

Gender, Slavery and Slave Trade in the Horn of Africa, 1800-1935

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Abstract: *Slavery studies on the Horn of Africa are critical in understanding the historiography of the region. However, majority of these studies have not been adequately situated within gender architecture. The place of a woman in the Horn of Africa's historiography is therefore problematic and fragmented. There are serious scholarly gaps with regard to the status of slave women in the general history of the Horn of Africa. As a result, the study sought to interrogate the interplay between gender, slavery and slave trade in the Horn of Africa, 1800-1935. The main purpose of the study was to explore the experiences of slave women within the Horn of Africa. The study ascertained that slavery was a gendered process, modes of acquisition of slaves were varied and that gender was the main organising principle in slave labour relations based on other variables. Furthermore, the study findings reveal that slave trade and slavery in the Horn of Africa had negative consequences to female slaves who comprised the majority of the slave population.*

Key Words: *Gender, Horn of Africa, slave, women.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

According to Seri-Hersch, (2010) the intertwined history of the Horn of Africa has hitherto; received minimal scholarly attention because existing studies have limited themselves to existing state boundaries. Yet, trade relations in the region were interconnected through a complex web of trade routes and markets across the region (Moore-Harell, 1999; Declich, 2003). A survey of estimated slave exports between 1400 and 1900 from Africa reveals that the Horn of Africa played a critical role in slave trade (Nunn, 2007; Nunn 2008). However, existing evidence reveal that there are numerous gaps in slavery and slave trade in the Horn of Africa (Moore-Harell, 1999; Nunn, 2008; Nunn and Wantchekon, 2011). Slavery and slave trade studies have not been adequately probed within a gendered framework (Harris, 1971; Lodhi, 1973; Asante, 2007). As a result, slavery studies in the Horn of Africa have paid little attention to women's voices and experiences (Austen, 1979; Nwokeji, 2001; Asante, 2007).

Majority of existing studies in the Horn of African historiography have paid attention to women leaders, elites and ordinary women (Bizuneh, 2001; Asante, 2007). This is only a small fraction of women experiences in the historiography of the Horn of Africa (Austen, 1979; Nwokeji, 2001). Existing slavery studies in the Horn of Africa have not treated slave women as serious subject of analysis (Bizuneh, 2001; Meckelberg 2015). The recognition of concubinage under Islam has also masked detailed examination of the centrality of slave women in other productive spheres in the region (Sikainga, 1995). Consequently, there are gaps in slave women encounters in Muslim, Christian and Pagan societies. In light of the a fore mentioned gaps, the purpose of this study is to probe the interplay between gender, slavery and slave trade in the Horn of Africa, 1800-1935. The objectives of the study are to: describe the modes of slave acquisition; explain the role of gender in allocation of slave labour; establish the factors that interacted with gender in allocation of slave labour; and, to explain the impacts of slavery and the slave trade on the slave women

2. Research Methodology:

The data for this study was collected from secondary sources. These sources provided information concerning the slavery and slave trade in relation to the study objectives and respective historic period. The collected data was then subjected to qualitative analysis. The data from secondary sources was sorted out into data sets in relation to study objectives. The data was then compared for similarities and differences in generating patterns and sub themes. Secondly, the emerging themes were then linked to respective study objectives. The study findings were then presented thematically.

3. Discussion and Results:

3.1 Origin of Slavery in the Horn of Africa:

Available evidence suggests that slavery and slave trade existed in the Horn of Africa before Western imperialism in the region (Hasan, 1977; Pankhurst, 1977; Moore-Harell, 1999; Mohammed, 2015). The socio-economic relations in the Muslim, Christian and the Pagan societies were characterised by slavery and slave trade (Fenyhough, 1989; Ghaffer and Ahmed, 2007). Guidelines on enslavement and slave trade were spelt out in the Quran, the legal code of Ethiopian Church and Customary Practices (Pankhurst, 1977; Moore-Harell, 1999; Hussein, 2010; Mohammed,

2015). Analyses in the Horn of Africa show that early slavery and slave trade was meant to satisfy domestic demand in which slaves were used by slave masters for their immediate family use (O'Fahey, 1973; Edward, 1982; Spaulding, 1988; Sikainga, 1995).

Existing slavery and slave trade in pre-colonial Horn of Africa was further intensified by European and Arab imperialism both internally and externally (Spaulding, 1988; Declich, 2003; Berswick, 2004). Central Sudan for instance was drawn into the Turkish system and the later to the Anglo-Egyptian system as a source of slaves (Spaulding, 1988). During the European and Arab imperialism, the economies of the region were characterised by monetization and the development of plantation farming (Edward, 1982; Spaulding, 1988; Declich, 2003). The demands of the plantation economy required labour which was ultimately sustained through complex networks of slavery and slave trade (Edward, 1982; Spaulding, 1988; Sikainga, 1995; Declich, 2003).

