

Ethiopian Village Studies II

(Designed and edited by Philippa Bevan, Alula Pankhurst and Tom Lavers)

Korodegaga

Dodota-Sire *wereda*

Arssi Zone

Oromia Region

researched by

Workneh Abebe and Aster Shibeshi (2005)

and

Assefa Tolera and Mesfin Tadesse (1996)

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One of a series of six studies edited and produced by the Ethiopia Wellbeing in Developing Countries Research Programme, based at the University of Bath, UK, and financed by the Economics and Social Research Council, UK. The rural Village Studies II are updates of four of the 15 Village Studies I published in 1996 (Dinki, Korodegaga, Turufe Kecheme and Yetmen). The two Urban Studies I cover new sites in Addis Ababa and Shashemene.

Foreword

The reports in this series are outputs from the Wellbeing in Developing Countries (WeD) research programme organised and coordinated by the University of Bath, UK and financed by the Economic and Social Research Council, UK, between 2002 and 2007. Ethiopia is one of the four countries selected for the research.¹ The aim of the programme is to develop a conceptual and methodological framework for studying the social and cultural construction of wellbeing in developing country contexts, and thereby investigate linkages between quality of life, power and poverty in order to contribute to improving policy and practice.

WeD Ethiopia selected twenty rural and two urban sites for its WIDE² research. Community profiles for fifteen of the rural sites had been produced in 1995 and 1996 (WIDE1)³ and five new sites were added in 2003, when further community level research was undertaken in the twenty sites (WIDE2), involving exploratory protocol-guided research during one month in July and August 2003 by teams composed of one female and one male researcher in each site.

Six sites were selected for the DEEP⁴ research, including four of the rural sites and both urban sites.⁵ In-depth fieldwork was carried out between July 2004 and November 2005 by teams composed of one female and one male researcher spending about three weeks of each month in their respective sites. The four rural sites were chosen from the two largest regions: Oromia and Amhara. In each region one of the selected sites was more remote (Korodegaga in Oromia and Dinki in Amhara), and the other closer to market and state influences (Turufe Kecheme in Oromia and Yetmen in Amhara). The urban sites, Kolfe in the capital city, Addis Ababa, and Arada in Kebele 08/09 of Shashemene, a business city in the south, were selected on the basis of the research team's interests in market areas, community-based organisations and urban-rural linkages. One of the rural sites, Turufe Kecheme, is close to Shashemene town.

Profiles are available for the following six sites:

Rural sites:

Dinki, Ankober *Wereda*, North Shewa Zone, Amhara Region

Korodegaga, Dodota-Sire *Wereda*, Arssi Zone, Oromia Region

Turufe Kecheme, Shashemene *Wereda*, East Shewa Zone, Oromia Region

Yetmen, Enemay *Wereda*, East Gojjam Zone, Amhara Region

Urban sites:

Arada, Kebele 08/09, Shashemene, East Shewa Zone, Oromia Region.

Kolfe, Kebele 10/11, Kolfe-Keranyo Kifle *Ketema*, Addis Ababa City Administration.

The (DEEP) research involved a Resource and Needs Survey with 250 households followed by in-depth process research involving monthly community and household diaries with households differentiated by gender, wealth and size, life histories of children, adults and old people, and modules exploring thematic research topics including community institutions, elites and destitution, poverty dynamics, migration, intergeneration relations, collective action, and a quality of life survey. A research database has been produced including data at individual, household and community levels which is being used to produce a book and research papers.

¹ The other three countries are Bangladesh, Peru and Thailand.

² Wellbeing and Illbeing Dynamics in Ethiopia.

³ The 15 Village Studies were produced by the Centre for the Study of African Economies, Oxford, UK and the Department of Sociology, Addis Ababa University and financed by the UK Overseas Development Administration and can be obtained from the web-site (www.csae.ox.ac.uk)

⁴ In-Depth Exploration of Ethiopian Poverty.

⁵ Likewise the other countries in the WeD project selected a similar number of urban and rural sites.

The rural village studies were produced starting with the 1996 community profiles, which were constructed from a background paper based on secondary sources, rapid assessment material collected by site managers and enumerators involved in the three rounds of a household economic survey (the ERHS⁶), a field visit during one month by an anthropology student, a questionnaire completed by the enumerators at the end of the household survey and a community economic survey administered by the site managers.

The 1996 profiles were updated, and revised with a focus on the major research interests and approaches of the WeD programme. The new versions are largely the product of insights from the researchers who carried out intensive fieldwork in the sites over 16 months from mid 2004 to late 2005.

Many people participated in the construction of the profiles, the most important being the people in the villages who answered questions, raised issues we had not thought of and provided hospitality to our fieldworkers. The site managers, enumerators, and anthropologists involved in 1995 played a vital role. First drafts of the 1996 profiles were constructed by Etalem Melaku-Tjirongo and Joanne Moores, and backup in terms of translating, editing, word processing and map-making and was provided by Tina Barnard, Ziggy Bevan, Girma Getahun, Haile Redai, Sarah Smith, and Ruth Tadesse. Economist colleagues at Oxford (Shukri Ahmed, Stefan Dercon and Pramila Krishnan) and Addis Ababa (particularly Bereket Kebede, Getinet Astatke, and Mekonnen Tadesse) were influential in shaping our ideas, and the administration in the Economics Department at Addis Ababa University was extremely supportive.

The 2004-2006 research design benefited from the inter-disciplinary discussions and debates of the WeD research group in Bath, including anthropologists, economists, psychologists, and sociologists, and the research teams from Bangladesh, Thailand and Peru. A number of the core Bath team provided intellectual stimulus, advice and support, and several members collaborated in various aspects of the research design and/or visited Ethiopia including Allister McGregor, the director of the project, Ian Gough, Sarah White, Suzy Skevington, Bereket Kebede, Laura Camfield, Susan Johnson, Julie Newton, Andy McKay, Catherine Dom, Virginia Williamson, and Anne Yates. Logistical support was provided by Becky Lockley, Jane French, Diana Duckling, Emer Brangan, Teresa King, Mark Ellison and Jun Zhang.

The project benefited from discussions and collaborations with John Hoddinott, from the International Food Policy Research Institute, Marleen Dekker from the Free University in Amsterdam, Luc Christiaensen and Caterina Ruggeri-Laderch from the World Bank, Pramila Krishnan from Cambridge University, Stefan Dercon from Oxford University, Charles Schaefer from Valparaiso University, Nuala O'Brien and Kevin Kelly from Development Cooperation Ireland, Simon Winetraube from the British Council and Claudia Fumo and Laure Beaufilets from the UK Department for International Development. A local NGO, PADET, and the Learning Centre provided office space for the project.

In Ethiopia the main members involved in the research design and management were Feleke Tadele, Yisak Tafere, Bethlehem Tekola, Solomon Tesfay, Ashebir Desalegn, and Theodros Wolde Giorgis. Members of Addis Ababa University Department of Sociology who took part in the project at various stages included Ayalew Gebre, Melese Getu, Derese Getachew and Asrat Ayalew (the last two of whom went for graduate studies to Bath). The project benefited from support from the Economics Department of Addis Ababa University particularly in carrying out the Resource and Needs Survey. The project also benefited from advice from a network of advisors from various disciplines who are

⁶ The Ethiopian Rural Household Survey involves a panel survey carried out by the Economics Department of Addis Ababa University in collaboration with the Oxford Centre for the Study of African Economies in 1994 and the International Food Policy Institute in 2004.

too numerous to mention.

The following researchers took part in the 2004-2006 research in the six sites, although most of the drafting of the rural profiles was carried out by one female and one male researcher, generally those who spent longest in the site or were the last researchers involved, whose names are on the front of the profiles and are italicised in the list below. The urban profiles involved more researchers, with greater input from the field coordinator and editors.

Arada: Abebech Belayneh, Abraham Asha, Bethlehem Tekola, Demissie Gudisa, Habtamu Demille, Mahder Tesfu and Rahwa Mussie

Dinki: *Damtew Yirgu*, Kiros Berhanu and *Tsega Melesse*

Kolfe: Bethlehem Tekola, Demiye Tefalet, Eyob Mhreteab Rahwa Mussie, Tigist Tefera and Yisak Tafere

Korodegaga: *Aster Shibeshi*, Tsega Melesse and *Workneh Abebe*;

Turufe Kecheme: *Bizuayehu Ayele*, Demissie Gudisa, Tsega Melesse and *Yohannes Gezahegn*

Yetmen: *Agazi Tiemelisan*, Asham Asazenew, Hiwot Atfraw, *Kiros Berhanu*, Leleena Aklilu and Lewoyehu Ayele

Most of the editing, standardisations, formatting, improvement of the maps, photographs, seasonal calendars etc was carried out by Tom Lavers.

Further information about the Wed-Ethiopia project can be obtained from the web-site: www.wed-ethiopia.org. The Bath University WeD website www.welldev.org.uk provides overall information about the project worldwide.

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1. Locating the Site In Time and Place.

Geography and Population

The community of the Korodegaga Peasant Association is composed of different clans of Oromo people, who have settled in nine villages. Alelu and Amola are 1 hour and 50 minutes walk from Sefera and Buko while Chirota and Arda are 1 hour 30 minutes from these villages. Shallotta, Olati and Bowra are 35 minutes walk from Sefera and Buko. In 1994 there were 304 households at the site and the total population was 1,400, according to *kebele*⁷ sources, though the supervisors of the economic household survey thought the population was larger. Compared to surrounding villages Korodegaga is larger in area but poorer. In 1994 Korodegaga was part of Dodota *Wereda* of Arssi zone of Region 4 or Oromia. Then Dodota and Sire were two different *wereda*. During the regionalisation process they merged to become Dodota-Sire *wereda*. The boundary between Korodegaga and the neighbouring areas in Shewa is the Awash River, which people cross on two rafts manually hauled across the river on a steel cable. Korodegaga also shares a boundary with some *kebele* in Sire *wereda* of Arssi zone from which it is separated by the Qalata River (which prevents contact during rainy months). However, travel to Dera town (the capital of Dodota *Wereda*) is possible: the walking distance is 3 to 3½ hours. Korodegaga is remote. It is located at the north-east edge of Arssi administrative Zone, bordering on Eastern Shewa and is the farthest *kebele* from the capital city of the Zone - Asella. Korodegaga is mostly in the lowland area with an altitude of less than 1,000 metres above sea level (Webb, *et al* 1992: 34) but the altitude in the *kebele* ranges from 1,300 metres at Sefera/Buko to 1,500 metres at Alellu/Amolla.

According to old people the first settlement was started at Arda village at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. At that time the whole of the area was covered by luxuriant forests of different varieties. It was also endowed with different kinds of big and small wild animals. The area was used only for grazing purposes. Farming activities were a later development. With the increase of population mainly through immigration, the Alelu and Amola villages emerged. Villages continued to expand. Probably in the 1950s and 1960s the Shallotta village (now dominant in terms of population size) was established. This village forms a kind of belt between the Sefera and Buko villages on the one side, and the Chirota, Arda, and Alelu and Amola villages on the other side. During the same time or a little later, Chirota (to the north of Arda) and Buko (on the Korodegaga side of Sodere recreation centre) emerged (see map).

During the time of the Derg (1974-1991) all these scattered major and other smaller villages were forced to concentrate at one place under the villagisation programme. They were gathered at a new village called Sefera (which means village settlement). Thus, in the late 1970s and 1980s, all the above villages were disbanded in favour of Sefera, which was established on flat, fertile agricultural land. It was very close to the Awash River as well as to Sodere. With the coming to power of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) in 1991, Sefera was disbanded. This led to the re-establishment of the old villages in their original form. Sefera was converted into agricultural land and distributed to landless farmers. However, the establishment of the present irrigation scheme in Degaga area led to the settlement of some irrigation farmers in the area. Gradually this has led to the emergence of the new Sefera village, which is established on part of the old Sefera. Its nearness to Sodere, and the Awash River, the suitability of the whole area for irrigation, the presence of rafts (access to water transport), the presence of the primary school, and the accessibility for daily labour has resulted in additional settlers from other remote villages building houses in the village. But *kebele* officials have prevented the expansion of Sefera into land designated for irrigation projects.

⁷ The term *kebele* during the Derg period referred to the lowest administrative unit and was translated as "Peasants Association". On average three former *kebele* were regrouped into one unit under the EPRDF. The new larger *kebele mestedader* with salaried leadership is translated as "*kebele* administration". Since these studies relate to both periods for simplicity we have used the term *kebele* to refer to the study community.

There has been widespread deforestation in the past twenty years. Population increase, the expansion of agricultural lands, the cutting of trees for construction, and fuel, and firewood selling are contributory reasons for the decline of the forest environment. In the words of the local elders, the intensification of firewood selling is the major factor in the conversion of the forest zones into areas covered with smaller bushes, mainly in Chirota, Alelu and Amola.

The soil of Korodegaga is mainly sandy and its water-holding capacity is very low. Some of the soil is of good quality; crops and vegetables are grown in good condition under irrigation using motor pumps or hand pumps. However, much of the soil is subjected to heavy erosion every year. The slopes, high intensity of the rain, deforestation activities, and sandy condition of the soil greatly contribute to soil degradation. Most of the highland areas of the site are so highly eroded that farmers are forced to cultivate the bush and grazing lands. The water-holding problem of the soil also prevents the implementation of some agricultural development programmes like water harvesting. The attempt of the government to introduce this programme in the area resulted in total failure because the soil could not hold the water for any length of time.

The community's livelihood is based on settled farming. Korodegaga has repeatedly suffered from hunger since the 1980s. Webb *et al* (1992:35 and IFPRI, 1989:7-8) indicate the years 1983, 1986, 1987, 1989 and 1990 as years of crisis peaks in food supply. According to the Oromia Relief and Rehabilitation Commission Bureau Early Warning and Planning Department, in Dodota *Wereda* 73,367 people or 11,785 households sought relief because of displacement and drought (Oromia RRC Bureau, 1993:22). IFPRI's report says "...Korodegaga ... has been something of an anomaly in recent years in this otherwise grain-surplus province. ... The area forms part of a drought-prone belt that runs north-south through the floor of the Rift Valley at altitudes of between 1,200 and 1,500 metres" (IFPRI, 1989:7). The soil is sandy and clay loam. On the extent of soil degradation, IFPRI's 1989 report reads "...the longer-term dangers of continued deforestation are great... The likelihood of increased erosion over the medium-term is substantial, with both arable and grazing lands under threat" (IFPRI, 1989:21).

Sefera, Buko, Olati and a small part of Shallotta (Boura) have access to river water for irrigation. Sefera has more access to irrigation because the community irrigation pump was installed at this place and also the land has good quality soil. If the people work well and have good weather conditions, they get a good output from a parcel of land. Sefera and Buko are nearest to services like the *kebele* and Development Agent (DA) offices for different meetings, the grain mill and to Sodere where they can get transport.

Climate and Weather

Although Korodegaga is on the Arssi side of the Awash river (one of the largest rivers in Ethiopia), "...the locality through which it runs at this point is dry, receiving an average of between 600 and 700 mm of rainfall per annum" (IFPRI, 1989:7). Rain-fed agriculture is precarious in this locality. But, as IFPRI argued in 1989 (p7) the success of the Wonji and Matahara sugar estates and the fruit and vegetable plantations of Merti Jeju and Nura Era testify to the local potential of irrigated farming.

The rainy months⁸ are June, July and August. Except during the rainy months the area is very hot, making it very difficult for people to subsist given their low food intake. When the rains stop short, the heat dries the crops. In the rainy season the air is a bit colder than at other times. From November to January the range of temperature is very high. The night is very cold as the day is hot. Korodegaga is one of the most drought stricken areas in Dodota – Sire *wereda*. There is no or little rain in most parts of the

⁸ The people prefer to call it rainy months to seasons because there are only between 2 and 2½ months of rain in the community.

year. Though there is some rain in May and June, it is not sufficient to grow crops. The maximum rainfall comes in July and August, which are the sowing and weeding seasons respectively. Even during these months, the amount of rainfall is very small, and it rains with heavy intensity, which prevents the entering of raindrops into the soil. Moreover, in some years, the rain comes very late, and/or stops very early. These seasonal variations greatly contribute to the deterioration of rain-fed agriculture.

