

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SOMALI STUDIES (BOSS)

If you are familiar with the work of Hargeysa Cultural Centre, then probably you heard about the Bibliography of Somali Studies (BOSS). If you didn't, then here it is; Bibliography of Somali Studies is a comprehensive online system meant for the scholars and researchers of the field of Somali Studies to browse and the aim of BOSS is to offer an open access database, containing an indexed bibliographic data of Somali Studies. The bibliography is established to help scholars and researchers in the field of Somali Studies to browse books, articles, reports and conference proceedings relevant to their research projects. BOSS is planned to produce an electronic annotated bibliography of Somali Studies field.

There are many ways we can look into how the field of Somali Studies came to be but one pivotal moment in this regard is the establishment of the Somali Studies International Association in 1978. Professor Lee Cassanelli writes that the field of Somali Studies was considered a minor subfield of Ethiopian Studies which also was part of the larger African Studies. Ever since the establishment of this congress, many important meetings and conferences that spanned more than 40 years (Cassanelli, 2008). It is indeed worth mentioning that the last conferences of Somali Studies (Hargeysa 2018 and Jigjiga 2021) took place under the auspices of Hargeysa Cultural Centre with collaboration with regional and local institutions. This has inspired many scholars and researchers to write more and produce knowledge over the years and this is where our work here comes handy.

One of the central tenets of Hargeysa Cultural Centre's work is to promote knowledge production and providing an enabling environment for researcher to thrive academically by getting access to the published work and also citing other scholars on the field in order to produce knowledge. There are already existing bibliographies who contain resources on Somali studies with particular focus on language and literature including Archivio Somalia at Università di Roma, The Digital Somali Library at Indiana University and Libris at the National Library of Sweden. The fact that the bibliography is based in institution who is working in the global south attests to this goal and so far the experience of this process was successful.

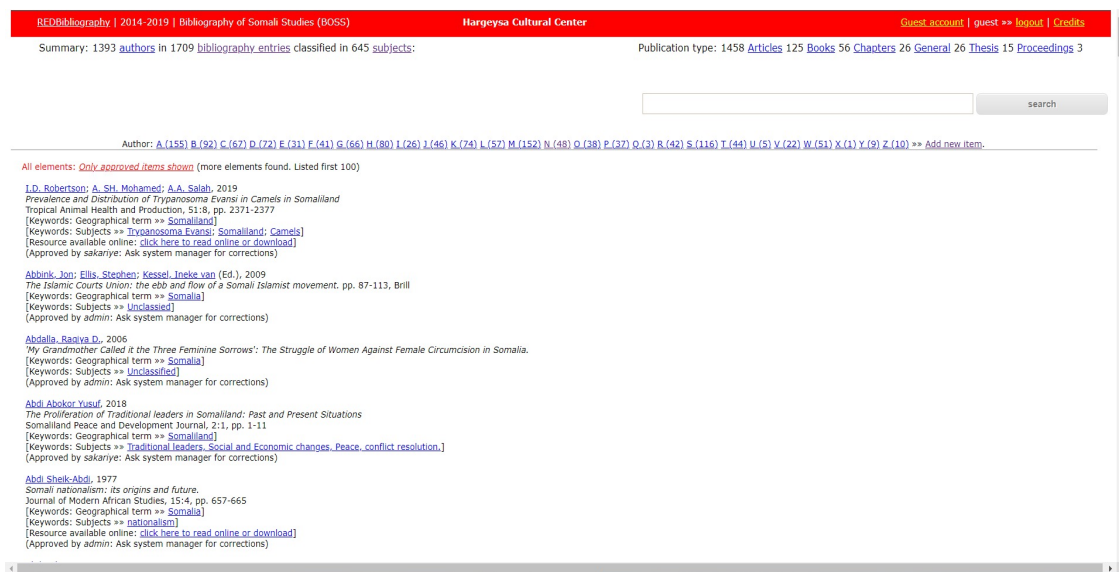
There was a wide global consensus on the importance of citation and referencing for the research works. For starters, it gives the researcher more grounds to explore what has been written or established in the specific area he/she is writ-

ing about. Also, it gives the authors of the said document their deserved credit for the work they produced. We at the Cultural Centre concur with this idea and that is why we set out to promote meaningful knowledge production on the field of Somali Studies and at the same time give the authors their deserved recognition. One unique aspect of our bibliography is it has a space for the research works that are not as popular as books and journal articles. These include thesis, general works, conference proceedings and other academic production.

So how this bibliography works

BOSS is a web-based online platform and it needs a valid user id and password in order to access it and to research data. The system administrator, who defines also a specific role for each approved user, provides the user id and the password upon request. This gives the system to monitor new members joining the BOSS and also helps the user to have his/her account. It is a self-explanatory system where you get to see all the major functions of the system; the statistics of the number of authors, entries, subjects. In addition to this, it shows the different classifications of the data in the system such as books, book chapters, journal articles, thesis etc. Hence any new user will be able to browse the system either by title of the publication or the author or the keywords the publication contains.

As of today, the BOSS contains more than 1693 authors, 1964 bibliography, 645 subjects, and these subjects are divided as such; 133 books, 1637 articles, 68 chapters, 26 general, 73 thesis and finally 15 conference proceedings. The team working on the system update the data on daily basis and follow the latest published works by scholars and thanks to the BOSS, many scholars can now browse and easily find the reference they need for the projects. We aim at adding more content in the coming year and we target to upload as much data as we can especially those by scholars based in the country.



Moustafa Ali Ahmad is head of the Library of the Hargeysa Cultural center and is also the manager of the Bibliography of the Somali Studies database. He comes from an international relations study background and he is interested in social justice, politics, and research. He can be reached at moustafa.ahmad@redsea-online.org

Bibliography

Cassanelli, L. (2008). The Somali Studies International Association: A Brief History .
Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies, 1-10.