3.2 Modes of Acquisition of Slaves in the Horn of Africa:

Slave acquisitions modes in the Horn of Africa were varied and dependent on the existing environment. The organisers of slave raids comprised of sultans, leading notables, traders and freemen (Hasan, 1977; Kapteijns, 1984; Declich, 2003). Slaves were obtained majorly from the Nuba Mountains (Kordofan province), western Sudan mountains (Darfur province), central and eastern Sudan, Sudanese-Ethiopian borderlands, White Nile and Abyssinian Mountains. Additionally, Somalia sourced slaves locally and from the Bajun and Swahili borderlands of East African coast (McLoughlin, 1962; Declich, 2003).

According to Gardiner, (1933) the *Fetha Nagast* asserts that at creation all "men" were born free but war and raids resulted in the enslavement of those that were conquered. As observed in the *Fetha Nagast*, warfare and raids were the most frequent modes of slave acquisition in the Horn of Africa. Existing evidence establish that warfare and raids were the lifeblood of Horn of Africa's slave economies (O'Fahey, 1973; Edward, 1982; Pankhurst, 1977; Meckelberg, 2015). As a result, many women, men and children were captured within Ethiopia, Sudan and Somalia to sustain agrarian and urban economies (McLoughlin, 1962; Pankhurst, 1977; Spaulding and Kapteijns, 1989; Declich, 2003). Existing literature reveals that small quantities of slaves in the Horn of Africa were obtained partially through kidnapping (McLoughlin, 1962; Hasan, 1977; Woldemariam, 1984; Declich, 2003; Gakunzi, 2018). Available evidence show that harems in Sudan were filled with light skinned slave girls kidnapped from Southern vassal states or borderlands of Ethiopia (Kapteijns, 1984; Hill, 1970). In Somalia, slaves were kidnapped from Oromo or Borana settlements (Declich, 2003). In the kingdom of Jimma and Enariya, kidnapping happened at night with high degrees of efficiency (Mohammed, 2015). In Sudan, the Nubas and the Kababish also captured lonely travellers (McLoughlin, 1962).

According to Spaulding, (1988) available slave narratives and eye witness accounts reveal that trickery was also used to lure individuals into slavery. Trickery was a minor mode of slave acquisition mainly used by individuals within a given tribe. According to slave accounts, slave dealers would trick women whom they would then deliver to slave traders. It was relatively easier to trick because women were socialised to respect and obey their men without questions, thus they easily became victims of trickery (Ibid). Existing evidence suggests that slave markets were secure supplies of slaves (Pankhurst, 1965; Hasan, 1977; Ahmad, 1999). Pankhurst, (1965) suggests that slaves accounted for fifty percent of commodities on sale in slave markets in the 1880s. According to Baka (1983), the individuals that ended up for sale in slave markets were mainly victims of raids and trickery. Murderers, wizards and recaptured slaves were also offered for sale in slave markets as an alternative punishment for death (Spaulding, 1980; Woldemariam, 1984; Mohammed, 2015). Existing evidence reveals that there were other motives for sale of individuals as slaves. In Kaffa state for instance, it was a taboo for women to eat fowls. Women that violated this custom were immediately sold as slaves (Baka 1843). In the Horn of Africa's slave markets, there were incidences in which children and women were exchanged for tax, cows, goats, tobacco and cotton fabric (Spaulding, 1980; Declich, 2003). However, some groups like the Nuba constantly raided each other and captured unprotected women and children whom they sold in Arab markets (McLoughlin, 1962).

Slaves were also obtained as tribute mainly offered to stronger Sultans (Kapteijns & Spaulding, 1984; Sikainga, 1989). When the Gomez in the Bela-Shangul and Gubba regions were conquered for instance, they began to give tributes in form of slaves to the central government at Addis- Ababa (Ahmad, 1999). Accordingly, the Central government of Addis-Ababa received tribute in form of slaves during the reign of Emperor Menelik II, (1889-1913); Lij Lyassu, (1913-16); Ras Tafari, (1916-30); and, Emperor Haile Sellasie I (1930-74). Tribute payment in form of slaves was a customary practice in Sinnar, Darfur and Wadai (Hasan, 1977; Spaulding, 1980). In Somalia, slaves who undertook "independent" economic activities paid tribute to their masters on daily or monthly basis (Declich, 2003). These tributes ranged from three to six *besa* per day or about two *talleri* per month (Ibid). Another form of tribute was the reciprocal "gifts-giving" between sultanates for diplomatic relations. Among notable examples are the slave concubine gifts from the sultan of Wadai 1898–1900, to sultan Ali Dinar of Dar Fur; and, gifts exchanges between Ali Dinar and sultan Dar Sila (Spaulding, 1980; Kapteijns & Spaulding, 1984). There were isolated cases where refugee population became enslaved in places they sought refuge (Declich, 2003). Available evidence indicates that the refugee status was conditioned by