Topographical variations also contributed to differences in temperature and the distribution of rainfall. Areas like Shallotta, Arda, Alelu, and Amola are relatively higher in altitude. The day temperature is cold in these areas as compared with the temperature condition of Sefera and Buko areas, which are characterised by lowland, flat topography, high temperature, and a very small amount of rain. At Buko and Sefera villages, there is overhead sun which is very hot during the day and there is a severe wind and dust in the afternoon, especially after 3pm, which comes from the Shallotta direction. In comparison the highland areas get good rain during the rainy months. These areas are also windy.

The population get their water either from the Awash River or the Keleta River. The Awash River is a steady water supply the people use all the year. There are no fluctuations except for flooding sometimes in summer. It is also used for livestock and washing clothes. It takes 5 to 10 minutes to walk to it from Sefera and Buko and 30 minutes from Bowra, Olati and Shallotta villages. The Keleta River is also a steady water supply all year. It takes 10 minutes to walk to it from Allellu and 25 minutes from Amola, Arda and Chirota.

Farm Production

The principal crops in the area in 1994 included maize, *tef*, sorghum, beans, and sometimes chickling peas (especially during good rainy months). The economy of the population is based on subsistence farming, characterised by small farm size, limited fertiliser use, and the area is prone to climate-related production fluctuations (Webb,1992:35 and Gadisaa Birru interview, Feb.17, 1994). Maize and *tef* are the principal crops in Korodegaga (IFPRI,1989:37). "(F)irewood collection [and marketing] is the principal non-farm source of income for poorer farmers" (IFPRI,1989:21). In 1994 people did not market their output as it was not sufficient to cover subsistence needs.

The principal crops for subsistence are maize, *tef* and beans (*boloke*). Sorghum is purchased from the market but it is not now produced in the site. *Tef* and *boloke* are the main source of income during the harvesting season. They use the name *mashilla* (which means sorghum) for maize. They use *mashilla* and *bekolo* (maize) interchangeably for maize. Some farmers also produce sesame and barley. The use of fertiliser, selected seeds and weed-killers has been increasing in recent years. Shortage of rain is the major change for rain-fed agriculture. The area has experienced repeated crop failure caused by recurrent drought.

The other major challenge for rain-fed agriculture is the lack of farm oxen. Most poorer and female-headed households do not have oxen to cultivate their farmlands. As a result they are forced to rent or share-crop their lands or to cultivate it by borrowing oxen from richer households. Furthermore, there is a shortage of farmlands particularly for the young married people. Land distribution was carried out only in 1991. Thus, there are many landless people in the community.

In 1994 it was reported that there was no *belg* cropping season in the area, due to the absence of rain. Farmers could only produce during the *meher* season. After May or June most people do not have enough food to eat until the next harvest. The 1993 *meher* harvest was very low (the worst when compared with the last five years). The 1992 harvest was better than that of 1991. In 2005 some farmers produced maize during the *belg* season by using irrigation via motor pumps and hand pumps.

In 2005 informants reiterated that the past ten years were characterised by an overall decline in agricultural production from rain-fed farming. Crops were repeatedly destroyed by drought. Some harvest seasons were even worse than others. In 2003, for instance, there was no agricultural output obtained from rain-fed farming. In 2004, it was a little better, but the 2005 harvest was worse. The rain came very late and stopped very early. As a result, only some *tef* crop survived the drought to some extent. The destruction of crops was followed by severe shortage of food crops in the area. The months of December, January, February, and March were characterised by chronic hunger and almost all households purchased food from the market. The prices of food crops were so high that people could not afford to buy them. The problem of food was intensified by lack of food aid from the government and non-governmental organisations. It was only after March that some food aid under the safety net programme was started.

In a good year people sell *tef*. Of course, they do not sell all of it. Some households store it for seed (up to 100 kg) and they also consume small amounts mixed with home-grown maize, and sorghum, and wheat purchased from the market. On average they consume *tef* for about two months during the harvesting season.

In one of the Quality of Life Focus Group Discussions unmarried young people said that it is becoming difficult to depend on rain-fed farming, and because of recurrent drought and repeated crop failures it is better to expand irrigated farming. In the irrigation farm, people produce hybrid maize and use it for consumption. They also produce vegetables such as tomatoes, onions, peppers and fruits like papaya and sell them to merchants coming from Addis Ababa, Nazret or Dera. There are also petty traders (local or from Eastern Shewa) who purchase vegetables from farmers and sell them in Sodere, Awash Melkasa, Boffa, and Dera markets.

In 2006 there will be four modes of irrigation: a 40-hectare scheme provided by an international NGO; a 157-hectare scheme to be provided by government; a number of small farms irrigated by outside investors; and pumps bought by local farmers individually and in groups.

Currently most of the cash crop producers are farmers who have land in the community irrigation farm. The Self-Help International (SHI) sponsored irrigation scheme started to give service in 2001. It provides irrigation on small plots to about 130 households. The pump is worked by a diesel motor and irrigates 40 hectares of lands. 130 households directly participate in this irrigation scheme. The rest of the people participate indirectly, either as daily labourers or petty traders or share-croppers. Some individuals also produce vegetables using private pumps.

The government scheme has developed a scheme originally sponsored by UNICEF which was installed in the Derg period but which never worked. When they finished the work and ran the motor, the water flow from the irrigation pipe entered the Awash River on the other side of the motor due to technical design faults. In addition to technical design faults, the Awash River flooded the pumps in the summer of 1989, which caused serious damage to the motors. At that time, conflicts arose between the UNICEF officials and the Arssi Regional Administrative Office on the problems related to the failure of the irrigation project. Before the conflict was resolved the Derg was overthrown and was replaced by the present government (EPRDF). After the change of government in 1991 neither the government nor UNICEF took any action to repair these irrigation motors even though the local people and the extension workers repeatedly applied to the government to repair the motors, which would solve their food problem in a sustainable manner, rather than providing them with food aid. But the government did not head their requests. It was only in the second half of 2004 that the government determined to resume this pump.

In October 2004 three technicians came from the Oromia Small Scale Development Office to check the condition of the motors. They checked all the three motors and announced that they could give service with minor repairs. After this time, *wereda* officials told the people to make preparations to irrigate their

lands. In April 2005, irrigation experts from Oromia Irrigation Development Office visited the motors. They made the decision that it would be better to replace the old motors with new ones rather than repairing them. At the end of April, the Ethiopian radio transmitted the news that the regional government had decided to resume this pump by September 2005 budget year. This created happiness among the people of Korodegaga. After this a lot of works have been accomplished. The old motors have been dismantled and places are being prepared for the new ones. A large building was constructed with stones, cement and sand to protect the motors from flooding. In August there was a meeting about the distribution of irrigation land for the community members. Everyone can get ½ hectare. Both motors had arrived by September. People have started digging canals. It is expected to start in early 2006.

There are five investors who produce vegetables by renting lands from individual farmers. They produce in bulk for sale in towns such as Adama/Nazret, and they employ Amhara and Oromo migrant labourers. During the time of harvesting, they also employ local daily labourers. The migrant labourers work in the form of share-cropping. The activities of the investors are a recent development. In 1999, there was only one investor who acquired many hectares of land with the help of *wereda* officials. In 2003, the number rose to three, of which two were land rent investors. In 2005 there were five investors and their capacity to produce vegetables was very high. They used their own medium-sized private pumps. There are also more than 20 motor-pumps and some hand-pumps owned by individual farmers or farmer groups.

The main livestock kept in the area are cattle, sheep and goats. Goats are the most numerous. Due to shortage of rain there is a problem of fodder in the area. In 1994 households did not get any income from the sale of animal products such as milk, butter and eggs, but the introduction of hybrid hens by the Women's Credit Association now enables most households to sell as well as consume eggs and hens. It is becoming an important source of income mainly for the poor and female-headed households. The hens are given in the form of credit, which will be repaid in cash together with interest. The hens are provided by SHI in cooperation with the *Wereda* Agricultural Office. Hens are given in the form of credit from SH cooperative with the *Wereda* Agricultural Office for women. When they take the hens they pay a quarter of the cost. After a year they pay the rest of the money. Now only some people have cows and they do not give much milk because of the shortage of animal fodder. So milk is not sold. Three or four people sell small amounts of butter to people in their home who use it on their hair.

While they sell firewood collected from the communal woodland, they do not get any income from tree crops such as *gesho* or eucalyptus.

Infrastructure

The nearest towns are Dera (25 km south), Bofa (10 km north) and Awash Melkasa (8 km west). In 1994 there was a dirt road from the *kebele* that runs 18km from the local town of Dera and a manually hauled raft (steel cable) to cross the Awash (see picture). The raft is constructed of oil drums lashed to a wooden platform and crosses the Awash 2km downstream from Sodere.

An investor, Hailu Tuke, has established two grain mills on the opposite side of the Awash river about 1 km from the raft. The investor has also cattle fattening, irrigated farming and a shop in this place. He fattens up to 40 oxen at once, buying cattle of middle weight and selling them after three or four months. The shop has goods, like soap, coffee, kerosene, salt, hair food, shoes (plastic), bread, soft drinks, etc. He also sells wheat, sorghum, beans, *tef*, maize etc. In July 2005 he established a new raft on the Awash adjacent to the grain mills. He did this to facilitate the water transport for the people of Korodegaga. It is a shortest path for the people. With the establishment of this raft, the total rafts used by the local people increased to three. The major one was provided by the Red Cross five years ago; the other is in the Degaga area but is used only by some individuals and daily labourers to cross to the Bofa area. In addition to rafts, young people cross the Awash by swimming. Though the river is always dirty, people

swim, and wash in it and also drink its water. The water is polluted with waste from hotels and factories and the people are subject to waterborne diseases such as typhoid, amoeba and giardia as well as children's skin diseases. It also causes malaria. As described above the Awash River (the most irrigated river in Ethiopia) is also used for irrigation in Korodegaga.

There is no market in the village. The nearest weekly market (Mondays) is in Dera. This is also a grain and livestock market. There are grain and livestock marketing problems related to transportation, since the *kebele* is surrounded by the Awash and Keleta Rivers. At the present time people use the Sodere-Awash Melkase-Dera road to get to Dera market. People prefer to use cars rather than to walk. Some poor people, however, use the Korodegaga-Dera route travelling on foot. In the past this route was the main way to Dera and other parts of Arssi because there were no rafts to cross to Shewa. It is following this route that most present dwellers came to Korodegaga from the Itayaa and Dera areas. The establishment of the present community irrigation scheme in 2001 changed the importance of this route. Now, lorries come to load cash crop vegetables through this route. The route is cleared every year of unwanted materials like trees. The clearing is carried out by mass mobilisation. It is the presence of this route that helps the lorry drivers to travel through the difficult terrain of Korodegaga.

There is no shop in the community but some female-headed households sell cigarettes, salt, sugar, kerosene, coffee and food oil in their house. They bring these items from Dera or Sodere. In addition to Haile Tuke's shop, there is one shop started in 2005 in Bole village (found on the way to Sodere from Korodegaga). Sodere is becoming an important market place for the people of the community. It is a daily market for firewood sellers and petty cash crop sellers. There is also a weekly market (on Sunday) at Sodere. The presence of shops also makes it the favourite town for them.

The electricity for the school and *kebele* office was discontinued in 1995 because people refused to pay for it, and the government was not willing to subsidise it. In 2005, however, electricity was re-installed for resuming the damaged irrigation motor; and the people hope that the electric service will expand to their houses. The co-operative grain mill which operated during the Derg was discontinued following the coming to power of EPRDF. Now, the mill and millhouse are there but the mill does not give service. It was discontinued when the electric power was disconnected. After the malfunction of the mill, people were forced to go to Awash Melkasa (8 km) to grind their grains. This was very problematic both in terms of cost and distance. But the establishment of Haile Tuke's mill in November 2004 solved the problem.

Social Structure

In 1994 the only ethnic group living in the site were Oromo. There had not been any ethnic conflict at the site in recent years. The main language spoken is Oromiffa. A few people speak Amharic. In 2005 there were about 30 migrant labourers who worked in groups of four or more on the land rented and irrigated by the investors. They stay from the planting of the seed to the sale of the output. The investor covers all input costs and before the output is shared (equally) his expenditures are reimbursed. Most of them are Amharas who come mostly from Wollo (northern Ethiopia) but also from Eastern Shewa. There are also some Wolayita. Most of them are youngsters. All of them are men; there are no female migrant daily labourers. Most of them are Orthodox Christian by religion. They come into the community alone without any family members and live in temporary tent-like houses which they build around the irrigated farms of the investors (mainly from Awash Melkasa and Nazret) who rented the land from the locals. They prepare food for themselves.

Some of these labourers also rent the land from local farmers and produce vegetable cash crops. There are also a few share-cropper migrant labourers. Investors prefer to employ migrant labourers because they believe that the temporary settlers are hard-workers and well-experienced in irrigation work. It should be noted that there is no strong social interaction between the migrants and locals, but there are

some conflicts. Local people accuse them of raping their daughters and introducing bad habits like drinking etc.

More than 99% of the population of Korodegaga are Muslims. During the field research in 1995, four Orthodox Christian households were identified which have migrated from Eastern Shewa. All of them live in Sefera village. Two of them came to the area many years ago, and have their own private lands, both rain-fed and irrigated while the other two came recently and have no land. They earn a living by doing daily work or selling firewood. Four of them have their own house and family. There is no church in the community so they do not go to church for praying. Generally, their relations with the natives are good although one informant said that people consider him as alien to them and do not give co-operate with him in times of conflict with native members. The female researcher was told there was only one Christian woman, although there are four Christian households who are residents with their own lands.

Although the infiltration of Islam into the present day Arssi region goes back to the sixteenth century, it became the dominant religion only during the last decades of the nineteenth century (Braukämper, 1988:769). The Ethiopian Orthodox Church adopted an offensive missionary strategy to challenge Islam since the restoration of Ethiopian rule in the 1940s (*ibid*: 770). Braukämper adds "Arssi informants reported that *abuna* Baselyos travelled in the Lake Regions as far as Gadab in 1957 and baptised a considerable number of people... However, almost all Christian Arssi opted to turn to Islam shortly afterwards" (*ibid*). It is because of this that Braukämper concluded that by the beginning of the 1970s Arssiland was almost completely Islamised. IFPRI's report on the religion of the Korodegaga community concurs with this observation. "All 186 households currently in the village are Muslim" (IFPRI, 1989:23). There have never been any religious conflicts at the site.

The influence of Islam has been increasing in the site within the past ten years. The main reasons for this are (1) the penetration of Islamic preachers (who strongly enthuse about the importance of Sharia traditional religious practices), (2) the expansion of Quran education and Quran schools, (3) the expansion of the construction of Mosques and (4) the widening of religious interaction with other Muslim communities including Saudi Arabia through pilgrimages and female housemaid workers. In addition to several traditional private mosques (made from wood, mud and thatch), there are three large and modern mosques which have been constructed in the past four years using money obtained from Muslims in Saudi Arabia.

In the past, Korodegaga was forest land with no settlers. Gradually people migrated from the nearest *wereda* (Sire, Huruta, Iteya, etc) in search of grazing land. Those Muslims lived by rearing animals but gradually they cut trees to sow maize and eventually settled. Then Emperor Menelik granted land to new migrants from Shewa (Amhara and Oromo Orthodox Christians) introducing the principle of *balabat*. Those *balabat* had different titles like *Kegn Azmach*, *Gira Azmach*, *Fita'awrare*, *Degazmach*, etc. These migrants became permanent settlers by owning a lot of land.

Among the Oromo society, like most of the rest of Ethiopian societies, male dominance in almost all spheres of human activities is clearly observed. The Central Statistical Authority's (CSA) report of the 1984 Housing and Population Census revealed this fact. "The headship rate was found to be lower among female than male at all age-groups, a finding not unexpected given the dominance of the patriarchal and patrilineal family system in Ethiopia" (CSA, 1989:49). It is, therefore, clear that crucial farm management decisions are made by men unless that particular household is headed by a woman.

