**1. Description**
1.1 Name(s) of society, language, and language family:
    Name of Society: Saho (1)
    Language: Saho (1)
    Language family: Cushitic (1)
1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): SSY (1)
1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):
    South and North Red Sea regions; also in Ethiopia (1)
1.4 Brief history:

    According to oral traditions and legends, the Assabora, Kabota,
    Baradotta and Idda are the most ancient Saho tribes (2, p92). According to
    Abdulkader Saleh Mohammad, "As they tell it, an Idda man married a woman
    from the Kabota tribe and later destroyed the Kabota in a bitter way, so that
    Idda became the dominant tribe in the region and extended it's power up to
    the highlands. The Assabora, according to legend, are the ancestors of the
    Minifere tribes who commonly descent from one Assabora woman. The Saho
    call these four tribes the guardians of the Saho land; a belief widely shared by
    all Saho tribes and sub-tribes today" (2, p92).

    There are a number of indications that the Saho groups were the first
    indigenous people who settled the highlands and in the Red Sea Costal
    region. They did this after splitting from the southern East-Cushitic groups
    around 2000 B.C. Around 700 B.C., Semitic-speaking new comers arrived and
    settled among the Saho and later moved to the interior, where they
    established fixed villages in the highlands and spread their language and
    culture: "The Sabeans revolutionized both the daily life and political
    organization of the Hamitic [Cushitic] herdsmen. They brought the camel, the
    horse, the sheep, new plants and cultivation methods, the art of writing and
    more advanced arnaments" (2, p93).

    At this point in time, the Saho were practicing a pastoral way of life, moving
    from place to place in search of pasture and water points (2, p93).

    Around the 12th century, the settled Semitic groups started to occupy the
    pastoral areas of the Saho, which eventually led to the gradual displacement
    of the Saho and forced them to move to the inhospitable environment of the
    Red Sea coast. This displacement continued and accelerated during the 14th,
    15th, and 16th centuries, a common pattern that occurred in many Africa
    regions, due to the Abyssinian ruler's hegemony and the Oromo expansion of
    the mid 16th century (9, p93).

    Although historical evidence backs up the fact that the Saho are the
    indigenous people of the area, other groups claim ownership of the land,
    making it difficult for the Saho people to maintain their land rights. The
    Tigrinya-speaking groups of the highlands insist that they are the indigenous

population, making the Saho seen as immigrants or foreigners in the eyes of the land laws and they are denied access to land and land-ownership.

Despite historical evidence, according to the customary law, the Tigrinya-speaking groups are considered to be the original settlers and enjoy their recognized rights of landownership (2, 94).

However, one of the sources disagrees with the statement that the Saho were there first. Lydia Favali et al. (2003) writes that the Tigrinya settlers were actually there first and the nomadic Saho encroached on their land, which created tension (8, p115).

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors:
When the Semitic-speaking neighbors arrived, they settled on the Saho's land, leading to the eventual displacement of the Saho people. This settlement is  still making it hard to the Saho to obtain their land rights (2).

1.6 Ecology (natural environment):

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density:
Population size: 191,000 in Eritrea (2006) (1); Total all countries: 223,800 (1)

## 2. Economy
2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):
not found, but the Saho are considered sedentary farmers, according to the majority of the sources. The staples that they are farming, however, were not found within the sources.

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: not found

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: not found

2.4 Food storage: not found

2.5 Sexual division of production:
Traditionally, there were no specialized craftsmen or craftswomen in Saho settlements. Every man would build his own house or help others build theirs and manufacture the wooden objects needed in his household. Every woman would tan animal skins, prepare leather objects, weave dum palm fibers and manufacture clay containers (6, p86).

These practices are very different today: wooden objects are no longer used and are replaced with industrial plastic and metal tools and containers. Women prepare skin mats and leather containers of different sizes by several women as part of their daughter's dowries (6, p86).

The only traditional female handcraft that is still quite alive is weaving dum palm fibers for producing mats, baskets, and other kinds of containers (6, p86).

2.6 Land tenure: not found

2.7 Ceramics: not found

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: not found
2.9 Food taboos: not found
2.10 Canoes/watercraft?: not found

**3. Anthropometry**
3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): not found
3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): not found

**4. Life History, mating, marriage**
4.1 Age at menarche (f): not found
4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): not found
4.3 Completed family size (m and f): not found
4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): not found
4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): not found
4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:
>A proportion was not found, but Lyda Favali et al. (2003) did mention divorce when discussing land rights: "Unmarried daughters and divorced girls who move back home are given a share equal to that of the men and boys" (8, p114).  This indicates that divorce is present in the Saho society and it is probably not very frowned upon.