either unfavourable weather patterns or the fragile nature of some ethnic communities to withstand warfare or raids from neighbouring communities (Kaptejns, 1984; Declich, 2003). This refugee status eroded their freedom and they became slaves by circumstance. In Dar Masalit for example, refugees who were fleeing war in their homelands were taken in as slaves (Kaptejns, 1984). The other category of refugees comprised of individuals or groups that were running away from drought and famine. These refugees were mainly from neighbouring states and their enslavement was temporary because they would normally assume their free status upon their return to their homelands (ibid). In the conquest of the Oromo by Somali, some Oromo female and male slaves decided to stay among the Somali as clients whereas others preferred slave status (Declich, 2003).

The Fetha Nagast or legislation of the kings provided for enslavement by birth on condition that children born of slave women were born slaves of her master (Gardiner, 1933). These children were majorly sired by a union of female and male slave (Kaptejns, 1984 Declich, 2003). In the absence of contestation over paternity claims under this circumstance, it became a rewarding opportunity for the slave master to accumulate labour force for future labour requirements (Spaulding, 1973; Sikainga, 1995). Slaves were also obtained as compensation (Naty, 1994; Sikainga, 1995). Compensation was instigated by many factors. Firstly; compensation resulted from the failure to offer annual tribute and provision of labour services by conquered subjects (Naty, 1994). With the conquest of the Aari people by Abyssinian state, serfdom- *gebbar sirat* was introduced. The Aari were required to service the soldier settlers-*Neft'ennyä* with annual tribute and labour services. However, when the Aari could not meet these requirements, most of their women and children were taken by the soldier-settlers as slaves (Naty, 1994). Secondly, compensation was occasioned by the demand by unmarried girls for female slaves as part of bride wealth (Sikainga, 1995). Thirdly, slaves were offered as security for late payments or unpaid debts. The renting out slaves also attracted compensation in return for services rendered by the slaves (Moore-Harell, 1999; Declich, 2003). In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, women and children were taken as slaves through a practice known as *Leba shay*, a thief searching procedure (Naty, 1994). The practice of *Leba shay* was prevalent in southern Ethiopian societies and the Aariland people in particular. The practice of *Leba shay* was perpetuated by the soldier settlers. The suspected thief was then fined a fixed amount of money. Majority of the Aari families could not raise the imposed fines. Thus, women and children were taken into servitude by the soldier-settlers (Ibid).

3.3 The Gender Picture of Slave Population:

Aggregated data on slave population based on gender is highly fragmented and varies in regard to location and specific historic periods within the Horn of Africa (Spaulding, 1988; Declich, 2003). Existing evidence establish that the ratio of female slaves' populations to those of male were irregular (Spaulding, 1988; Declich, 2003). In Somalia's Lugh region for instance, available slave estimates establish that population of female slave was slightly higher than that of male slaves (Declich, 2003). These findings are replicated by Spaulding, (1988) regarding the gender and ethnic composition of slaves who arrived in Western Sudan between, 1910 and 1927. Spaulding notes that the female slaves accounted for 65.8 percent while the male slave population accounted for 32.9%. The slaves whose gender was unknown accounted for a mere 1.3 per cent. A survey of existing literature indicates that the population of female slaves was statistically superior to that of the male slaves within the Horn of Africa or depended on one slave master to the next or market to market (Bramley, 1940; Edwards, 1982; Declich, 2003).