There are about nine clans in the community. The Sebro is the most powerful and dominant clan. It is dominant not only in Korodegaga but also in most parts of Arssi. The majority of the local people belong to this clan. Elders of this clan play a significant role in the social, cultural and political activities of the people. Their role in a conflict resolution, in particular, is very strong. Members of the Sebro clan seem to feel superior for belonging to the clan, and sometimes they discriminate against some minor clans as

weak. Since intra-clan marriage relationships are culturally forbidden the Sebro conduct marriage relations with other clans of the same religion. Since the rest of the clans are small in size most Sebro clan members have marriage relations with other Muslim communities in Itaya, Sire, Dera and to some extent Eastern Shewa. This does not mean that there is no intra-community marriage relations. There are individuals who establish marriage with non-Sebro clans in Korodegaga. The non-Sebro clans recognise the dominance and power of the Sebro. One informant from the Lude clan said that without doubt the Sebro are powerful and strong; they are well organised and have good internal cohesion. In the past the Sebro were even more powerful, taking first place on social, political and religious issues. For example, religious and ritual activities were governed by this clan and also respected elders and mediators were selected from the Sebro.

History

The history of the Arssi Oromo is not exceptional as far as their place in the history of Imperial Ethiopia is concerned. They suffered a similar fate as most of the people placed under Ethiopian imperial rule towards the turn of the last century. People recall that the introduction of the Imperial Ethiopian rule by Menelik II and the strengthening of the system by Emperor Haile Selassie I denied people their right to farm the flat, fertile and cool areas of Arssi land and forced them to move to the arid, hot and ragged lowlands. The introduction of the alien political system converted them to tenants and replaced their traditional social, political and cultural system called *gada*.

The earliest event people in the village could recall being told about was 1888 when there was a conflict between the richest Arssi Oromo Gossa Dollemo and the Amhara occupier known as *Ras Abate Bellew*. In 1893 there was a conflict between Menelik's soldiers and the Arssi Oromo organised by Lenjiso Diga (the *Kedida* war). In 1935 local strong men were chosen and ordered by Haile Selassie to go to Ogaden to fight the Italians who were coming into Ethiopia through Somalia. In 1944 Haile Selassie returned from England. From 1935 to 1944 local people collaborated with the Italians: some *balabat* (local chiefs) fought on the side of the Italians.

In 1962 the day became dark. The people did not know if it was an eclipse or not but it was from 11am that the day became dark and all those who were looking after cattle in the fields could not return to their homes. In 1968 Haile Selassie made Sahilu Difaye leader of the Arssi Administrative Region. In 1974 Haile Selassie was detained. In 1983 National Military Service was declared. In 1985 the drought forced many people to sell their cattle, to start selling firewood and to migrate to other areas. In 1986 the farmers started to organise under the Producers' Cooperatives (PCs). In 1991 came Transformation (the end of the *Derg*).

There was villagisation at the site in 1986. Since 1991 people have moved back to their original homes, either voluntarily or with some pressure.

Major events that stick in most people's minds are:

- road construction in 1985/86
- villagisation in 1986
- the death of *Haji Bosie* in 1987
- the school was built in 1989
- land redistribution in 1991
- death of *Haji Kedir Detie* in 1993
- over flooding of the Awash in 1996
- severe drought and wide spread distress migration in 1997.
- some farmers started to produce vegetables by using hand-pumps in 2000
- The SHI sponsored irrigation scheme was constructed in 2001
- Destruction of vegetables by diseases in 2002

Maize is the oldest crop grown in Korodegaga and the surrounding areas. Although the life of the earliest residents was based on cattle-rearing they ate maize together with milk. But they only ploughed one-tenth of a hectare because they used wood as a hoe and could produce enough maize for the family from that much land. The quantity consumed by a family in 1888 was not more than half a quintal per annum. One informant said that before the time of Haile Selassie the staple foods of the people were meat and milk; people did not drink water but only milk. It was not common to eat food crops. But now, because of drought there are no more cattle and milk, so they feed only on grains; during the harvesting season their own production and at other times, purchased from the market. Therefore, the quantity consumed by a family is highly increased because there are no quality foods like milk, meat, butter, different vegetables and fruits.

Wheat and barley were introduced when Emperor Menelik sent his soldiers as a form of migrant (as if they were people attacked by famine) into Arssi land and begged the surrounding rich people to help them. These migrants got land and started to plough and plant wheat and barley. The local people imitated their farming system and began to produce these crops. However, the need of the Emperor and his followers to make these soldiers landlords in Arssi (because the soldiers became tenants of the Emperor and his followers if this strategy was effective), and the discomfort of the new life for the Arssi Oromo when they were sedentary compared with nomadic, led to disagreements between the two. The new soldier settlers who were assisted by the government began to extend their farmland by force, and in 1912 the Oromos led by Lenjiso Diga organised themselves to attack the soldiers. The conflict happened at a place called Kedida and lasted two days. The soldiers won, and afterwards the representative of the government came to the area and made an agreement between the two groups. The Oromos allowed the new settlers to keep the land they controlled until the conflict began, while the soldiers agreed to give their weapons to the representatives and not to fight in future.

Crop History 1995

	1888	1893	1935	1944	1962	1968	1974	1983	1985	1986	1991
Maize	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Wheat		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Barley		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Tef</i>			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Haricot beans			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Millet			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Lentils			x	x	x	x	x	x			
Horsebeans			x	x	x	x	x	x			
Cowpeas			x	x	x	x	x	x			
Banana											x
Papaya											x
Orange											x
Tomato											x
Sweet potato											x
Onion											x
Green pepper											x

Source: Rapid assessment

The Amhara settlers knew how to prepare *injera*, bread, *tella*, *wot* etc which were not known to the Oromos. The Amharas also had contact with other Amharas living elsewhere which gave them access to different types of crops. The Italian Occupation helped the Amhara to increase their farm size and grow different kinds of crops. When the Italians began to take the cattle owned by the Oromo nomads by

force, most of the richest Oromos were forced to migrate to other areas and then the Amharas took their land and became landlords.

In 1961 (when General Mengistu Neway, the Defence Minister, tried to get rid of the higher officials in Haile Selassie's government) most of the nearby towns (Dera, Boffa, Awash Melkasa and Sodere) started their weekly markets. The peasants sold livestock, grain and other farm products and bought finished goods like clothes, salt, sugar, edible oil, spices etc.

The construction of Sodere Resort Hotel 3 km from the *kebele* enabled the local people to use the public transport following the road from the hotel to Awash Melkasa, then towards Asella (the capital of Arssi administrative region) and Nazret. The downfall of the Imperial government and the coming to power of the *Derg* emancipated them from tenancy by nationalising all rural lands in March 1975. Under the *Derg* agricultural PCs, service cooperatives and collectivised villages were established. Korodegaga Peasant Association is composed of two *kebele*, which were called Korodegaga and Burkunteedagaga. *Haji Gabbi*, a former chairman of the *kebele* recalls that the reason why the two *kebele* joined was the quota system of military conscription. He says: "the two *kebele* were required to recruit 10 militia men each, which was too much for such sparsely populated *kebele*. Then leaders of the two *kebele* and elders sat together and decided to assimilate the two *kebele* and formed Korodegaga *kebele* which has 1,400 ha instead of 800."

The 1985 drought changed the productivity of people. Since this time there has not been sufficient rain, and the crops, especially lentils, horsebeans, and cowpeas, began to dry at the time of their growth. The farmers decided therefore to stop producing these crops. In 1994 the people of Korodegaga had nothing in common except the Service Cooperatives shop located roughly 100m from the Awash. A significant number of the population abandoned the new villages and the members of the PCs divided their collective properties among themselves and started working on their individual plots. Between 1984 and 1994 there has not been any history of good harvests. The people recalled that the area had been food deficient since 1980/81.

In 1986 the government ordered the *kebele* to organise the farmers under the Co-operative farming to be able to help them by introducing new technologies. The farm lands of the cooperatives and the collectivised villages were established on the edge of Awash river at a place called Koro. About 85 farmers, of whom 3 were female, became members of the PC. Most of the fertile land came under their control. There were farmers who were not members of the association who owned land privately. UNICEF introduced irrigation for the co-operative farmers by installing a motor generator. The co-operative farmers grew bananas, papaya, oranges, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, onions and green peppers and shared the produce at harvest time. One farmer could gain up to 2,000 *birr* from the sale of these crops. The amount of *birr* given to each farmer was based on the number of days worked. There was no farmer who obtained less than 1,000 *birr* in addition to the food crops grown. They were by and large richer than the farmers not organised into an association. The PC was abolished with the abolition of the *Derg* regime in 1991. No one was responsible for maintaining the generator and organising the farmers to continue their membership. But they hired someone to maintain the generator and shared the land to use separately. They continued to grow these crops until 1993 but stopped when the generator became useless due to flooding from the Awash River.

There was no farming using oxen until the occupation by Menelik's soldier. Sowing of crops also began at that time. The life of all the Arssi Oromo was based on cattle-rearing. The fertility of the soil was "100%" until the Italian occupation. An informant produced 10 quintals of maize on ¼ hectare (1 *timad*) of land a year before the Italian occupation. There were changes in consumption habits because most people started to eat *injera*, bread etc, and the extension of farmland as well as deforestation during and after the Italian occupation decreased the fertility of the soil.

Deforestation continued in the past fifty years. Before the great famine of 1984/5, cutting of trees had

been carried out for timber and for the expansion of farmlands. After this time, however, cuttings of trees for firewood (both consumption and sales) significantly contributed to environmental degradation and the deterioration of the livelihood of the people. Forest destruction led to climate change and intensified soil erosion. In turn these had a strong impact on the productivity and production of farmlands. Drought repeatedly hit the area; as a result most people reached the level of not feeding themselves and their households.

Following the abolition of the PC and the damage of the generator, almost all the cash crop vegetables and fruits which had previously been produced by the PC members, were destroyed by drought. Most of the PC members were subjected to repeated food shortage. The continuous crop failure due to shortage of rain greatly contributed to the impoverishment of the people. In the second half of the 1990s in order to overcome food shortage some strong farmers developed a strategy of irrigating their land using hand pumps. As they became successful in these activities other farmers also joined them. In 1999 they wrote a letter to the *wereda* office stating that they needed some help to expand irrigation. By this time some farmers had already bought private diesel pumps in a group of 8 or 10. After observing the achievements and initiatives of the farmers, the *wereda* agricultural office and SHI (which had recently opened an office in Dera to support small scale irrigation schemes) decided to plant a big irrigation pump in the community. Within one year, two big motors (bought at the cost of 1,220,000 *birr* each) were established to irrigate 40 hectares of land for 130 households organised into a cooperative. Since the year 2001, the members have produced different kinds of cash crops and, with the exception of some weak farmers who became bankrupt, most have experienced a significant transformation in their economic status and they are found in the range of medium to rich. The major challenges of this scheme is fluctuation in market price and the spread of plant disease. In 2001 for example, many farmers failed to re-pay the debt incurred to buy modern inputs because the output prices were too low to cover the cost of production.

2. Seasonal Activities and Calendars

Calendars are included in appendix B at the end of this profile. Some notes of relevance to these calendars are included here.

Men's credit: In 1994 credit was supplied in April and May to buy seeds and from June to October to buy food. However, in 2005 credit among local farmers was reported as highly reduced because many poor farmers had little capacity to repay what they borrowed from rich or medium farmers. Even lending from rich to rich is very minimal especially during the years of severe drought and hunger. Members of the Degaga Irrigation Development Cooperative (DIDC) can borrow inputs (fertiliser, selected seeds, pesticides, weed-killer) whose cost is returned with interest after harvesting. The eight men's *Iddir* now provide credit to a member only when a member of his family failed to get medical treatment due to lack of money. The money is to be returned to the organisation with interest.

Women's credit: In 1994 there was greater credit requirement between October and December even though it is harvest time. It is a time when almost all of the residents suffer from malaria and they need money to go for treatment at the Malaria Controlling Centre in Nazret. Anyone asked to lend money refuses to do so unless they are sure the borrower will repay. Most farmers repay loans when they sell their food crops. In 2005 it was reported that the cost paid in relation to malaria had decreased. The problem was solved by the distribution of chloroquine tablets in the *kebele* by a trained man. If the ill person deteriorates they go to Awash Melkasse health centre for treatment and medicines.

However women take credit any time they have a problem or when they face a sudden thing such as death of relatives, children falling sick, or wanting to go somewhere. Women headed households borrow money from relatives during taxation (March to April) and when prices of livestock are low.

Women's labour: it is difficult to give the proportion of time spent on childcare. In any case most children are cared for by their elder sisters and sometimes brothers.

Festivals: In 1994 there was an important festival celebrated by women, called *Arete* and held in September. They prepared food - bread, *injera* with *wot*, *kolo*, *karibo* (used as *tella*) in their houses and brought it near the Awash River. They cooked coffee and then the elder men and women begged Allah to make the New Year peaceful, healthy and a year of excess production. Before they ate the food, they threw a very small amount from each and every type of food and drink into the river. However, this festival has not taken place in the past six/seven years. The strengthening of the sharia and the strong agitation, by sheiks, against this traditional cult is the major factor for its destruction. Today, any activities of such kinds are subject to social and religious discrimination. Many young people even forget the presence of this festival. *Karibo* is a drink that does not contain alcohol and all Arssi Muslims drink it, but in Korodegaga it is not prepared, even for wedding ceremonies, as the fundamentalists claim that the Sharia law forbids it.

Livestock sales and disease: Livestock are mainly sold after March/April for paying tax, buying seed, purchasing food crops and also at the time of weddings, to pay for bridewealth, clothes, etc. They are also sold when there is the need for cash for health problem, education, clothes or other contributions. In years of bad harvest, people sell livestock from November, perhaps up until the following harvest in October. A disease called *Kiftina* is very common from early September to November, causing wounds to different parts of the body of goats and sheep.

Consumption: The most useful crop is maize. It is sown at the end of May and in June. The people start to eat it in September, by collecting from the farm before it dries. October and November is the time of harvest and more is then available. After the maize is threshed in December women get it from their stock and the quantity consumed reaches maximum point until February. During these three months women also sell some of the maize to buy coffee, salt etc. In March and April the amount of maize in stock decreases and the next four months are hazardous for most of the households except for those who have produced enough and saved it. Most farmers begin to buy maize. Men start to sell goats and sheep while women sell firewood to buy food.

Tef is consumed only for three months. It is the most important cash crop in the area because it costs more than haricot beans. The farmers are always forced to pay tax, fertiliser loans, school fees and other payments during the harvest time. It is also during harvest time that they repay most of their loans. Therefore they sell almost all their *tef* after harvesting in December, though some is saved as seed for the coming farming season. The women prepare food from it for only three months (December to February). After that it is rare to find *tef* in a farmer's stock and they cannot buy it for consumption.

Wheat is mainly consumed in the form of bread while barley and maize are consumed as porridge. Due to the expansion of drought in the past ten years, most poor farmers buy maize and wheat from December. By mixing the two crops together, they bake either breads or *injera* or make porridge. The well-to-do families, especially those who have private irrigation pumps, can produce maize even during the winter season. Onions and tomatoes are produced in the community irrigation scheme throughout the year. They are produced by members of the co-operative, private land renters of investors and private irrigation pump owners. The crops are sold to traders from Nazret and Addis Abba at any time when the vegetables ripened for collection. Most investors however, sow cash crops during the rainy season (June or July) because the rain helps them to reduce the cost of diesel, which is used for the motor. It takes two months to produce the seedlings of both tomatoes and onions. After it is transplanted to the farm, it takes three months for harvesting. Some farms also produce green pepper for cash. It is produced through irrigation at different times of the year and is sold in the market by the producers themselves rather than to the in-coming cash crop traders.

Haricot beans take a short time to grow (2.5 - 3 months) and are the second most important cash crop after *tef*. Women store a small amount of beans, which can be used for only two months (October and November). There is no consumption after November since they cannot afford to buy them in the market because the price is too high.