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: not found
4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?:
>Women prepare hand skin mats and, especially, leather containers of different seizes for their daughter's dowry (6, p86).

4.9 Inheritance patterns:
>Saho society inheritance patterns are kinship and lineage based. As far as inheriting land is concerned, a woman is only half of a man but as far as buying and selling land, she is equal to a man. The woman also has the right to leave all of her goods to her daughters and exclude her sons from the inheritance (8, p114).

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: not found
4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: not found
4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):
>The Saho clan is endogamous (8, p 106).

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized?: not found
4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., "receptacle in which fetus grows"): not found
4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)?: not found
4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape: not found
4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin):
>preferably cousin (8, p106)

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?: not found
4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring: not found

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?: not found

4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females: not found

4.22 Evidence for couvades: not found

4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older): not found

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?: not found

4.24 Joking relationships?: not found

4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations:

> The descent patterns that were found were over land rights and did not give an exact pattern of descent. It did, however, say that when it comes to inheriting land, a woman is only half a man. Unmarried daughters and divorced girls who move back home are given a share equal to that of the men" (8, p114).

4.26 Incest avoidance rules:

> marriages are usually between cousins (8, p106)

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?:

> There was nothing written in any of the sources, but #2 under "Other interesting cultural features," there is a YouTube video of a Saho wedding.

4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?: not found

4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?):

> Each Saho marries a member of the same clan (8, p106). There was nothing mentioned on a male/female difference.

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?: not found

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: not found

**Warfare/homicide**

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: not found

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: not found

4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:

> The sources did not mention any violence, but most did mention the increasing tension between the Saho and the Tigrinya over land rights

4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): not found

4.18 Cannibalism?: not found

**5. Socio-Political organization and interaction**

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: not found

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

> Tekle M. Woldemikael (2003) describes the Saho as nomadic pastoralists with mixed farming (4, p119), while Abrene Zemichael (2005) describes the Saho as sedentary farmers (5, p4).

Out of the sources, the majority agreed with Abrene Zemichael (2005) that the Saho are sedentary famers, but are traditionally nomadic.

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes):

The Saho society is divided up by a hierarchy and runs on a clan system: "There is a clan system, which currently includes around 11 clans, which are also divided into even smaller kinship groups. Clans are led by a leader called a *Redanto*, who is head over a group of leaders under him. The main job of the clan leader is not to make decisions on his own, but to work in conjunction with clan elders and be a representative to other groups. This social structure is extremely important, and clan loyalty is an integral part of society, both in politics and day-to-day matters. Organization within the society is based on family lineage, and this system determines many aspects of Saho life" (7).

5.4 Post-marital residence: not found

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): not found

5.6 Social interaction divisions? (age and sex): not found

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships: not found

5.8 Village and house organization: not found

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses): not found

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?: not found

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc:

The Saho society works on a clan system, for more information on the clan system, see 5.3 Political System.

5.12 Trade: not found

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?:

The Saho society is divided up by a hierarchy (7), for more information on the social hierarchy, see 5.3 Political System.


**6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)**

6.0 Time allocation to RCR: not found

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): not found

6.2 Stimulants: not found

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): not found

6.4 Other rituals: not found

6.5 Myths (Creation):

Abdulkader Saleh Mohammad (2013) alludes that within the different Saho tribes, there are different creation myths: "The Saho tribes are unified as an ethnic group by their common language, in spite of diverse myths and legends concerning their origin" (2, p85).

Although there seems to be many different creation myths, no source elaborated on them further than the tribes all have different creation myths.

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): not found

6.7 Sex differences in RCR: not found

6.8 Missionary effect: not found

6.9 RCR revival: not found
6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: not found
6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?: not found
6.12 Is there teknonymy?: not found
6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.)
   According the Joshuaproject.net, the Saho population are 30% Christianity and 65% Islam (3).

   According to Tekle M. Woldemikael (2003), the Saho in Eritrea are exclusively Muslim, while the Saho in Tigray are mostly Christians known as "Irob" (4, p119).

   Nothing besides those two statements mentioned anything further about their religion.

## 7. Adornment
7.1 Body paint: not found
7.2 Piercings: not found
7.3 Haircut: not found
7.4 Scarification: not found
7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): not found
7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: not found
7.7 Sex differences in adornment: not found
7.8 Missionary effect: not found
7.9 Cultural revival in adornment: not found

## 8. Kinship systems
8.1 Sibling classification system: not found
8.2 Sororate, levirate: not found
8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.): not found

## 9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):
**1.** Traditional Saho dance in Samhar:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cx0ut8loYZ4

**2.** Saho wedding:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpOPgZmlaM0

**3.** Some Saho music:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1p77ZR5qadY

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