3.4 Gender in Slave Labour Relations:

Gender was the dominant organising principle of division of slave labour in the Horn of Africa (Moore-Harell, 1999). Slave labour Studies reveal that slaves undertook a variety of tasks (O'Fahey, 1973). Available evidence suggests that female slaves majorly performed social and economic roles in the Horn of Africa. Social roles comprised of household, reproductive roles and entertainment. Household services entailed acting as domestic servants tasked with relieving slave masters' wives from the daily burdens of household chores (Spaulding, 1988). As a result, slave master gained some form of status among his peers in the Islamic bourgeois. As domestic servants, the female slaves were engaged in fetching water, cleanliness, collecting firewood, cooking and brewing traditional beverages. Additionally, they were involved in grinding and pounding millet (Kaptejns, 1984; Bahru, 1991; Mohammed, 2010). Female slaves were also required to run small errands. In Southern Wallo for instance, young female slaves was part of the entourage that accompanied young brides to their husbands' homes upon marriage where they were to serve as maid servants (Hussein, 2010). Female slaves played a key role in reproductive functions (Sikainga, 1995). Young female slaves served as concubines and as wives. The practice of keeping concubines was prevalent between slave masters and their female slaves (Moore-Harell, 1999). A notable example is King Sahla Sellase who had 300 concubines (Hussein, 2010; Harris 1844). As slave women or concubines, they served as sexual partners of their masters and slave husbands (Ahmad, 1999). Consequently, there were prevalent incidences of marriage between slave masters and their female slaves. In Southern Wallo, when the slave master "husband" died his slave wives were inherited by his off springs (Hussein, 2010). In Somalia, a captive Oromo woman who bore children for her master would in return go ahead to be his wife (Declich,

2003). As wives or concubines, female slaves played a key role in the expansion of the slave master’s kinship or breeding other generation of slaves (Sikainga, 1995). The slave women were also used for the entertainment of visitors, male children of the slave master and the slave masters (Hassan, 1977; Sikainga, 1995; Ahmad, 1999). These entertainments ranged from habitual entertainment through songs and serving drinks to complex forms of sexual exploitation (Hill, 1970). The female slaves provide sex within the slave masters’ household, the harems and brothels. In the harems and brothels, the female slaves were freely given to visitors for night entertainment (Sikainga, 1995). Some of these slave women served as *Suryia in shamba*, “concubines in the field”, tasked with providing hospitality to the master when he visited the farm. The female slave wives and concubines were also tasked with the reception of acquired slave children. They were required to store them and socialise them into servitude. The wives of the Watawit and concubines were to receive and store children destined for export (Spaulding, 1988). Some of these under age children were trained as servants or concubines prior to export by the wives and concubines of slave masters.

In the economic productive functions, the female slaves were involved in spinning, basketry, pottery and preserved animal skins through salting (O’Fahey, 1973; Declich, 2003). Female slaves could also be involved in crop cultivation (McLoughlin, 1962; Declich, 2003). Spaulding, (1988) observes that from eighteenth century in Sinnar, female slaves were purchased by slave masters to enable them secure some autonomy and freedom of their women folk from productive labour. Hay, (1984) asserts that free women highly valued female slave labour for economic production having failed to marshal male labour. It is evident that concubines helped their masters controlling plantations to some degree (Declich, 2003). There were slave masters that derived profit by hiring out young female slaves for sexual exploits (Hill, 1970; Sikainga, 1995; Ahmad, 1999). The male slaves were engaged in economic, political and social spheres within the slave owning societies (Ahmad, 1999; Moore-Harell, 1999). Economically, the male slaves were involved in productive activities ranging from crop cultivation, pastoralism, gold mining and construction work (O’Fahey, 1973; Sikainga, 1995; Ahmad, 1999; Moore-Harell, 1999). Additionally, male slaves sank wells, served as sailors and hunted elephants for ivory (Ahmad, 1999). Other male slaves served as porters along the trade routes or carry out raids that generated slaves for their masters (Ahmad, 1999; Moore-Harell, 1999). Socially, the male slaves undertook domestic chores as wood cutters and messengers. The eunuchs were tasked with the supervision of concubines in the harems and within the palace (Sikainga, 1989; Ahmad, 1999; Moore-Harell, 1999).

In political functions, the male slaves served in the military as soldiers, guards, political office holders and Eunuchs (O’Fahey, 1973; Spaulding, 1973; Ahmad, 1999; Moore-Harell, 1999). The male slave guarded the palace, secured settlements and escorted trade caravans (Sikainga, 1989). They implemented decisions by the sultan (O’Fahey, 1973; Spaulding, 1973). According to Spaulding, (1973) male slaves served as court officials, treasurers, market supervisors, keepers of the royal seal and implemented king’s orders in Sinnar. They also served military officers and conducted government sponsored slave raids. Majority of these roles were replicated in the Keira state and the kingdom of Dar Masalit, Somali and Ethiopia (Kapteijns, 1984; O’Fahey, 1973). Although gender division of labour defined the roles of female and male slaves, there were tasks that were performed by both genders. These were productive activities falling under agriculture. Both the female and male slaves provided agricultural labour ranging from bush clearing, tilling, sowing, weeding, harvesting, and storage. Both female and male slaves could occasionally be engaged in watering vegetables, fetching firewood and water (Kapteijns, 1984). The Swahili slaves highly valued for agricultural tasks because they were perceived to be more hardworking and strong compared to the Oromo. As a result, the slaves were tasked with easier chores such as pastoralism (Declich, 2003).