Millet cannot be prepared for food alone unless it is mixed with other crops such as *tef*, barley and wheat. A small quantity of millet can be used for a long period of time. The farmers eat millet from their stock for 6 to 7 months. Millet, horsebeans, cowpeas and *guaya* (vetch) do not grow in the area but they are bought at the market to prepare *wot*. Between January and April the amount bought is a little bit higher than the other months since they have cash from the sale of farm products. Between May and September the farmers have little cash and the amount bought decreases. Between October and December is the appropriate time to buy these in large quantities since they have cash. They also eat *injera* which needs *wot* during these months.

Injera is prepared from the mixture of small amount of *tef*, maize, wheat and sorghum (during harvesting season). After January/February it prepared from maize, wheat and sorghum. *Wot* is prepared from bean and *boloke* purchased from the market. *Nifro* (cooked grain) prepared from maize and *boloke* is their usual food. At breakfast *nifro* is eaten with coffee. In the summer season they did not eat *injera* as before, because the foods purchased from the market is used for bread, porridge (eaten with oil or milk if they have it), *kita* etc. Bread and *kita* are eaten with cabbage (local produced).

Milk is obtained from cows, goats and camels. From June to September it is summer and the grass is growing while from September to December there is enough waste on the farm to feed cattle. During these months the cows give a lot of milk and the farmers consume a lot of milk and butter during these months. Porridge is mainly eaten with butter and milk. At the present time, since the number of cows are highly reduced (through drought and selling), many poorer households do not get butter and milk throughout the year. In 1994, it was reported to be culturally undesirable to sell butter and milk so they simply consume them themselves. However, a few individual have begun to sell milk to outsiders who reside temporarily in the area and a very few farmers sold butter to community people who used it for their hair. Camel's milk is used only by those who have them (three households in the community).

Previously few people ate chickens or eggs, except during holidays, as they were a valuable means of income, however, many people have since received chickens in the form of credit from the *wereda* agricultural and extension office. They are hybrid hens, and can lay eggs every day. As a result, both the consumption and sales of chickens and eggs has been increasing in the past five years. They are eaten not only during holidays but also at any time then they want to eat. The major problem with regard to hens is that they are highly sensitive to diseases. Therefore, unless proper care and treatment are given, people can easily lose them.

Off-farm income activities: One important activity for women is the selling of firewood. In the past, it was selling firewood was looked down on, however, this is increasingly common at all times of the year due to poverty. Women transport firewood to the Sodere market by carrying it on their backs. Due to distance, firewood is transported to Dera by donkeys, and most of the sellers are men. Most of the firewood sellers belong to the poorer, female headed households. It is not uncommon to see female carrying bundles of firewood and travelling to Sodere every day. They cross the Awash river by raft. Drought and poverty are the main reasons for participating in firewood selling. The price of a bundle of fire wood in solder ranges from 2- 4 *birr*, but a bundle of one donkey fire wood may be sold from 5-6 *birr* in Dera market.

The establishment of the irrigation cooperative in 2001 and the influx of investors created a wider range of daily works. Women and young people (age ten and above) of both sexes actively participate

in daily labour. The works include digging, planting, weeding, collecting and loading on lorries. They work every day except on Friday, considered a Muslim holiday. They earn from four to eight *birr* per day. The money is used for purchasing food crops and other consumption items such as clothes coffee, sugar, salt, etc. Most of the adult daily labourers belong to poorer, destitute as well as female-headed households. But the young people may be from any wealth category. There are now local daily labourers who migrated to Degaga state farm in a neighbouring *kebele* in eastern Shewa as mentioned above. In reverse, there are daily labourer from eastern Shewa who work in Korodegaga.

Common health problems: malaria, common cold, stomach ache, headache and gastritis. Common colds mainly affects people during the rainy season. Most woman suffer from stomach ache and gastritis during the rains. Many people are affected by malarial illness. Its spread is very high from June to October. The summer season is a favourable season for mosquitoes. The local people state that the ripening of the maize crops in September greatly contributed to malaria expansion. People take medical treatment inn Awash Melkasa, and Dera health centres; for serious illness they visit Adama (Nazret) hospital.

Water resources: Korodegaga is surrounded by two major rivers, the Awash and Keleta. While the Awash flows with little fluctuation throughout the year, the Keleta River shows decline in volume during the winter and spring seasons. During the summer season the volume of both rivers reaches a maximum level; as a result, sometimes, they create problems for transportation. People drink water from these rivers. They wash their bodies and clothes in them. The Awash River always brings waste materials from hotels, factories, recreation centres (like Sodere); its impurity reaches the highest level in summer. Thus, the rainy season in particular is characterised by serious sanitation problem in the area.

Migration: From October to December some poor and destitute people migrate to the highland areas of Arssi for temporary work. They return at the end of December with grain or money. From September to June, students move to Dera and other towns for education. They visit their families every week. In the rainy period (July-August), they live with their household because it is a vacation time. Population movement for medical service is high from June to October because of the spread of malaria infection during these months.

Petty trading: some women sell different kinds of shop items like coffee, sugar, kerosene, cigarette, etc. in their house. Others also sell bread to daily labourers. They sell these items all year round. Women also sell tomatoes and onions in Sodere, Bofa, Awash Melkasa and Dera markets. They buy the vegetables from local farmers; their carry them to markets on their back. They sell these crops any time except during the weeding (August) and harvesting (September) seasons. The number of these local petty traders area small. After their own production is finished (February/January) they start to sell firewood.

Festivals: *Id-Alfatir* does not have a fixed time but varies according to the Muslim lunar calendar, going round all months of the year. *Id-Alad (Arefa)* is in March/April and *Mowlid* on June 12. Weddings are celebrated in April/May.

3. The Farm Economy

Crops

Many people grow cash crops vegetables throughout the year. People say that the soil and climate of the area are favourable for any kinds of vegetables and fruits. Now, the main vegetables produced are onions and tomatoes followed by green peppers. Some farmers also produce cabbages, sugar cane, and hybrid maize. A small number of farmers have papaya trees in their farm near the Awash. One

farmer produces cotton, lentils, and sweet potatoes. All of these crops are produced using irrigation.

In addition to the 130 households who have irrigated land in the SHI sponsored irrigation scheme, rich and strong farmers produced cash crops vegetables by using their own private irrigation pumps. Outsiders (from Sodere and Awash Melkasa) also rent irrigated land from weak farms and produce either tomato or onion. The big land renters (investors), which I explained above, also actively participate mainly in the production of tomatoes of different species (Bombay, Kochoro, etc.).

The main problem of cash crops production is pests. The main disease is locally called *wag* which affects the leaves of both tomatoes and onions. It is mainly spread during the time of slight weather change from dry to wet or wet to dry. In order to overcome the impact of this disease on their crops, farms carefully follow-up the change in weather condition and spray pesticides on their crops. In some months (mainly winter), the night temperature is very cold while the day is hit by frost. In March 2005, many irrigation farmers lost their cash production due to frost. However, if proper care and follow-up is taken, the production obtained from irrigation is promising.

With regard to rain-fed agriculture, it is becoming the last form of earning a living because crops fail every year due to recurrent drought. There has not been good harvest in the past ten years. The non-irrigated farmers, in particular, have suffered a lot from repeated crop failure. Lack of farm oxen is another handicap for the poor and destitute farmers. Due to lack of farm oxen, they are forced to rent or share-crop their farms or to share their labour in exchange for oxen with “richer” farmers. In short, drought results in crops failure and inability to feed the household members, leading to dependence on food aid and daily labour and firewood selling. This results in intensification of poverty in all aspects of people’s life.

There are no *belg* crops because of rain shortage, but some people produced maize by using irrigation (hand pump and motor pump) during *belg* season for eating *ishet*. There are soil fertility improvement practices by making compost from different leaves, ashes and animal dung. Inter-cropping, planting maize with tomatoes, is also a common practice in Korodegaga.

Livestock

The common livestock are cattle (cows and oxen), goats, sheep and donkeys. Goats and sheep are the most numerous. Number of livestock is seen as a measurement of wealth. There are rich individuals who have up to 200 goats and sheep. They get cattle by inheritance from parents or they buy cattle from output sales, etc. Three farmers have camels (one has about 30 camels, the second about 15, and third two). Camels are used for milk, meat and cash. One camel can be sold for 1000 to 1500 *birr*. These three farmers belong to the richer wealth category in the community, and having camels is seen by the local people as a reflection of high wealth status and good standard of living. The logic here is that in addition to good income from selling camels, they are adaptable to diseases, and drought conditions are prevalent. Moreover, camels give high milk yields so that the owners can get milk frequently.

In 1994, one respondent described seven types of livestock diseases which are common in this area:

Golloba affects the lungs of cattle and it occurs at the end of the rainy season (from the end of August to October). When the rain stops there are strong sun rays and when the cattle sleep at noon the heat affects their lungs. The cattle which come from neighbouring *wereda* to graze on the communal land also bring this disease and transfer it to local cattle. This is because most of these nomads have some relationship (they may be relatives or friends) with the local people and get permission to mix their cattle at night in the houses.

Kiftina: this is the most widespread disease which affects goats and sheep. It is mainly prevalent from October to January. The timing and cause of this disease is similar to *golloba*. It causes wounds all over their bodies. Our diaries research indicates that almost all households were affected by this disease in 2004/05. One local rich person claimed he lost 67 goats within a period of two months in 2004. Another informant said, 27 goats died of *kiftina* in November 2004. People complained that the reluctance of the DA worker to report the severity of the problem contributed to the spread of the disease. The DA said that people did not report problems to her early enough; and even after she reported to the *wereda*, goats and sheep passed away. Since the vaccination was not given continually, the disease continued to attack the animals for many months. Camels are also affected. Unless proper vaccination is given it kills many camels in a short period of time. *Kiftina* is sometimes called camel disease. Last year, in September, one camel owner told me that *Kiftina* killed three of his camels; the rest of the camels recovered after he gave them medicine which he bought from Nazret animal clinic.

Bote occurs in October and November and is a goat disease. There is a lot of feed on the farm after the crop is harvested and the goats eat insects together with the feed which makes them ill. Most of the goats, especially the younger ones, die in these months.

Geregelcha is a disease which affects mainly horses and donkeys. It is caused by the shortage of food and the strength of the sun's heat, especially from March to June.

Werandomsi affects calves by wounding their tongues and eyes. There is no particular time when it happens.

Merto is a goat and sheep disease which occurs at any time. They become abnormal and run here and there like rounding a circle.

There are seasonal variations, in the diseases that affect livestock. Cattle are affected by disease during spring and summer (May – July). Goats and sheep are affected by diseases from August to December. The reason for this is that the diseases have relations with cold air condition and the animals also eat some insects and plants which can be the cause of the disease.

In Korodegaga the people sell their livestock all the year. But during rainy season (other than harvesting time) from February to August the rate of selling livestock increases because they need to buy food crops, seeds, fertiliser, pay government taxes etc. According to informants it is common for people to sell their cattle to buy food, although they indicated that the main source of cash to buy food is firewood. Women and young men transport firewood to Dera and Sodere. Donkeys are mainly used for this purpose. Those who do not have donkeys carry the wood themselves. Goats and sheep are kept in the houses since they may be easily attacked by hyenas if kept in huts. Oxen attract high prices between August and October, since they easily get fat because of abundant pasture.

Cattle are mainly reared in the upper streams of Arda, Amola, Alelu, Chirota and Shelota because these areas have relatively good grazing lands. The lower streams like Sefera, Buko and Degaga are farming areas so that they are not good for cattle rearing. Due to the recurrent drought and expansion of poverty many people have lost their cattle either by death or sold to buy food. Most destitute extremely poor people do not have a single head of cattle. There are many who do not have any oxen. But most farmers have goats and sheep, though the range of number of these animals varies greatly from one for the poorest to over one hundred for the richest farmers.

Hybrid chickens are brought to the community under the coordination of *wereda* extension office and the local women's associations. Hens are given in the form of credit, a quarter of the cost being paid initially and the remainder after a year. The DA and extension workers teach the women how to breed, feed, vaccinate and care for the hens. In the past three or four years many hybrid chickens have been

brought to the area; at the beginning, many hens died due to lack of proper care, but gradually people began to understand the benefits (eggs and meat, and cash) of hens and began to breed them very well.

Land

As was discussed above, before 1974, land was owned by Shewan Amhara rulers. The average landholding worked was then 1 hectare. The whole area covered in the Korodegaga *kebele* before the 1975 nationalisation was under the monopoly of two Amhara-Tigre landlords, namely General Mebratu Fiseha and *Dejazmach* Alula Bekele. After the proclamation each household was given a plot of land, irrespective of whether the family was headed by male or female. Residents got up to 3 hectares of land. All the poor tenants and share-cropping farmers became the owners of the land and began to produce and consume their farm outputs for themselves. The previous big landowners were reduced to small farmers. The absentee landlords such as General Mebratu Fisseha and *Dejazmach* Alula Bekele had their lands confiscated and evacuated the area. Youngsters and married couples got land by the redistribution process. Some farmers organised under PCs, who produced some crops in common. But the richest people owned large amount of land at any period. Now, young people have got land from parents because there is no land redistribution in the EPRDF period. There is no complaint about land shortage, because they did not use properly what they owned due to the effect of drought.

Forced cooperativisation (started in 1980) and villagisation (started in 1986) led to devastating economic consequences (IFPRI, 1989:17-18 and Gadisaa Birru, interview, Feb.17, 1994). With the establishment of PCs, the best farmlands were taken away from private holders by the cooperatives until the latter was dismantled around 1990. After that all cooperative holdings were redistributed among the whole community of the *kebele*. There has been no redistribution of land since the advent of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) in 1991. As a result many young people have become landless; they are / were dependent only on what they obtained from their parents in the form of bride wealth. In the second half of the 1990s, drought and poverty forced some farmers to cultivate lands around the Awash River and to produce vegetables and maize by using hand pump. Through time, these farmers formed groups and bought smaller private pumps. Thus, irrigating the communal lands following the edge of the river. As many people begin to use irrigation, competition became very stiff, and conflicts become normal. Though the *kebele* officials tried to resolve some disputes by distributing communal lands to those who already started irrigation work, the vast increase of potential land seekers, (mainly the landless) aggravated the conflicts. The *kebele* officials wrote an application letter to the *wereda* administration expressing the importance of expanding irrigation farm, and the extent of the conflicts over land among farmer. After assessing the issues (through field visits to the area, the *wereda* officials decided that those who had irrigation pumps should continue to perform their irrigation works on lands that they had already occupied; and the *kebele* officials had to divide the rest of the unoccupied lands among the new seekers. Since then the problem of land shortage has not be resolved. The steady increase of population is the main cause for the shortage. The marked plots of many households have gradually declined because they have divided their original land between their married sons.

In 2005 occupying farmland through rent or share-cropping is very common. The increasing loss of livestock (mainly oxen) is the major factor for such kinds of contract relationship. Lack of seeds (in drought years) and labour are also other factors that force many poorer and destitute farmers to rent out their lands to richer farmers or outside renters. Our destitute female-headed household, for example, rents two hectares of land, and gave one hectare on a share-crop basis. In rain-fed agriculture, a hectare of farm-land is rented for 50-60 *birr*, but outside renters (investors) can rent irrigated lands for 600 *birr* for a hectare.

The costs of seeds and fertilisers are equally divided between the owner and the sharecropper. Lack of seed and oxen have become recent influential factors providing an opportunity for access to land. A farmer who has either of the two can get the land from a farmer who has not and shares the harvest

equally. Even a farmer who has only seed can give it to the landowner and share the harvest equally even if he provides no other input (like labour or oxen). In irrigation farms, the owner provides only the land, while the share-cropper provide seeds, fertiliser, weed killer, pesticides, and labour cost. When the vegetables are sold, they divided the money equally after the renter takes the cost of production.

