The culture of the Oromo people gives special place to green environment and big trees. This fact is more illustrated by the following quotation. "The dense forest of region coupled with the Oromo religious idea of respect for and honoring of green nature and the practice of not cutting big trees, must have provided an ideal environment for coffee growing [64]."

Moreover, from coffee production in the *areas*, the coffee growers were not benefited as well. Probably it was a good chance for merchants, landlords, government officials and coffee exporters, who bought coffee and land at low price from growers and sell it at high price [65]. In the 1920's there was encouraging circumstances for coffee production and marketing. This was due to the increased coffee price and production in the world market and the study areas got new attention. The consequence of this condition paved the way for shift of coffee farming from small scale farming to large scale commercial farming [66]. Even if, this new coffee production was introduced to these areas, it did not bring better way of life for the peasants of the region. But still peasants faced shortage food and cash during rainy season. As a result, the real cause for the self-insufficiency of peasants of the region may be due to the traditional way of agricultural practices, increasing of coffee production that discouraged food crops production and difficulty of working condition for peasants and reduction of land allocation for food crops [67].

Additionally, in the decades, 1950's and 1960's as coffee plantation extensively expanded, banks were also opened to facilitate coffee plantation. As a result, large amount of fertile farm lands put under coffee cultivation. On the contrary, it caused reduction of land for food crops and the increment of food price. Furthermore, additional laborers were attracted and caused food shortage in the study area [68]. Unlike the imperial regime, the *Derg* government tried to improve the life of peasants. At this time, *Derg* used different mechanisms such as expanding social service facilities, adopting new technology and improving the former peasant coffee plantation. These mechanisms were aimed at improving the life condition of peasants by increasing productivity. Urban areas had brought some changes, for instance, health institutions, modern bus station, modern stadium, kindergarten, some elementary and high schools, public library and some asphalted roads. In spite of the effort of *Derg*, there was still the problem of food shortage, low income from coffee production and marketing, fluctuation of coffee price and production in the world market remained unresolved. Again, the amount of tax imposed on coffee, low quality of coffee, high transportation cost were among problems of the time [69].



Figure 5: Coffee harvesting by hand picking

Source: [70]

In the good coffee harvesting season, coffee farmers and traders enjoyed better living condition in every aspect. Extravagance ceremonies such as weeding, relaxing in towns and some other unnecessary expenditure represented misuse of resources. Similarly, life in towns became better and better. Coffee played the advanced of these towns in many ways. Many hotels, shops, restaurants, bars and others were opened. But, it caused the rise of the price of consumer goods, transportation cost and clothes [70]. There was also clear mismanagement of the cash obtained from the sale of coffee. During the months of February, March, April and May most of the coffee yield was sold to coffee merchants in the nearby markets. Besides, the kind of meals and drinks that they consumed during these months were very much different in quality and quantity from other months [71]. As one of the informants told me during coffee harvesting season, youngsters were/are highly tempted by the decorated towns bars and spent their time with bar ladies, who infected their customers with HIV/AIDS [72].

In the middle of the rainy season was a period when the previously harvested crops were exhausted and the newly fresh crops were not ready for consumption. In order to pass this hard period, few peasants began to depend on root crops such as potatoes, sweet potatoes and *qocho* (false banana) [73]. The rent that the peasant paid for the landlord was the first to claim his produce during harvest season. To pay back the rent peasants needed cash. As a result, the farmers were forced to sell their coffee early during the harvest season when the local market price was very low. The rent together with mismanagement left the average peasant exposed to hunger during the middle of the rain season [74].

Coffee farmers are/were affected by numerous contributing factors such as very high production cost, particularly, the fixed cost, uneconomic size of farms, diseases and tax which reduced greatly the farm gate price of coffee much below the production cost [75]. As coffee moved from the growers to the consumers, it passed through many hands of buyers, government agencies, middlemen, processors, exporters, shippers, roasters, retailers and etc. At each level, the coffee price would increase. The relationship between the price paid to the producers and export values could not match. The tax imposed by government and cost of buying, transporting, grading, storing and other expenses brought very low return for the growers [76].

CONCLUSION

Southwestern Ethiopia, particularly the northern Kaffa province areas; the former Ennarya region of Limmu *awraja*, the current Jimma Zone, Gomma district of *Coccee Guddaa kebele* at a site called '*kattamuuduuga*' was the historical root of coffee Arabica. As scholars have been approved that it was the Oromo people who for the first time used coffee as food crop. It was around 10th century A.D that coffee was chewed by Oromo people who combine the ripe berries of coffee with animal fat and form into round balls that they used for journeys. It is believed that it was during the Oromo expansion of the 16th century that, the spreading out of coffee tree and coffee drinking habit expanded. Later, coffee is said to have been spread throughout Ethiopian high lands by long distance caravan merchants of the 19th century. It was probably Oromo traders who actually disseminated it to some parts of the north. It was probably Oromo traders who actually disseminated it to some parts of the north.

The art of making coffee is/was central element Oromo cultural practices. In this society, the coffee ceremony is an opportunity for social networking where elders pass the norms and values of the society (*Safuu*) to the children. It also called as a school of Oromosocialization. It is during this occasion that the youth are told proverbs, stories, as well as thoughts, customs, and norms of the community. Coffee used during different ritual practices such as child birth, in celebration for the birth of a calf, sacrifice for the spirit of a dead, *ateetee* ritual, *moggaasa* and *baalli* (Taking and giving power of *Gadaa*). Additionally, Coffee play a big role of Ethnic Interaction .Annually,during coffee harvesting season different people moved from their homeland to coffee producing areas. These is due population growth, lack of employment opportunity, poverty, famine, scarcity of land in their home land areas. As a result, as the area became over populated, land began to be fragmented and the farmers are obligated to cultivate on hillsides. the present day inhabitants in most coffee growing areas are made up of diverse ethnic groups.

The life of coffee farmers in coffee growing areas directly depends on coffee production. However, Coffee production is full of risky. As many researchers recommended risk management strategies are best alternative survival for coffee farmers to minimize coffee risky. Moreover, the coffee growers were not benefited from coffee production. Probably it was a good chance for merchants, landlords, government officials and coffee exporters, who bought coffee and land at low price from growers and sell it at high price. Coffe farmers are/were affected by numerous contributing factors such as very high production cost, particularly, the fixed cost, and uneconomic size of farms, diseases and tax which reduced greatly the farm gate price of coffee much below the production cost. In the good coffee harvesting season, coffee farmers and traders enjoyed better living condition in every aspect. Extravagance ceremonies such as weeding, relaxing in towns and some other unnecessary expenditure represented mismanagement of the cash obtained from the sale of coffee. Besides, the kind of meals and drinks that they consumed during the months of February, March, and April were very much different in quality and quantity from other months. During coffee harvesting season, youngsters were/are highly tempted by the decorated towns bars and spent their time with bar ladies, who infected their customers with different diseases.

In spite of this, during bad coffee year people faced hardship and exposed to usurers. To survive these days they took a number of measures. They borrowed money from the landlords and rich merchants to pay back for the next season and selling coffee at flowering stage if they borrowed coffee they paid back in coffee and if they promised to pay in cash they paid it in cash. If a person borrowed a quintal (100kg), they would pay two quintals and if they borrowed 100 birr, they paid 200 birr. The rent together with mismanagement left the average peasant exposed to hunger during the middle of the rain season.

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