3.5 Factors that Influenced the Allocation of Slave Labour along Gender Lines:

Studies have established that allocation of slave labour was determined by a multiplicity of factors (Ahmad, 1999; Nunn, 2007; Mohammed, 2015). Existing evidence pose that tribe was a major determinant in gender allocation of slave labour in the Horn of Africa (Hasan, 1977; Woldemariam, 1984; Declich, 2003). In Muslim societies, enslavement of fellow Muslim was discouraged (Seri-Hersch, 2010). As a result, ethnic groups in border zones such as the Nuba, Galla, Bertha, Barun, Jum Jum, Mao, Khomo, Ingessana, Gunza and Meban were desired for slave labour (Hasan, 1977; Ahmad, 1999; Seri-Hersch, 2010). In Somalia, slaves from the Swahili tribe were preferred more for agricultural tasks while slave women from the Galla or Oromo ethnic group were preferred for their beauty. Young dark skinned female slaves from the Nubian ethnicity were preferred in the Christian parts of Ethiopia, Muslim towns, the kingdom of Jimma and the Oromo principalities (Lovejoy, 1983; Declich, 2003).

Table1. Ethnic composition of slaves based on gender and task preference.

Tribe	Gender	Role preference
Galla	Male	Economic production
	Female	Reproduction function/Household tasks/ Entertainment
Swahili	Male	Economic production
	Female	Household tasks
Aari	Male	Economic production

	Female	Household tasks/Economic production
Nubian	Male	Political/Military roles
	Female	Household tasks/Economic production

Sources: Lovejoy, (1983); Naty, (1994); Declich, (2003)

As illustrated in Table 1, the Galla men were valued mainly for economic activities. The Galla slave women on the other hand were highly valued for reproductive functions, household tasks and provision of entertainment services. The Swahili and Aari male slaves were preferred for economic production functions. The Swahili and Aari slave women were preferred for household chores. The Nubian slave males on the other hand were highly preferred for political and military roles. Although table 1 provides ethnic preferences in allocation of slave labour based on gender, there were overlaps in allocation of roles between the female and male slaves (Lovejoy, 1983; Naty, 1994; Declich, 2003). Thus, it was common to find a male slave engaged in certain household chores considered as slave women’s domain. The ethnic preferences in allocation of slave labour resulted in differential pricing of slaves in various markets across the Horn of Africa.

Table2. Prices of adult slaves based on tribe, gender and role in Somalia markets, 1903.

Tribe	Gender	Role	Price in Talleri
Galla	Female	Concubine and household chores	90
Galla	Male	Pastoralism	60
Swahili	Female	Household chores and crop cultivation	65
Swahili	Male	Crop cultivation and economic activities	89

Source: Declich, (2003)

Table 2, highlights approximate prices of adult slaves based on their ethnic group in Mogadishu and Benaadir markets in 1903. As illustrated in table 2, there was a relationship between tribe, gender and perceived slave task. The slave price was therefore determined by slaves’ ethnic group, gender and tentative slave role. As a result, an “adult” Galla slave woman was priced at 90 *Talleri* compared to a Swahili “adult” slave woman who was priced at 65 *Talleri*. This was because the slave women from the Galla tribe were considered to be more sexually attractive (Declich, (2003; Moore-Harell, 1999). Similarly, an “adult” Swahili male slave was highly valued and priced at 89 *Talleri* compared to an adult Galla male slave priced at 60 *Talleri*. This difference in tribal pricing of slaves was based on tribal perception and preference. The Swahili male slaves were more preferred compared to the Galla men because they were considered to be hard working and thus more useful in undertaking demanding economic tasks. The Galla male slaves were allocated relatively easier tasks as they were thought to be lacking endurance (Declich, 2003). However, it should be noted that a part from the tribe and gender there other factors that determined slave prices such as distance from the source of supply (Moore-Harell, 1999). Age interacted with gender to determine the allocation of slave labour (Mohammed, 2015). As illustrated in table 3, age determined the prices of the slaves based on the nature of perceived engagement (Declich, 2003). Consequently, young girls were assigned light household chores or grazing. However, as teenagers they would then be considered ripe for concubinage (Sikainga, 1995). Young boys were destined to serve in palaces as messengers (O’Fahey, 1973). Available evidence show that, the slaves presented for sale in the slave markets in Mogadishu and Benaadir in 1903 were of various age groups as illustrated in table3.

Table3. Prices of slaves in Somalia based on age, gender and task, 1903.