In the past land disputes were settled by community elders, whereas today, land disputes are mainly solved by the *kebele* social court. But this does not mean that elders have no roles in settling disputes; they are involved in minor land disputes; only the major conflicts are taken to the social court. The major types of land dispute include conflicts over “communal” (unoccupied) lands, over borders of farm lands, over inherited lands, and over rented lands, especially when there is no clearly defined agreement regarding when the contract will be over.

The landless peasants are more than 100, and the number is even greater when we include here those who get only a very small (1/2 ha.) amount of land from their parents during their marriage ceremony. There are some migrant landless households in the community. The landless earn their livelihood by renting land and share-cropping with weak farmers. They also participate in off-farm activities like daily labour and firewood selling. Women can own and manage the land by themselves if and only if they are either female-headed households or inherited by the brother of her deceased husband. Now, divorced women have rights to share land with her husband. This is supported culturally and legally.

People own land that is used solely for grazing. Both private and communal grazing are practised. Most of the year people can graze their cattle everywhere in the community. It seems difficult to differentiate communal land from private grazing lands because of livestock. But in the rainy season when the crops are growing people should keep their livestock on their private lands and the communal practice does not work at this time. In the upper stream areas of Chirota, Arda, there is grazing for everybody. That is why farmers in Sefera and Buko moved their cattle to these areas during the rains.

An observer reported land shortage in the area; the farmers clear forests to get sufficient land for agriculture. The population is on the increase. People have been migrating in the past because of lack of rain and land. The farmers think they should own the land and not the government. There is severe shortage of land mainly for young boys and migrant households. The shortage is even the worse when we come to irrigated land. During 2001 land was distributed for 130 households who are members of SHL. The lands are taken voluntarily from individuals, and distributed to these people. The land which is under the community irrigation scheme was rented for about 300 *birr* per *kert* (1/4 hectare of land). But the land, which used for rain fed agriculture, is rented for 15-30 *birr* per *kert*.

There are 130 households who work on the SHI sponsored irrigation farm. Each household has ¼ ha. of a land in this scheme. Those who have a private pump can also irrigate up to ½ ha. additional farm lands outside this product. There are also some farmers who irrigate their private farm by borrowing pumps from other farmers. In 2005 the damaged UNICEF sponsored irrigation pump was being restored; and is expected to irrigate up to 50 – 60 hectares. Since the damaged pump was originally planned to irrigate 157 hectares, the lands were distributed among the farmers accordingly. Since the new pumps are going to cover only a third of the previous plan, all the households in the *kebele* could not be included in the product. Furthermore, most of the households who are included in the new project are those who have irrigation land in the SHL sponsored scheme. This has created dissatisfaction among the non-irrigated and irrigated farmers. The landless people, in particular, are highly discontented.

Women are inherited by their dead husband's brother on the principle that he cares for his brother's children and manages his wealth well. The widow controls the inherited lands; the new husband cultivates the land for children. The widows control not only the land but also the output and assets of her dead husband. The new husband is expected to give good care and protection to the widow and her children. It is not an obligation to bring her to live with or near to him. She has a right to live in the

house and on the land of her previous husband.

The problem of access to grazing land is not only decline in size but also problems of planting grass because of drought. So everybody plants trees in hilly areas and at the edge of the river. They also plant different types of grass and trees which enable them to keep the eroded soil on lands.

Very few people migrate from other areas of Arssi, mainly from the neighbouring *wereda* and *kebele*. They came towards their kin, relatives and so on, so they live here by working daily labour and cattle rent, they also cultivate land which is rented or kin gift. They become permanent settlers. However, there are some migrant labourers who come from other parts of Arssi, most of whom are Muslims. They are either farm labourers or cattle herders. The age of cattle herders ranges from 8 to 16 years old. The farm labourers are adolescents (over 16). Most of them are employed on a contract basis for a period of one year but there are also farm labourers who are employed only for the harvesting or farming seasons. The payment is mainly in cash (more than 500 *birr* per year). Sometimes, however, it may include both cash and farmland on the basis of the agreement between the labourer and the employer. Since they are migrants, they have no direct access to agricultural land. Their opportunity to establish a separate household is also less. In addition to these, there are migrant temporary labourers who work on the irrigated land of investors. Some of them also work on a share-cropping basis with local farmers. These are culturally, socially, and religiously different from the local people and contact is related to mutual economic benefits. Most of them belong to the Amhara ethnic group, and they come from the north.

Investors who came from different areas rented land from poor households, school's land and so on. Now there are about five investors in the area who produce different vegetables (tomatoes, onion, papaya, banana, maize etc, but no investor who produce potatoes in the area). From those, two investors have their own irrigated land, which was given to them by *wereda* officials. Some people complained that the *wereda* officials are subject to corruption. The other three investors rented land from private landowners and one has rented about five hectares of land from the school and has planted tomatoes.

The increase of land renters and investors, as well as the increasing importance of irrigation is the most important factor for the increase in price of the land. Population increase may also be another factor. The price of a hectare of rain-fed farm is from 80-100 *birr* for one harvesting season. Irrigated land (its proximity to the Awash determines the price) costs 300-350 *birr* per hectare. According to farmers, this sharp increase in the price of irrigated land is a recent development; they mainly associate it with the coming of outside renters from Sodere and Awash Melkasa. There was land measurement in the area in 2005, carried out from February to May. The survey assessors were elected by the people, and comprised five local individuals. The group members moved together and measured the lands of each farmer. The farmers had to show their plots and the borders. The aim of the measurement is to ensure ownership. Before the measurement was completed the rainy season began, so the ownership certificate had not yet been given to the farmers.

Traditionally people could sell their land in times of crises like famine, death, etc. to satisfy their other needs. The present government policy, however, does not allow lands to be purchased; but it allows land to be rented or share-cropped. During the time of measurement, conflicts arise between the purchasers and sellers who made the agreement through traditional manners many years ago. The purchasers try to register the purchased land in their name while the sellers strongly opposed this move and took the case to the *kebele* social court. The *kebele* social court decided in favour of the original holder because the policy / law supports land rentals not land sales.

One investor started to work there years ago. He rented land from local farmers and started to work. His irrigated farm is in the Eastern part of Shelota village. He is the only investor who has carried out cash crop production in this area of the *kebele*. The other investor started last year (2004). He rented

10 ha. of land from farmers. The farm site was in the Degaga area, in the North-Western part of Shelota. He produced tomatoes twice a year. In June 2005, he left his previous farm, and rented 5 ha. of land from the primary school. He planted tomatoes in July and the land was irrigated by another investor last summer (2004). After harvest he left the area and moved to Awash Melkasa - he is originally from Awash Melkasa. In May 2005, another investor, who had been producing cash crops in Awash Melkasa area, came to Korodegaga and rented six ha. of land from different farmers. He moved to Korodegaga following the conversion of the irrigated land in Awash Melkasa area into government farms for the expansion of sugar cane, which was already carried out in the nearby areas. Now, his farm is located in front of the DA and *kebele* offices (about 100 meters from Awash river). He rented for a year for a price of 160 *birr* per $\frac{1}{4}$ of a hectare. Almost all of these investors employed migrant daily labourers who settle around the farmsteads and care for and protect the crops. The investors provide irrigation motors, seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, salary of the motor operator, and food costs for the labourers. The labourers perform all the works (digging, weeding, watering, harvesting, protecting the produce from thieves etc.). At the end of the harvest, the investors count all the production costs, except the cost of the purchase, which the labourers pay. Then, the remaining profit is divided between the two parties - the labourers and the investor. Irrigation activities of such kind are carried out by using two motors (one costs 12,000 *birr*); one brings water up some distance and pours it into a hole; the second pump transfers the water from the hole to the farm.

One investor acquired private land ten years ago. The land was given to him by the *wereda* officials together with *kebele* officials. He occupied about 110 hectares of land. At that time this land was covered with a very dense forest. He said that he converted this jungle land into farm after a fire and cutting trees for a year. No irrigation activities were carried out in this area at that time. Now, his farmlands are surrounded by the SHI irrigation scheme. He got the lands freely. Previously he produced very well and obtained good income. He rents most of these lands to relatives from Sodere and Addis Ababa. He built a residence house on the farm, and lives there. He breeds sheep and hybrid hens as well. His house is surrounded by papaya and orange trees. He sells these fruits. At the beginning he agreed to educate the people on how to expand irrigation (he was an agricultural worker during the Derg), but people complain that he did not convert his words into practice. He has little contact with the locals. People call him an “extravagant” individual.

The sales of cash crops are carried out through the involvement of brokers who play an important role between the producers (farmers) and traders of Addis Ababa and Nazret. They sell to the traders after they finish the dealings with farmers. Most of the brokers are from Sodere while some are from Awash Melkasa and Nazret. They contact the traders by mobile telephone. There is one local broker, who is very active in renting lands and selling cash crops. He is also a Chairman of the community irrigation cooperation, which facilitates his relations with traders and other brokers. Others brokers consult him before they start dealings with the farms. The brokerage activities started in 2002 as a medium between the farmers and traders.

Farm Labour

All the able-bodied adult males and grown-up young boys work at farming, weeding and harvesting crops. Small boys tend the livestock while the girls assist their mothers in domestic chores (including fetching water and wood). Threshing and ploughing are activities of males, however, both men and women work on irrigation. Farming and harvesting are conducted mainly by adult and young men; small male children can participate in weeding, digging, collecting and threshing as well as irrigation works. Women participate in all agricultural works except ploughing the farm. They work in weeding, soil preparation for sowing, harvesting (beans, maize, etc), collecting and threshing the crops.

Women prepare the soil while men sow the seed. They throw out wastes from the farm in order to clean

it, which decreases the weeds. Then they help with the weeding on all the crops grown. For maize and haricot beans women mostly participate in the harvest and collect the cobs in fixed places from where the men transport them to the threshing areas. For *tef* women sweep and make clean the floor where the crop is threshed. It is difficult for women to grow crops on their own, because they do not plough and they also need access to male labour during harvesting and threshing.

Girl's labour: Today, girls participate in all activities except farming and harvesting. They perform cooking, baking, fetching water and firewood, weeding, digging, collective harvested crops in fields, irrigation works (weeding, planting, watering, collecting harvest, etc), community works (Food For Work (FFW), water harvesting, terracing, removal of weeds), etc. They also herd goats and sheep. They care for babies in home. Most girls in the community are involved in daily labour; they carry bundles of firewood on their backs to sell in markets. They take grain to the millhouse for grinding by carrying the grains on their back. In short, there is no work that girls do not do, except tilling the land.

Girls' education has greatly increased in the past ten years. Though we have no concrete figure, the number of female students in the primary school seems only a little less than that of boys. The attitude of the public towards girls' education also shows an important transformation. Parents are eager to educate both their daughters and sons. Three girls attend the high school in Dera; three girls joined grade five in Dera in September 2005. Girls also attend Quran education. But there is a problem for them to continue with secondary education after finishing primary education (grade 4). This is because of financial problems for educational material, paying for house rent, food etc. This problem is not only faced by girls but boys also.

The expansion of irrigation schemes and the subsequent expansion of irrigation works by private individuals and investors have greatly changed the farm labour system in the past five years. One of these changes is its contribution to the decline in traditional labour sharing mechanisms such as *jigi* (*debo*) and *wenfel*. Irrigation creates important opportunities for daily labour. Thus, people choose to work on daily labour, which earns them income, rather than spending the time and labour in non-payable works like *jigi*. The poor and destitute, in particular, do not volunteer to participate in *jigi* because they have no capacity to make feasts, which are consumed on the day of *jigi*. As a result, *jigi* has been almost fully abandoned while *wenfel* is still practiced among some farmers – i.e. it does not involve large feasts, and it is a reciprocal labour sharing arrangement. While the old and adult people regret the decline of those traditions, labourers and young people appreciate the benefits brought by daily labour, and do not worry about traditional labour sharing arrangements. One elderly woman said that “if someone stands early in the morning and observes the situation in this community s/he may be amazed that everybody runs to the irrigation farm for *jornata* (daily labour). That is why we are left without help, and that is why people refuse to help each other free of charge”.

Women and girls use the income from labour for purchasing food and other consumption items like coffee, sugar, salt, etc. They also use it for transport on market days, *iddir* and credit payments. Girls also sell firewood to buy clothes, and educational materials.

The majority of the daily labourers are young boys and girls followed by destitute and female-headed households. Since cash crop vegetables are grown in lines of 5m long by 15cm wide, labourers are paid from 10-15 cents per row. They can get from 8-10 *birr* per day. Active and strong daily labourers can get up to 120 *birr* monthly. Our poor diary respondent said that he and his wife can get 10 *birr* each per day. Most of the native daily labourers are from the nearby villages of Satara, Buko, Olati and Shelota. Distance and high temperature hinder the coming of women and children to the irrigation scheme.

With regard to the relationship between migrant labourers and locals, it is mainly economic rather than social and cultural. But sometimes conflicts arise. In March 2005, for instance, one individual accused four others (who came from Wello in Northern Ethiopia) to the *kebele* security. At first the accuser gave his irrigated land to the labourers in the form of share-cropping. Then, he accused them of repeatedly

raping girls and stealing goats. But there was no evidence for this. Some people, however, state that the above reasons are not the real ones and that the main cause of conflict was that one of these labourers established secret relations with the wife of the accuser. Finally, some security personnel and some irrigation farmers caught the migrant labourers and beat them severely, and imprisoned them in the *kebele* office for three days. The labourers said that they were abused because they are alien to the community; and the aim was to confiscate their cash crops which they produced in the form of share-cropping. The security personnel reported the problem to the *wereda* police office. The office instructed them to bring them to the *wereda*. However, since the individuals were seriously wounded, they feared to take them to *wereda*. The local elders tried to resolve the problem through reconciliation. But after few days, the victims left the area. Some local people strongly blamed the security personnel for doing such kinds of illegal action; they add that if the labourers became strong enough to accuse the crime makers, they should volunteer to be witnesses.

Interlinkages

IFPRI's Baseline Survey of Korodegaga *Kebele* (1989:27-29) reveals the fact that there were "various ox/plough-sharing arrangements with other farmers... these arrangements range from providing labour in return for borrowing oxen and a plough, to the symbiotic sharing of oxen between farmers who each own only one when the plough requires two". This happens between two farmers; one needs more labour power and the other needs oxen to plough his land. Therefore, there are mutual benefits.

In the past seeds were borrowed during sowing season and returned during harvesting season. But now almost all the community people are poor and have not extra seeds to lend for others, so there is no seed exchanges in the area.

As previously mentioned, *wenfel* as a labour sharing mechanism is still practiced; but it is declining as a result of expanding daily labour. It is limited to harvesting, not farming and threshing. Now, people do not volunteer to work free of charge; they need cash in every activity.

Rich farmers give their goats and sheep as *ribbi*, a method of keeping them for the owner but to divide the offspring's equally. For example, if a goat has four offspring in a year, they take two each but the mother continues to be the asset of the owner. The goats or sheep are kept until they have given birth 2-3 times, the offspring are shared equally and then the heads are returned to the owners.

During the time of death, every woman has to pool some contribution, which may be grain, flour, milk, porridge, or money to the deceased family (household). The amounts of its is from ½ kg to 1kg of flour which helps the household to prepare porridge to serve guests who came from the farthest areas of deceased skins, relatives, etc. This contribution is in kind and it also cultural norms to help the deceased household. Men also contribute some money. The expansion of irrigation crests the production of vegetables mainly of onion and tomatoes in the community. Thus, people share these vegetables. Most people do not buy them from the market. They take them from their neighbours who have vegetation from their fields.

In the case of *iddir* (also called *shengo*) members have to participate in the burial, send messages to relatives of the deceased, fetch water and fire-wood, erect tents, a fence or build a house, and look after guests who come for the funeral. In some *iddir* members have also to cultivate the lands of the deceased.

Farming Technology

They plough only by oxen and use agricultural tools. They also use improved seeds, patricides, irrigation technologies and so on. There is no storage for grain, the farmers only use sacks. In addition to plough, and sickles, people also use other farm implements such as spade, *Jamba* (machete) – for destroying unwanted weeds like perineum, hummer and sprays. These are given to the people by SHI and *wereda* administration within the past five years. Almost all households have these implements, spades are used for watering irrigation land, throwing soil while terracing and to dig canals. In the community irrigation farm, members borrow fertiliser, selected seed, pesticides, weed killers, which will be returned in cash and with interest after harvest. The interest rate is 2% per six months.