Gender	Age range	Categorization	Price (Talleri)	Labour type preference
Male	20-25	Adult	70-89	Economic activities
Female	18-20	Adult	60-90	Reproduction/household
Male	15-20	Young adult	50-60	Reproduction/household
Female	15-20	Young adult	40-90	Economic activities
Male	10-15	Teenager	40	House hold/ economic activities
Female	10-15	Teenager	40-50	Households activities
Female/male	8-10	Child	30-40	Light household activities
Female	≤10	Child and mother(old)	40	Light economic activities

Source: Sikainga, (1995); Declich, (2003);

As illustrated in table 3, the data establish that slavery attracted relatively young people. This differential pricing shows that although age differences determined slave prices, female slaves were highly valued than their male counterparts based on gender allocation of tasks (Declich, 2003). Comparatively, age interacted with gender and perceived task allocation to determine slave prices across the Horn of Africa as illustrated in table 4.

Table 4. Prices of slaves based on age and gender in Sudan and Ethiopia, 1837-1925.

Area	Period	Gender	Approximate age	Approximate price
Shendi Market	1837	Male	20 Years	20-80 Maria Theresa dollars
		Female	20 Years	160-300 Maria Theresa dollars
		Male	15 Year	50 Maria Theresa dollars
		Female	15 Years	50 Maria Theresa dollars
South of Shendi	1870	Female	8-10 Years	7.5 Maria Theresa dollars
		Male	8-10 Years	7.5 Maria Theresa dollars
		Male	12-15 Years	15-20 Maria Theresa dollars
		female	12-15 Years	30-40 Maria Theresa dollars
Dangila Market	1922 -25	Male	20 Years	65 Thalers
		Female	20 Years	95 Thalers
		Male	10 Years	50 Thalers
		Female	10 Years	50 Thalers

Sources: Ahmad, (1999); Moore-Harell, (1999)

As illustrated in table 4, the prices of slaves in the Shendi market and south of Shendi, were based on age and gender. The same phenomenon was replicated in Dangila market in north-western Ethiopia where young Gumuz slaves were sold for approximately 50 thalers. As illustrated in table 4, adult attracted higher prices compared to young ones. Among the adult slaves, female slaves were sold at 95 thalers compared to male slaves' 65 thalers. This differential pricing between male and female slaves was attributed perceived gender roles and age (Moore-Harell, 1999). It can be established from both table 3 and table 4 that slaves presented in slave markets were relatively young with an adult being classified as being approximately between fifteen to twenty five years. It is also clear that the value of a slave declined with aged. This is illustrated in table 3 in regard to the low price offered for both an old mother and a child. Additionally, the findings reveal that, adult female slaves were more expensive, compared to young and old female slaves (Moore-Harell, 1999). According to existing literature, physical appearance and personal characteristics determined gender allocation of slave labour (Moore-Harell, 1999; Declich, 2003). Physical appearance was a major determinant in the identification of female slaves that were to be designated as concubines (Lovejoy, 1983; Declich, 2003). If the slave buyer's interest was erotic then, he would be persuaded to acquire female slave rather than male slaves. Existing literature puts the Oromo women at the centre of light skinned female slaves that largely ended serving as concubines in the Horn of Africa (Lovejoy, 1983; Woldemariam, 1984; Declich, 2003). Physical appearance also determined gender allocation of tasks in Somalia. The Swahili slaves were highly considered for agricultural tasks because they were perceived to be stronger as compared to the Oromo slaves (Declich, 2003). The Oromo male slaves were tasked with pastoralism attributed to their lack of endurance while Oromo slave women were given household tasks that were considered light (Ibid.).

Conflict of interest disrupted gender allocation of slave labour. Arab women in the Horn of Africa for instance, resented their husbands' acquisition of young beautiful girls as concubines whether Nubia, Oromo, Hadendowa or any other ethnic group (Spaulding, 1988; Declich, 2003). These women demanded for recruitment of male slaves in place of women slaves. Consequently, male slaves were favoured in undertaking tasks that were traditionally reserved for female slaves. This arrangement is said to have contradicted the gender allocation of slave labour based on sex category (Spaulding, 1988). Abilities and earlier trainings played a critical role in gender allocation of slave labour. Women who were knowledgeable and skilled as nurses were enslaved primarily in Sudan (Spaulding, 1988). Male slaves were also assigned tasks due to their skilful abilities. This explains the why after the Turco-Egyptian conquest of 1821, there was an intensification of slave trade in Sudan aimed at acquiring black slaves for recruitment into army (Hasan, 1977). Generally, the situating of slaves as nurses, carpenters, builders, soldiers, miners, sailors, cultivators or a combination of some of these duties was based on their earlier training and abilities (Hasan, 1977; Ahmad, 1999).

3.6 Impact of Slavery on Slave Women:

Slavery impacted on slave women in multiple ways. Slavery and slave trade created hierarchical and dependency relations in the Horn of Africa mainly based on gender and whether one was free born or slave (Spaulding

and Kapteijns, 1989). Ordinarily slaves occupied the lowest social strata; lacking freewill and depended on their masters (Kapteijns, 1984; Declich, 2003). Slave roles created hierarchical and dependence relations that further subordinated slave women (Spaulding, 2006; Declich, 2003). Slave girls and concubines lived in their master's house and were under the command of the master's free wives or Eunuchs (Kapteijns, 1984; Sikainga, 1994). To break from this dependency, some slave women engaged in prostitution as an income generating activity (Declich, 2003). However, slave women who were engaged in this craft kept it secretive to avoid taxation from the masters (Ibid). Generally, the relations between female slaves and their owners was characterised by social hierarchy, dependency and subordination, resulting from their limited control over the products of their own labour (Kapteijns, 1984; Declich, 2003; Spaulding, 2006; Meckelberg, 2015). Prejudices against slave women were based on ethnic affiliation and religion (Sikainga, 1989). The dark skinned slaves from Sudan in particular, were subjected to ethnic prejudices linked to their dark skin colour (Sikainga, 1989; Hussein, 2010). Slave from Bahr-Ghazal were referred to as the "*fertit*," a pejorative term used to describe the southern stateless non-Muslim societies by the people of Darfur (Sikainga, 1989). In Amharic, a Sudanese female slave was referred "*Barya*". The term *Barya* represented a black woman with kinky hair, flat nose and thick lips (Hussein, 2010). The Somali customary law forbade enslavement of fellow Somali, thus the enslaved people were all categorised as foreigners (Declich, 2003). In Somalia, every ethnic group defined slaves in their own way. However, in general terms they were classified as "things", "chattel", or "property" (Declich, 2003). Although majority of female slaves were assimilated to Islamic cultures of their masters, they still received negative perception both socially and culturally (Sikainga, 1995).

According to McCann, (1988) slave women lost their traditional identity through enslavement. The slaves were habitually treated as strangers with no kinship ties except their relationship with the slave master (Kapteijns, 1984; Sikainga, 1989). According to Spaulding and Kapteijns, (1989) female slaves that were assimilated into their master's households were given the first names of their masters. Thus, female slaves adopted common names such Baraka, Habtsh, Lotti and Tehune. In marriage, slave women lost permanent membership in their own family groups and at the same time they failed to access full membership to their "husbands" clans (Spaulding and Kapteijns, 1989). The practice of integrating slaves into the master's clan was known as manumission (Kapteijns, 1984). Although manumission served as survival technique among the female and male slaves, it gradually eroded their identity (Sikainga, 1989; Declich, 2003). Loss of identity was also experienced by children born by slave women (Kapteijns, 1984). These children were considered to be fatherless (Sikainga, 1989). As a result, they were treated as property of their mother's slave master (Kapteijns, 1984; Declich, 2003).

Customarily, women enjoyed relative socio-economic power through their productive functions as cultivators, food distributors and production of handcrafts (Spaulding and Kapteijns, 1989; Meckelberg, 2015). However, slave raids displaced and uprooted women from their productive activities (Ahmad, 1999; Moore-Harell, 1999; Meckelberg, 2015). As a result, there was significant reduction of women's social and economic power associated with limited production space for both the free ordinary women and the slave women (Beswick, 2004, Ghaffer & Ahmed, 2007; Declich, 2003; Meckelberg, 2015). In Benaadir coast for instance, slave women that had acquired some property as silver bracelets, earrings and trifles, disposed what they had accumulated through prostitution by their slave masters (Declich, 2003). Slave women lost control over their sexuality (Sikainga, 1989; Hill, 1970; Pankhurst, 1974). After capture, some women were deported as sex slaves and their history was characterised by rape episodes (Gakunzi, 2018). These slaves were forcefully accessed for sexual services by both the slave master, his male children, relatives and guests (Sikainga, 1995; Declich, 2003). Young girls were recruited in brothels in Ethiopia, Somalia, central and northern Sudan (Pankhurst, 1974). In the Sudanese harems, it was a normal custom of hospitality for a host to offer services of a slave girl to a traveller spending a night in his place. The slave woman was then expected to surrender payments made to his slave master for her sexual services to the guest (Ahmad, 1999). Even in marriage, a slaves never acted at their free will and were required to seek consent of the slave master (Sikainga, 1995). There were peculiar instances where slave masters purchased "husbands" for their female slaves or purchased "wives" for their male slaves. Existing literature reveal that the slave owners' exercised control over their slaves' feelings and sexuality (Kapteijns, 1984). The male slaves selected to serve as eunuchs were castrated too. Castration of teenage and adults male slaves resulted in significant deaths at slave reservoirs (Kapteijns, 1984; Hogendorn, 1999). Although castration of the eunuchs was aimed at enhancing the supervision of slave women in the harems, it resulted in sex imbalances that limited female slave's sexual freedom (Hogendorn, 1999).