In April 2005, some individuals were called to the *wereda* extension office to take training on how to use the manually operated irrigation pump. At the end of the training, three individuals took this technology in the form of credit (at a cost of 1,000 *birr*). Since it is manually operated, it does not require fuel cost, and the price is much cheaper than a diesel motor which costs from 4,500 *birr* for smaller ones to 12,000 *birr* for bigger ones, and also consume fuel. The major problem of the former is that it requires manual labour which is operated using both hands and both legs at the same time; thus, the individual who operate it should be strong enough to move it. Its importance is mainly related to water harvesting since brings water from the ponds.

Currently, there are more than 25 people who have private irrigation pumps. Farmers who are members of community irrigation motor pump and who used rain-fed cultivation, have their own land and paid government tax get inputs (fertiliser, seeds, pesticides etc) from government extension service on credit. But the costs of inputs are high and some of them could not afford them and lost their land.

Farming Innovations

The use of fertilisers, pesticides, weed killers and selected seeds both in irrigated and rain-fed farming has been increasing in recent years. The *wereda* agricultural and extension office greatly encourages people to use them. The exposition of irrigation farm is the main factor for the high consumption of these modern inputs. All irrigation activities use these inputs. But the price of fertiliser, selected seeds and diesel have been increasing every year, and people blame the government for not subsidising them.

Grain is not ground at home, there is grain mill on the other side of the Awash River (Eastern Shewa), which it is near to the area. In the past there was a cooperative service grain mill in the *kebele* which was stopped, because of the discontinuation of electric power. Until the establishment of this new grain mill, they used the grain mills at Bofa, around Sodere and Awash Melkasa.

Fertiliser and improved seed are modern inputs which had only recently begun to be used in 1995. The *Dodota wereda* Ministry of Agriculture Office gave credit once a year in May. From 1992-4 the price increased from 107 to 143.35 *birr*. These inputs were introduced in 1992 because the farmers had produced less food crops since the 1984 drought. It was proposed to the farmers by the extension agent and about half the farmers used it the first year. The inputs were successful only when there was enough rain. For instance in the 1994 *meher* the lack of rain dried most of the crops and no advantage was gained from the input. When it rains there might be about two quintals increase of the product. In the 1986 *meher* almost all the farmers, except those who could not afford to pay the loan, used fertiliser. But only five people took the loan for improved seed of wheat and maize because one can buy it from the market unless one wants the loan. Almost everyone used these inputs except for the very poor. The long-run effects of the inputs was good for increasing output. However the shortage of rain and the rising

prices of inputs limits the extent to which farmers can increase their use. Also a new type of weed came along with the fertiliser and this became a major problem in decreasing output because it is difficult to remove it from the maize and it can cover a large amount of land within a season.

Perineum weed has been increasing over the whole area in the past ten years. It is widespread over uncultivated lands. It grows very fast and covers vast lands in a short period of time. It grows mainly during the rainy season but also grows in the irrigated farms in the rainy season. Unless it is weeded, it can easily destroy crops as well as grasses. Livestock do not eat this weed and it is highly resistant to weed killer so that weeding is the only way to prevent its expansion. On communal lands people destroy it through campaigns. People agree that this weed was introduced to the area by the Awash River in 1996 when it flooded all the nearby farm lands. Some say the use of fertilisers accelerated its expansion.

Common Property Resources

Every member of the community has equal rights of access to both grazing land and to fetch firewood from the wooded areas on the slopes and plateaux, but not from the current farm land of a particular family. Every household in Korodegaga *kebele* fetches water from the Awash and Keleta rivers to which all have equal rights of access. There is no problem of theft in the *kebele*. However, all people do not have equal access to irrigation water. This is limited to those who have farmland near to the Awash or those who are members of the community irrigation project. The most of the population have only indirect access to daily labour. The service cooperative was banned ten years ago; and today only old people and adults remember about it.

In 2005 it is very difficult to draw a distinct line between communal and private land. The expansion of farmlands by private farmers is greatly reducing the trade in lands. Even the remaining grazing lands are occupied by individuals. Thus, in rainy season, farmers claim grazing lands that exist just parallel to their farms. This shows that the communal nature of grazing lands has gradually declined. But in the dry season, when the amount of grass is reduced, everybody's cattle can graze everywhere in the community.

In 1994, it was reported that there were four properties commonly used by the farmers:

1. *The electrical mill*: This was installed in 1973 by a person known as Mr Adem Oumer who used it until the *kebele* took it in 1981. The *kebele* paid 6,000 *birr* (i.e. half of its price) to the owner when they took the mill. It worked using electrical power by installing a transformer to the main line which passes near the *kebele*. This line goes from Sodere Resort Hotel to the highway station which is about 6 km between the 2 places. The transformer was installed in the middle of these two places which is about 1 km from the mill. It served only *kebele* residents because no-one wanted to cross the Awash river to get the service. So the *kebele* obtained a monthly income of not more than 100 *birr* which was used to pay for the consumption of electricity as well as for the per diem of the *kebele* officials when called for a meeting at the *wereda* or regional offices. However, it stopped its service from September 1994 because the *kebele* have no money to pay 300 *birr* for the electricity consumed from June to August 1994. Since, then it has not been resumed. In 2005 the electric mill still exists in the mill house established by the Red Cross. After the discontinuation of the electricity in 1994, people have moved to Awash Melkasa to grind their grains. It is only in November 2004 that the investor, Hailu Tuke, (see under infrastructure) established a new electric mill in the nearby *kebele* of Eastern Shewa.

2. *Grazing land*: There are communal grazing lands around Arda and Chirota. This grass is always on sale once a year in August for the nomads living in neighbouring *wereda* such as Sire, Jeju, Huruta, Hamda and Kulla. Most of the areas in these *wereda* are lowlands which are not appropriate for food

production. The life of the residents therefore depends on cattle rearing. They come to Korodegaga *kebele* in August because the grass grows very well in June and July. A pastoralist must pay 1 *birr* for one cattle and can keep it there until the grass is finished. The land is not delimited for each pastoralist because they all come at the same time (within a difference of not more than a week) and can keep their cattle together. The *kebele* obtains about 1,000 *birr* per year and uses the income to buy stationery for the office and other office requirements. The *kebele* residents are not using this grazing land because it is not allowed for them to keep their cattle there from July to October (since it is a growing time) and in November (since they decide to sell it to others). After the pastoralists return home there is no grass to feed the cattle even if the residents were allowed to keep their cattle on this land. They keep their cattle at various places where ploughing is impossible.

3. *Service co-operative (SC)*: Korodegaga had a service co-operative all on its own because of its remote location. In 1986 when the government allowed the *kebele* to establish the SC it started with 30,000 *birr* capital and could serve the residents by supplying farm equipment and inputs. It sold all types of clothes like linen, blankets, shoes etc as well as consumables like soap, batteries, torches, matches, sugar, salt, cooking oil, kerosene, umbrellas, etc. After its two years' service the regional distribution corporation began to sell its quota to private traders and the quantity of goods that this co-operative obtained decreased from year to year. The *kebele* officials and employees of the SC began to steal not only the surplus income but also the capital. Then the service that the co-operative provided continued to diminish. Mainly it was after the reform (1991) that it became very weak because no supplies came from the regional distribution centre until the government established security. Even after the government was stable the quantity and type of goods given to the SC were restricted to only 500kg of sugar, 300kg of salt and 60kg of soap and 10 packets of matches. Finally it was closed at the end of 1994 when the national and regional distribution corporation (EDDC) entered into competition with private traders. The EDDC could not buy a quintal of sugar from the factory as the private traders did. The same is true for other goods except for salt which is cheapest in any market (i.e. 1.30 *birr* per kg). Hence the EDDC stopped giving paid goods for regional branches.

4 *Rafts*: It was in 1964 that General Mebratu Fiseha established a raft on the Awash river when he started modern farming on 20 hectares of land. This raft gave service to the people until it was replaced by a new one in 1998/9, established by the Ethiopian Red Cross society. It was bought with the cost of 5,000 *birr*, and can transport up to 10 people for one trip. It is used by everybody, natives and non-natives. People transport all their commodities (firewood for selling, grains for selling and mills etc.) using this raft. Traders, brokers, daily labourers, renters, *wereda* officials, etc. use this raft. Everybody use it without any payment. During the night time it is tied with a big iron on the Korodegaga side of the river. Some farmers also transport vegetables using the raft. In May 2005 land renters and investors contributed some money for its maintenance. Another raft which is located in the Degaga area is used only by daily labourers and few individuals because it is not located at an accessible place for transport. Distance is also another factor. Hailu Tuke's raft, established in June 2005, is used only by those who grind their grains in his mills and buy commodities (coffee, salt, sugar, kerosene, soap, etc.) from his shop. It gives service only during the daytime. It is free of any charge. He established it to attract his customers from Korodegaga.

Environment

There is a serious problem of erosion, caused by wind and water in the rainy season, because the land is so rugged and sandy, which makes it vulnerable in the absence of dense bushes and grass to help protect the land from being easily eroded. Because the top soil is eroded, people use animal dung and chemical fertilisers, and also crop rotation to some extent. Crop rotation takes place only for certain crops such as *tef* replaced by beans, and beans by barley.

Several women complained that during 1985 when the river flow was lower than normal there was insufficient water to dilute processed wastes dumped into the Awash by the Wonji sugar estate upstream of the village." (IFPRI, 1989:22)

The expansion of drought and the resultant impoverishment of the people contribute to the fast increase of firewood sellers. It is not uncommon to see 15-20 firewood sellers (women and girls) travel to Sodere across the Awash. In the past, forests were also cleaned to increase cultivated land. As a result most of the historically forested areas of Korodegaga have been changed into bushes. The destruction of forests has led to the acceleration of soil erosion. The washing away of the topsoil contributes to the decline of the productivity of the farm lands. In addition to forest destruction, the sandy nature of the soil and the topography have their own contribution to soil degradation. Erosion is very high in the upper stream of the *kebele*.

Since 2003, terracing activities have been carried out every year in the highland areas. It is carried out under the food for work program. Much of the lands in Alelu, Amola land Arda were put under this project. In 2005 (from February to April) many farmlands were terraced. This is conducted by digging one meter deep across the farms. The distance between two ditches is five metres. Some farmers do not volunteer to make terracing on their farms because they believe that it prevents the free movement of their oxen during cultivation. Since the FFW programme is not well organised and the payment is very low (90 cents for 1m x 1m terracing), many people discontinued the work in March 2005. One informant said that it is better to do daily labour rather than wasting his precious time on terracing. There is no reforestation activity in the area. The dry climate is another hindrance for planting new trees.

There is an attempt to rehabilitate the soil. The people are working, in the principle of FFW they traced the eroded parts of land and also digging a hole to plant some grass and trees which help to protect the soil from erosion by different agents. On the other hand farmers started to preparing natural fertiliser (compost) from animal dung, different leaves and ashes to conserve the fertility of soil.

4. Off-farm Activities

Communal Work

Community works are practiced in Korodegaga every year. In 2004/5 people participated in different community activities. They carried out terracing work under the FFW programme. At the beginning about 800 people were registered for the work; but the delay of the payment, low amount of the salary, etc, forced many people to turn to daily labour and firewood selling. In April, only about 200-250 people participated. It took place on Sunday every week and people above age of 10 years have to participate in it. In the summer 2004, they actively participated on a campaign against unwanted weeds (*partineum*) which was spread over wide areas. The highest concentration was on the 60 hectares of land which was preserved for the Red Cross five years earlier. These lands were left uncultured for years and became the main source of *partineum* expansion. The campaign was organised and led by *kebele* and *wereda* officials. They also constructed a school toilet for female students. They built the fences of the school and DA office.

In an attempt to resume the damaged UNICEF sponsored irrigation pump, people actively participated by digging canals and fetching water during the construction of the house for the motor. They participated in a number of meetings which were organised by the *wereda* and *kebele* officials. The meetings were concentrated on how to expand irrigation works and at the same time reduce poverty. In the middle of April 2004, people also participated in the clearings of the Korodegaga-Dera road which is now used by lorries to transport vegetables. With regard to community irrigation, members participated in clearing the canals, destruction of unwanted weeds from the uncultivated lands near the

river, and in different meetings. These works are organised by the leaders of the irrigation cooperative. In 2003/4, people were involved in the water harvesting programme. It was also part of the FFW. A number of ponds were dug during that year in different areas of the *kebele*. However, the water harvesting programme faced total failure in Korodegaga, as it was started without taking into account the condition of the soil, which is mainly sandy, and has a water holding problem. Water easily infiltrates down into the soil. At the end of that year, it was discovered that all the ponds failed to preserve water. The other problem is the high temperature can easily evaporate water so that it is difficult to grow crops by using water from these holes.

There are also joint activities of men repairing the raft when it is damaged, construction/building of mosque and, during the distribution of food aid, they go together to give the food and also they helped each other by loading the food on the lorry.

Women collect firewood together, working as daily labourers, going to market and the grain mill, selling firewood together (in group). They also visit patients and go to a deceased person's house jointly. Last year, women of Sefera village, fetched water together for the new mosque and they also go to mosque together for praying.

Household Off-farm Activities

Within the community the principal non-farm source of income and activity is fuel wood marketing. Carrying of wood bundles to the nearest towns of Dera, Sodere, and Awash Malkasa markets is a daily chore for a good number of women and some boys. During 1989, women were more active than men in trading and selling fuel products and food and drinks (local beers and spirits, roasted barley, and maize). In 1995 no one was selling local beers and spirits and roasted grains, but some woman were selling 'Ambasha' a kind of bread. Men, on the other hand, were more active as manual labourers" (Webb, 1992:42).

According to Gadisaa Birru, children mainly tend cattle, sheep, goats and other animals, although the older children also participate in various agricultural activities along with the adult men and women. Whatever women earn is spent by women (it does not have to be given to their husbands), but quite naturally they spend for family expenses.

Occupational Structure

The sole occupation of the community is farming (crop and animal production). Informants said that one cannot find a single person engaged in non-farming occupations (such as weaving, smithing, tanning, etc) either as major or as supplementary occupations. There are some petty traders who sell vegetables in Sodere, Awash Melkasa, Bofa and Dera markets. Previously the *kebele* officials served the public without any payment (salary). But since 2002/3, they have worked with some payment (chairman =150 *birr*, vice chairman = 90 *birr*; secretary = 50 *birr*; security leader = 40 *birr*); the rest of the officials still work free of charge.

Most investors and merchants are from Addis Ababa and Nazret. They come to load the vegetables after the purchase is carried out between the brokers and the farmers. Due to lack of a proper road, merchants greatly reduce the prices of the crops. In addition, since the producers have no direct contact with the merchants, brokers may easily break (reduce) the prices of their crops.

Religious education is entirely carried out by outside teachers. They come from other parts of Arssi. The local people provide them with food and shelter. The Mosque is lead by the native Imam, who followed

Quran education up to grade four. Both teachers and Imam serve without salary.

Community elders play a significant role in conflict resolution. They may be involved in every conflict resolution process (conflict at different levels: individual, lineage and clan, family, community, between groups of young people, etc.). The conflict resolution role of elders has recently been reduced because people begin to take their cases to the *kebele* social court; and the previously respected position of the elderly has gradually deteriorated. Young people do not accept the ideas, opinions and decisions of elders. They degrade their knowledge as “backward”. The young also say that the decisions of the elders are full of biases. The *kebele* social court plays an important role in conflict resolution. It has three members - a chairman, secretary and a member.