Slaves lost their essence of being through commodification as units of exchange (Declich, 2003). The *Fetha Nagast* defined a slave as a kind of property that could be deposited for debt or rented out (Gardiner, 1933). In Nubia, the noble men hired their female slaves to travellers (Ahmad, 1999). In Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia, slave women were given as gifts, used in barter exchange, settlement of unpaid taxes or debts (Moore-Harell, 1999; Declich, 2003). Slave women commodification was also through the practice of giving them to soldiers in lieu of salaries (Moore-Harell, 1999). Court documents show that female slaves whose masters were dead were sold to settle the creditors of the dead slave master (Declich, 2003). Consequently, slaves were a special type of commodity that could be shared or disposed

as owner wished (Kapteijns, 1984; Ahmad, 1999). Kapteijns, (1984) and Spaulding, (2006) characterises slaves as forms of property that were kept for reproducing themselves for use when need arose. Slave women also suffered loss of social power as mothers. In Dar Masalit, it was assumed that a male slave was fatherless even if he became one; the children he sired with his wife belonged to the wife's master (Hill, 1970). Studies have shown that, "the calf did not belong to the bull that sired it but the owner of the cow" (Hill, 1970; Kapteijns, 1984; Ahmad, 1999). Consequently, many female slaves did not exercise their full power over their children and slave husbands as mothers. Free wives discouraged their husbands from marrying female slave concubines. In the event that the concubines were manumitted, in some cases they could not attain the status of legal wives and their children would still be treated as bastards (Kapteijns, 1984; Sikainga, 1995). Additionally, the practice of selling children also contributed to the decline of motherhood among female slaves and free women (Declich, 2003). The rise of female headed-households was triggered by punishment modes administered to male slaves who attempted to flee or those that showed disrespect to their slave masters (Ahmad, 1999; Declich, 2003). Under these circumstances, male slaves were then subjected to death or sale. In 1912 for instance, Zalaka a leader of the Balaya, raided villages of slaves who had escaped him due to mistreatment. In return, Zalaka killed all the men in the villages and re-captured the women and children as slaves (Ahmad, 1999). Similarly in 1932, Anuak raiders from Abyssinia raided Beir village in Sudan, killed 27 Beir men and captured their women and children (McLoughlin, 1962). These activities significantly resulted in rise of female-headed households for a while. Although Islamic law provided for fair treatment of slaves in Muslim societies, slaves were arbitrary subjected to mistreatment across the Horn of Africa (Sikainga, 1995; Declich, 2003; Ahmad, 1999; Meckelberg, 2015). Luigi Robecchi Bricchetti, an Italian traveller gives a detailed account of mistreatment of slaves in the towns of Brava, Merca and Mogadishu in 1903. He observes that although majority of slaves were loyal their masters, they were inhumanly treated perhaps, worse than beasts (Declich, 2003). A study by Naty,(1994) on the *Leba shay* practice, establishes that slaves taken through the process in Southern Ethiopia were severely mistreated compared to the mistreatment of pawns in West African societies. The common causes of mistreatments were attempts to flee or fears premised on suspicion that the slaves might flee (Kapteijns, 1984; Declich, 2003). These slaves would be subjected to thorough beatings sometimes leading to death (Kapteijns, 1984; Ahmad, 1999).

4. CONCLUSION:

This study established that slavery and slave trade was not a neutral process. The study findings reveal that slavery and slave trade in the Horn of Africa was practiced before and during Western imperialism in the region. The major study findings are as follows:

- Modes of slave acquisition ranged from raids, kidnapping, trickery, purchases in slave markets, payment as tribute, refugees, through birth and the practice of *Leba shay*;
- Female slaves comprised a significant section of the slave population;
- Gender was the main organising principle in division of slave labour;
- Gender interacted with tribe, age, physical appearance, conflict of interest and earlier abilities of slaves in task allocation; and,
- Slave women experienced dependency relations, ethnic prejudices, loss of identity, loss of socio-economic power, loss over sexuality, commodification, loss of power as mothers and the rise of female-headed households.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the study findings, the research suggests the following recommendations for further detailed analysis in regard to the Horn of Africa:

- Experiences of slavery and slave trade on children.
- Detailed study of the impact of colonialism on slave women.
- The status of slave women in abolition years and slave identities in post-slavery period.

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