Migration

During the time of the Derg a large number of men migrated for military service. While most of them lost their life in the war front, some returned home when the Derg was overthrown in 1991. In 2000/1, many youngsters were also recruited into the army and went to Tigray to fight the Eritrean forces. After the end of the war in 2003, some returned back as demobilised soldiers. At times of bad harvest, mainly before 2001, poor and destitute farmers migrated to highland areas of Arssi to get support (to Dera, Asella and Nazareth in search of daily labour). The distress migrants returned after three or four months. Currently, distress migration is highly reduced. One major reason is that the expansion of irrigation works creates high opportunities for daily labour; thus, poor and destitute people can get income by involvement in daily labour. The other possible reason is the expansion of drought and poverty into all areas of Arssi which brings most people into more or less similar economic status. Informants state that if there had been no irrigated farms in Korodegaga in the past five years, most poorer, destitute, and female-headed households would have left the area and the remaining population would have followed in their footsteps.

Recently some richer households started to send their daughters to Saudi Arabia. They moved to seek work as home maids. Three daughters have already left and they began to send money for their household. These greatly attracted other households to send their daughters. I have the information that two daughters have started the process in June / July 2005. During periods of food shortage, women go to their home area, to kin, relatives, families to beg for food.

Some young boys also move to distant towns like Addis Ababa, Shashemene and Dire Dawa. They moved to find work. They stay there for more than one year. One of my informants stayed in Dire Dawa for two years. He stayed there with his sister who had already migrated together with her husband. Another individual moved 10 years before but returned recently. Students migrate to Dera, Itaya and Nazret to follow their secondary education. Most of them are boys while some are girls. One student joined university at Ambo College in Western Shewa. The high school students stay in towns renting houses. They get food and other materials from their parents. Most of them learn in Dera secondary school.

Today, there are migrants who help Oromo residents in the Satara village. They are three households and have their children. They are Christians, and two of them have lands (both irrigated and rain-fed), whereas one has a house but no land. The wives and husbands are daily labourers. There is also one Muslim household which migrated to Korodegaga from the Bofa area of Eastern Shewa. He belongs to the Shewa Oromo group. He came 11 years ago and is a daily labour. He has a house and family, but no land and livestock. In addition, there are migrant Amhara and Wolayita migrants.

Rural-Urban Linkages

Sodere is the most important town for firewood selling. Women and girls visit Sodere daily to sell firewood, which they carry on their back. Some women also sell vegetables like onions, tomatoes and green peppers at Sodere market. People of Korodegaga also visit Sodere to recreate by bathing in the hot springs. They also buy consumption items (coffee, sugar, etc.) from shops. Some young people also chew *chat* in Sodere.

Dera is the most important market centre for the local people. Chickens and eggs, food crops like *tef*, haricot beans, cash crops and firewood are bought and sold on the market at Dera. As the capital of Dodota-Sire *wereda*, Dera gives administrative services to the people. The presence of a health centre and private clinics in the town also attracts people to seek health service. Many students attend secondary school in Dera. About 15 farmers built private houses in Dera in the past three years. Most of them are irrigation farmers. While some rent these houses, others use them for their children at school.

Awash Melkasa: Before last year, people daily visited this town for grinding grains. There were no mills in the nearby area so that people had to travel to Awash Melkasa. It is also a market place for cash crops (vegetables). It is the favoured town for medical service. There is a well-known health centre in the town. Furthermore, it is nearer to Korodegaga than Dera (20km). Thus most people get treatment in Awash Melkasa clinics and health centres.

Bofa is located in the North-Western part of Eastern Shewa. People sell vegetables, eggs, goats and sheep on the market day of Bofa. They also buy consumption items like food grains, goats, coffee sugar, etc.

Nazret. For serious illness people go to Adama hospital. They buy irrigation motor fuel for irrigation pumps (both community and private), personal items like clothes and electronics, etc. Some richer households also send their children to Nazareth high school. They rent housing whilst studying there.

Asella is used for health service, it has public hospital and some people go there by referral from the health centre of Dera. Relatively its medical treatment and medicines price is low. It is also the capital of the zone, so for serious cases (crime, accusation, etc), people go to the regional law court and also people are imprisoned there for serious crimes.

Some women came from *Iteya* and *Sire* by marriage and they have relatives and kin there. There are some traditional medicines in Iteya; medicines for cancer, animal diseases, *Yewisha beshita* (rabies), etc.

5. Reproductive Activity

Housing

In 1994, in the whole *kebele* there were only two tin-roofed houses, the rest were small *gojjos* some with incomplete partitions for bed and cooking and storing food containers. There has been a fast change in house construction and technologies. Eight corrugated iron sheet houses have been constructed in the past four years. Six of them are *blocket* wall houses, *Tehir* style. The floor, ceiling walls, etc. of these are modern. Since their walls are made of *blockets*, they can last for a long period of time. In addition the three major mosques (constructed in the past five years) are very modern in the sense that the roofs are tin, the walls are cemented with sand and cement, the floors are also cemented, and the styles are attractive.

However, there is little improvement in the technologies of *gojjo* houses, whose walls are wood and mud, and the roofs are wood and grasses. The quality of these houses is even in decline with time because of the lack of trees for construction. *Gojjo* houses are easily affected by termites. As a result, they do not last for more than 7-10 years. These houses are, thus, used for living, cooking, storage and livestock. They are not clean. But the present trend shows that the introduction of *blockets* technology might change the conditions of houses in the near future.

In the area the quality of house for the richest and poorest has less difference. However, some richest and middle wealth households have larger size and relatively have good quality of houses. But commonly goats and sheep and calves are kept with people in houses at night. Generally the community have a very poor quality of houses as compared to other areas of Arssi region. Children get access to land for housing from their parents or kin and relatives.

Following the establishment of the SHI sponsored irrigation scheme, some people began to build corrugated iron sheet houses. The walls of these houses are made of mud *blockets* which are locally produced. The *blockets* are produced from a special mud called *bole* – highly sticky and strong - the soils of the area is not used for making mud blocks for the walls of the house. The community people used soils from other sides of Awash River (Eastern Shewa) mixed with sand and cement. Six houses were produced with these *blockets*. In addition to reducing the problem of wood shortage, these houses last for long period of time. The *blockets* have high qualities of resisting rain, sun and cold. As a new technology to the community, having such houses is a reflection of good wealth status. Termites are the main factor that shorten the life of *gojjo* houses. But *blockets* prevent this problem. This technology was introduced from Sodere and Awash Melkasa area. I think the technology was, at first, started as a response to the increasing shortage of wood (trees) for house construction.

Domestic Technologies

Fuel-saving, wood-burning stoves were introduced some years ago through the *wereda* agricultural and extension office. A few households have used this technology in the past three years. Recently, fuel-saving stoves were introduced by the women's credit association in coordination with SHI. It seems that women understand the advantage of this technology. If it will continue to rise in popularity among the local people, the danger of firewood shortage may be resolved in the future. In March 2005, 15 stoves were brought by lorry. They were brought in coordination between the women's credit association and SHI. The stoves were distributed among 15 members of the credit association. Training was also given on how to use them and on the importance of the stoves. The rest of the households requested to be registered for the stoves. The plan is to distribute to all households in the future.

People mainly use simple housing technologies such as *mitad* (stoves). They also use plastic materials which are used for fetching water, serving meals, etc. All of these technologies are purchased from the market.

The main sources of lighting are firewood and *kuraz* (kerosene lamps), and in some houses one can also find pressurised lanterns. For cooking they use firewood, and in a few households, dung, and since the area is hot they hardly need heating except during the few rainy months. For these cool months firewood suffices to heat the house. Firewood is collected from bushes and farmlands, mainly during the harvest season. The maize residues are also used as firewood. For movements in the community during the night-time, it is common to use a torch. There is no electric light, but the installation of electricity for the restoration of the damaged UNICEF sponsored irrigation pumps might give electric service to the nearby villages in the future.

There is a firewood shortage at Sefera and Buko villages. They collect some residues, animal dung, straws, etc. and some people also collect driftwood around the edge of the river which is brought from different areas. The other seven villages have access to firewood, so they do not face as many problems as these villages.

The community of Korodegaga *kebele* gets water from either the Awash or the Kelata Rivers. There are villages which require some 30-45 minutes walk for water, while some villages may take less than 5 minutes. The serious problem regarding water in this community is not the distance, but its cleanliness. The water is impure and causes different kinds of waterborne diseases. The Awash River is polluted in Akaki, Debre Zeit, Mojo as well as from hotels in Awash Melkasa and Sodere recreation centres. It is highly impure throughout the year but the problem is much worse during the rainy season. Since they have no option, people drink it all the time. They also swim and wash clothes in these rivers. As a result they are subjected to different kinds of water related diseases. The most common waterborne diseases include typhoid, diarrhoea, giardia and skin problems.

There is a toilet found in the primary school. Before 2004, it was a male toilet and female students did not use it. But in the summer 2004, another toilet was built for girls. It was built with *blockets*, cement and tin. The male toilet is constructed with wood and tin. Most of the people use bushes and farms as a toilet. The other one is the DA office toilet which is becoming damaged. Its wall and roof is made of corrugated sheets, so it is easily damaged by strong wind. However, it gives service for DA workers and some surrounding people. Other than these the people do not have their own toilet. So they excrete their waste around their farm (small children excrete around their home but adults go far from the home). I observed that faeces do not last long (not more than one day), and rapidly become decomposed.

Household management

Women perform household activities such as cooking, baking, sweeping the floor, fetching water and firewood and childcare. They also teach their daughters about the different kinds of housework. Girls also play similar roles in the house. In male-headed households, daughters manage all home activities. Sometimes, daughters refuse to perform housework because they prefer daily labour than housework, as it helps them to get income. As a result, conflicts may arise between the mother and daughter; some households solve the dispute through discussion; fathers may also be involved in the discussion to settle the dispute. In addition to salary, daily labour helps daughters to get free time with their friends (both females and males). The involvement of daughters in daily labour creates a heavy housework burden on their mothers because they have to perform and manage all the above mentioned tasks.

Most of the time the major decisions are made in the household by agreements of both husband and wife and also include the eldest son. The main household tasks are housework including firewood sale, daily labour and childcare.

Fertility

Informants were bold enough to say that there is no divorce because of infertility. They say that one of the reasons for polygamy is infertility, which is assumed always to be a woman's problem. There is no reported treatment of fertility, but informants said that some women give birth after the husband has got married to a second wife. Elders could not recall a single incident where the woman was divorced because of infertility.

Old people believe that having more children is an asset. Children support their parents in labour

especially in old age. Having more children means replicating kin / relatives; children also protect their households from outside enemies, especially during conflicts with powerful individuals. In short, children help their parents to get respect and a proper position in the community. This is particularly true if the parents have more sons because sons always live with or around their parents. Girls move to their husband's home after marriage. Even female-headed households can get proper respect if they have more children. On the other hand, young people do not support the idea of having more children. Both young boys and girls told us during the interview on 'young lives' that the increase of population through natural increase is one of the main reasons for the impoverishment of many households. They said that they would make sure they have fewer children than their parents. Poverty itself made them change their attitude towards having more children. Some informants realised that because of having many children, they could not fulfil their basic needs (food, clothing, education, sanitation, etc) and their wealth status has decreased.

In the area abortion is not practiced. There do not appear to be women without children; if there are, they raised children of their husband's second wife or relative's children in the principle of adoption. Therefore, except a few people who have close contact, other people outside the community would not know about a woman's infertility. The adoptive mother says "my child" and the child says "my mother".

In 1994 it was reported that since children are regarded as the manifestation of the blessing of God, the use of artificial contraceptives was regarded as going against the will of God. There were many people (especially the young) who know about family planning, but it was not practised. In 2005 it was reported that in the past five years important changes have occurred with regard to family planning. People from the *wereda* health office, SHI and Women's Affairs bureau have repeatedly come to the area to teach the people about family planning, harmful practices and sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS. Some local women have also been invited to attend conferences on health issues at the *wereda* level at different times. As a result many people are making behavioural changes. The use of contraceptives has been increasing with time. They get information from the *wereda* and they get pills from Awash Melkasa and Dera Health Centre. Men do not use contraceptives, but most of them have developed awareness about the benefits. Female students also learn about family planning in the school.

Childbirth and Childcare

In 1994 it was reported (by a man) that pregnant women, especially during their last couple of months, perform only domestic activities rather than engaging themselves in farm-related work. In 2005 the female researcher reported that during pregnancy, women are not cared for; they work and eat as usual.

After childbirth women stay at home for 2-4 weeks. During this time they are taken care of either by daughters, mother-in-laws, co-wives, or other neighbouring women. The number of weeks a woman may stay at home depends on whether or not she has grown up daughters at home.

Pregnancy outside marriage is totally unacceptable and leads to stigmatisation. It is believed that every female child should marry at the proper age (15-19). Pregnancy before marriage is culturally illegal. Even widows should be inherited by the brother of their husbands or relatives. If they do not do this, they should keep themselves from having illegal children. A case in point is that one of our diary respondents gave birth to illegal children twice within the past four years. The local people always blame her for spoiling their culture. They have generally have no good attitude towards her.

In 1994 the male researcher said that most people (both men and women) preferred male children to female children because male children stay with parents even after marriage. Thus, they may give them support every time. In 2005 the female researcher said that the attitudes of men and women to boy and girl babies is no different although in the past, Muslims preferred girls to boys, because they were a source

of income; as a result of *gebera* (bridewealth) the family received more cattle, money etc. But now *gebera* has decreased because of poverty.

Childbirth is carried out at home for all whether they are rich, middle, or poor. Women give birth with the help of local female experts – having some knowledge and skill about childbirth. It is not common to go to health centre for birth. But if the pregnant woman faces difficulties in childbirth, she is taken to Awash Melkasa or Nazret health centres. Due to lack of transport, people carry her on their shoulders using and take her to Sodere, and from Sodere they use mini-buses.

After childbirth women are cared for well if the husband has livestock and slaughters a goat or sheep. She may be fed porridge with butter. Disabled babies are treated well, because this is the manifestation of the blessing or will of God. They do not prepare special food for the child. The children eat what their parents eat. This is because of economic influence and parents awareness.

Socialisation

A group of women listed the qualities desirable in women as good speech, politeness, a good knowledge of household work, and respect and obedience towards her husband. Most people learn these qualities from their parents but inheritance also plays a considerable part. Mothers can teach girls household activities and obedience. Undesirable traits in women are laziness, to have more interest in men for sexual intercourse, and to be talkative. A successful farmer's wife is alert in doing her activities, uses the farm income the family obtains economically, and tries to get income in addition to that gained from farming. She is a bit better than the average female in food processing and making baskets, yarn, etc. The most respected technical skill is being able to help in childbirth.

In the school, boys and girls learn about gender issues, human rights, harmful cultures, etc. Teachers teach them to be active, sociable, hard workers, respect others, to accept good community norms and respect the harmful ones, to know rights and obligations. Parents know that education helps their sons and daughters to expand their knowledge about their surroundings and outside world, but they blame the school for changing their mind to some unaccepted norms such as voluntary marriage, having friends before marriage, etc. they lions school wants to make children religious people polite, respectful etc.

Parents and kin teach children by sharing their experience, advising them about wrong things and also teaching formal informal education. So both boys and girls acquire knowledge from religious and formal schools. Religious education is important for the soul and it is also forbidden to do evil things. So it helps to have good behaviour as well be sociable. Religious education is important for boys to become religious leader, for girls to know for herself/ life.

Government school is important both for boys and girls. It helps to improve their future life. They have awareness about the importance of education. They want to educate their children - both boys and girls - but they cannot because of financial problems.

It is useful for women to be able to read, write and calculate since they can participate in local organisations like *iddir* and women's associations and they can contact other people outside the area. At primary school girls learn household work, sanitation, to read, write and do arithmetic. Education is useful for being a better farmer's wife as they can prepare food cleanly and keep their children clean. Education also helps in earning off-farm income because educated girls have an interest in wearing good clothes to make themselves unique. So they need more money and implement off-farm activities. Since they are educated they can think better in calculating their accounts and can run an off-farm business more easily. For education to be effective at least they have to complete primary school.

A group of men listed the qualities desirable in men as religious knowledge, intelligence, bravery,

politeness, honesty, respectful to others, respect norms and values, and to be hardworking. Excepting the religious knowledge they thought people are born with these qualities. You can try to teach them to boys by telling them with examples what the consequences have been for other people who did bad things. Undesirable traits are drinking alcohol, stealing and lying. A successful farmer saves seed instead of eating it, does the farming activities (ploughing, sowing, weeding, harvesting etc) at the right time, and follows up his farm-work continuously. The most important farming skill is to be able to prepare farm implements. It is useful to be able to read, write and calculate since then you can send and receive letters and can run the *iddir* without any problem. The most respected social skill is that of traditional healer. Children learn agriculture and home economics at school. It is useful for being a better farmer to some extent. It is easier to earn off-farm income if you have been to school because most students need money to wear better clothes, to have a watch etc, and hence they try to work in an off-farm business to get money. It makes a difference how long they stay at school: after completing junior school they become somewhat better than those who do not. The group said there were two men at high school, five men at junior school, five have completed 6th grade (one female), four have completed 4th grade (two female) and there are 41 students in grades 1-4, eight of which are female.

In 2005, there are now more than 200 students in the school. The ratio of boys to girls is almost 1 to 1. Most of these students are from within the community. Eight students are from Bole (a small village in Batto Degaga of Eastern Shewa) – located on the way to Sodere from Korodegaga. The number of students in junior and secondary school in Dera has also been increasing every year.

Both girls and boys have good interest in continuing their education up to higher institutions (colleges and universities). However, there is still high rate of discontinuing education mainly because of poverty. Poor, destitute and female-headed households have little capacity to send their children (both boys and girls) to high school, because they cannot afford house rent, cost of education materials, etc. Distance is another factor. Dera is located 20 km from the site. As a result, students cannot go to and from Dera every day. They must stay there at least for a week. Abduction is another factor that forces female students to stop learning. Many girls stopped education due to abduction in the past ten years. After completing primary school in the *kebele*, some parents do not volunteer to send their daughters to towns to continue their education. They believe they may establish special relationship with boys and give birth to illegal children which is not acceptable in the area.

Students work as daily labourers and females sell firewood to earn income that is used for purchasing better clothes and educational materials, etc. There are about 300 students who learn in primary school and more than 10 at high school (two female at grade 8) and there is one student who is studying 2nd year in Alemaya University. There are 41 students who have completed 4th grade (three females).

Education

The primary school in the area educates up to grade 4. Junior and high schools are attended at Dera by renting a house. There is a junior school (up to grade 8) at Sodere and Awash Melkasa. In 2005 about 40 students took final exam from grade four (4). Four of them are female students. About 80% of children attend their education regularly all year and about 10% of them attend their education sporadically.

There is no fixed age at which pupils start their education. As generally they start formal education from the age of seven to forty / fifty years old. So they have different age groups at different classes. At grade one they started to read and at two/three they write effectively. The community people would like to see changes their standard of living and they want to educate their all children.

At the present time they learn Oromiffa, mathematics, civics, English, sport, music, drawing, environment, science and social science. Under civics, they learn about democracy, human rights, citizenship, harmful culture, etc. In addition to the Korodegaga elementary school, some students

attend Sodere elementary school (1-6 grade). Still others (boys) learn in Itaya primary school by staying in their relatives' home. After completing elementary education, Dera is the most favourable location to continue secondary education because the nearest high school is located there. Only some male students continue their secondary education in Nazret high school. It is difficult to determine the average ages of students in each grade, but it is possible to give the range. In grade one, the age of female students extends from 7 to 19, and boys from 8 to 22; in grade four the range for girls is from 13 to 18 and for boys 13 to 21.

Parents who send their children to the elementary school must pay 10 *birr* as a school fee once a year (it can be at the beginning or in the middle of the year). They also pay 2 *birr* for sports and another 2 *birr* for a certificate in a year. Third and fourth grade students must pay 1 *birr* book rent for books borrowed from the school.

Before 2004, there were only two male teachers in the elementary school of Korodegaga. In 2005 there were three teachers (one contract, and two permanent). The two permanently employed are female teachers. Due to bad weather conditions, lack of proper services (clean water, residence houses, etc.), none of the teachers live in the community. They live in Awash Melasa 10 km from the site and 8 km for Sodere. They use minibuses from Sodere to Awash Melkasa, but they walk on foot between Sodere and Korodegaga. They teach from 9am to 12.30pm. In February 2005, the *wereda* education office tried to extend the time for education up 3.30pm. The attempt faced problems. Students who came from distant villages like Alellu, Amola, Arda and Chirota could not stay in the school for the whole day without eating their lunch. Teachers also faced problems to return home. As a result, they returned to the normal shift.

Children in the *kebele* also learn religious education in two places. To complete this religious education one must learn all of the five sections included in the curriculum:

1. *Quran*: this is simply learning the words and sentences written in the Quran. It enables the students to know how to write Arabic letters and some meaning about what Allah said.
2. *Kitab*: This is a book written by the followers of the prophet Mohammed about the Muslim religion in detail. These followers, called *Asehaba* included in the *Kitab* how to pray when begging Allah and what are good and bad things in Muslim religion. The student who learn this know more about religion than students who just learn the Quran.
3. *Hadiss*: the student who learns this can write Arabic words, translate the Quran, and sayings of the Prophet. They can also become a teacher of the Quran and *Kitab*.
4. *Tefsiral Quran*: here the student learns about the meaning of the Quran. it need students who are perfect in writing and reading of Arabic words to be able to translate the Quran.
5. *Bukarim-Muslim*: This is the last sector of religious learning in the book written by Muslim apostles. They wrote about the work of Mohammed in his efforts to extend the religion.

These five sections take 10 years to complete. In 1994, most children learnt only the first three sections for three or less years. In the past ten years, however, the attitude of people to religious education has totally changed. The main reasons for this is the strengthening of sharia, and the preaching of Islam by sheiks. In 2005 almost all children between the age of 5 and 15 attend religious education. Both boys and girls have equal access to it. Education is given by religious teachers who come from others areas for the purpose of teaching. In the Sefera village, it is given in the primary school. Religious education is mainly given in the afternoon (from Monday-Friday) and before noon on Saturday and Sunday. In Buko village it is given in small mosque of a private individual. In Shelota and Chirota village, it is given in Mosques.

It is difficult for the students to continue after they finish 4th grade because they must go to Sodere to complete their elementary education. Sodere elementary school is 3-6 km from Sefera, Buko, Olati, Shallota and Bowra villages and 10-15 km from Arda, Chirota, Alellu and Amola villages. Hence it is only appropriate for children from the first five villages to continue schooling. All children must cross the Awash river which is not reliably possible. Therefore most of the students are forced to stop learning after they have completed 4th grade. There are only five children who have completed elementary education and become farmers. Junior school is found at Awash Melkassa which is 10 km from the nearest village (Sefera). Any student who wants to go to this school must use public transport paying 1 *birr* for one-way travel to Awash Melkasa. If this is impossible the student can live for five days in Awash Melkassa. Both of these choices are difficult for parents. Currently there are five children who completed 7th and 8th grades but now they are farmers. There is one person who has completed 10th grade and one 12th grade but there are many drop-outs between grade 7 and 10. They have been to the nearest high school at Nazret, which is 28 km from Sefera village. More sons than daughters are sent school. No one has been to college from the *kebele*.

Currently, there is no student who learns at Awash Melkasa junior school. Students go to Dera junior and secondary school. Unless they go on foot (3-4 hours), they have to use public transport from Sodere (4 *birr* for one trip). Since there are students in high school from all the villages, it is difficult to determine the exact number of students who joined in Nazret. But we know that two male students learn in Nazret; and one joined Ambo college and another Jimma University in 2004.

Now the number of students that continue from elementary school to high school has increased. There are about four students who learn 10th grade and above 10 students are learn at high school (2 are females who are grade 8). There are many students who learn in junior school also present at Sodere and Awash Melkasa. There is one male who learns at Alemaya University in 2nd year college education.

Training

In 2004/5 a number of individuals took training at the *wereda* level. Most of them are *kebele* officials while some of them are community elders. They were chosen on the basis of the position and role they play in the community. One respondent told me that he has taken training on environmental protection (terracing, reforestation, sanitation, etc.), how to expand irrigation, both in a group and individually, family planning and health related problems. Another respondent said that he took training on how to combat harmful practices, sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS, and educational management and girls educations, family planning, harmful cultures such as rape, abduction, early marriage, non-voluntary marriage, polygamy, etc. Some women are able to change these trainings into practice. Members of the women's credit association contribute 11 *birr* monthly at the *wereda* credit association office; they bought hybrid hens, and sheep by borrowing the money from the association. When the community irrigation was established in 2001, SHI gave training to the farmers on how to perform irrigation works and on how to save their money in order to make the cooperative self-reliant and self-dependent.

Trainings were mainly given in *wereda* administration but sometimes experts come from the *wereda* and teach the whole population on different issues: irrigation, security problems, drought and its impacts, and environment protection. One informant told me that if all the information obtained from trainings and meetings had been converted into action, the people would have moved out of poverty, and even they would have become self-sufficient in food.

There were also many meetings at Dera, both women and men participated in different issues, such as community development and rehabilitation, evaluation of officials, leaders, teachers in the *kebele*, etc. The intention is that those people who took these different trainings teach the community but they have

not done much.

Health

People use different kinds of traditional medicine for various kinds of diseases. The medicines are obtained from plant leaves and roots. They are used for toothache, headache, snake poisons, etc. One person gives traditional treatment in Bofa in Eastern Shewa by making cuts on a patient's tongue. It is believed many people have been cured from stomach, kidney, liver, and lung diseases. A large number of women and a few men visited this person's house in 2005. People also bathe in hot springs to get treatment from some diseases. The presence of Sodere hot spring creates a favourable opportunity for the people. Since they could not afford the entry fee of 8-15 *birr*, people bathe in the hot waters which are found outside the recreation centre. There is also another hot spring in Korodegaga just parallel to the Sodere recreation centre. They use traditional medicine available in Iteya for cancer.

The most common disease in the community is malaria, so they get chloroquine from the *kebele* distributed/given by trained men. But if their health deteriorates they go to Awash Melkasa or Dera health centre to get treatment and medical medicine then to go to Nazret and Asella Hospital in which they get all types of medical treatment.

In 1994, a group of women ranked diseases in order of severity as: (1) malaria; (2) TB; (3) gastric; (4) amoeba; (5) headache; (6) eye problems; (7) teeth problems. They agreed that malaria is caused by mosquitoes and can be prevented by eating special food such as *fetto* and garlic, not getting hungry, and getting rid of swampy areas, although this would be impossible in this area since the Awash river is very long. TB is caused by dust, cold and hard work and cannot be prevented. Gastric is caused by drinking hot drinks and shortage of food and can be prevented by eating soft food, eating enough and avoiding hot drinks. Amoeba are caused by dirty water and can be avoided by drinking clean water. Headaches result from the sun's strong heat, hard work and malaria and can be prevented by controlling malaria and decreasing the intensity of work. All these illnesses are best treated by modern medical treatment. For malaria the health centre and pharmacy are used about 10% of the time, then the Malaria Controlling Centre. TB is treated about 20% of the time in the Clinic: the rest of the time at the hospital. Gastric is treated about 20% at the Health Centre, 20% at the pharmacy, 55% at the Clinic and 5% at hospital. Headache is treated half at the pharmacy and half at the Health clinic. Amoeba is treated 50% at the Clinic, and the other half divided about equally between health centre, pharmacy and hospital.

Malaria mosquitoes affect almost all the women, mainly in the summer because it is wet and suitable for mosquito reproduction. Mosquitoes also reproduce in the maize as they hide themselves in the maize stick before it is harvested. Women are mainly affected by TB when they are involved in men's farms. They are responsible for harvesting maize and haricot beans in October and November and the intensity of the work and the dust cause the women to be sick. From December until the rains start in June there is a strong wind which picks up the dust and this gives people TB. Women are again involved in the men's farms for soil preparation and weeding in the summer season. The bad smell from the ground, intensive work and the cold air cause TB.

It is mainly in the wet season that people can eat soft food like milk and butter which reduces gastric problems. In the dry season they do not have such soft food but rather hot drinks like coffee and less fresh food. They also eat less in the dry season which is another cause of gastritis.

The Awash River brings a lot of waste from factories and hotels and this is the main cause of amoeba. The intensity increases when people eat soft foods like milk and butter. The dust which is picked up by the wind from the ground during the dry season is the main cause of eye problems. Food shortage is another cause of such problems. Cold air is the main cause of teeth problems.

In 1994, a group of women ranked the four most serious children's diseases as malaria; stomach problems; tonsillitis; and colds. Malaria is caused by mosquitoes and can be prevented by giving children enough and soft food. Stomach problems are caused by dirty water and unclean food and can be prevented by providing clean water and preparing food carefully. Tonsillitis is caused by wind, cold and the sun's heat and can be prevented by keeping children properly. Colds are caused by cold air and can be prevented by keeping children carefully. In the past, to treat tonsillitis they were given traditional medicine and their tonsils were cut. Now, there is no traditional healer who cuts tonsils, so they take their children to modern medicine.

Our diary research shows that children are also affected by skin diseases. It is caused by swimming and bathing in the dirty water. Parents take them to health centres in Awash Melkasa (8 km from Sodere) and Dera (20 km). In addition skin and bone cancer affects some children. Treatments of such kinds are costly and carried out in hospitals; the poor and destitute could not afford it. Thus they just keep the patient in home without treatment. One child of 8 years has for example, suffered from bone cancer for the last four years because his destitute female-headed household mother does not have the economic capacity to take him to hospital.

In 1994, a group of men ranked the diseases causing problems in order of severity as malaria; amoeba; diarrhoea; TB; gastritis; eye problems. Amoeba is treated about a third of the time each at the health clinic, the health centre and the hospital. Diarrhoea is treated 45% of the time at the centre, 35% of time at the clinic and 20% at the hospital. Gastric is treated about half the time at the health centre and half at the health clinic.

The rain is the main cause of malaria. During the *belg* (March and April) the air becomes cold and the ground becomes wet and these are the appropriate condition for mosquitoes to bite people. During the *meher* (June, July and August) conditions are also suitable for the mosquito. Most biting occurs from September to November when the rain begins to stop and the air becomes hot. The second cause is the marshy areas around the Awash. Almost all the residents in the *kebele*, including children, have malaria. Today treatment for malaria is carried out in Awash Melkasa and Dera health centres. Private clinics in these towns also give treatment. Thus if someone is infected with malaria, people immediately take him/her to the health centres. The blood test does not take much time; and after the cause is known the physician gives them medicine. In recent years, the *wereda* health centre distributes medicines for malaria through *kebele* administration. In Korodegaga *kebele*, one individual takes the responsibility of performing this. Since people know the symptoms of malaria from their experience, they go to the house of this individual to get medicine. But when the illness becomes serious they move to clinics or health centres. Old people say that problems are caused by the dust and heat. But they do not associate it with lack of proper diet such as minerals. Coughing (common cold) is also a widespread disease in Korodegaga. According to the local people it is caused by diets, water from the Awash, and the lack of latrines. People do not go to the health centre for this disease.

About three-quarters of the residents of the *kebele* suffer from amoeba. The source is the Awash River which is the only water source for all purposes in the *kebele*. The waste from Akaki industries and the Wenji sugar factory and the Sodere Resort hotel all flow in the river. The Awash River also causes diarrhoea and most of the malaria patients have diarrhoea.

The men do not know the cause of eye problems but believe it is because of shortage of food. Mostly peasants only eat maize and sell the *tef* and wheat they produce. Adults are the ones who suffer from this illness even more than the elders. Many say they cannot see after sunset.

The nearest health facility is in the village, where they can get chloroquine for free which is distributed from the malaria control health centre. It is also possible to get medical service in Awash Melkasa and Dera. In addition to the presence of health centres in these towns, there are many private

clinics. Both in terms of distance and service, Awash Melkasa is the best for the local people. The transport cost is 2 *birr* per trip to Awash Melkasa while it is 4 *birr* per trip to Dera. Awash Melkasa is also the closest town to the *kebele*. The services given are also better, according to the beneficiaries. People go to Nazret hospital only for serious illnesses. The major problem with regard to health service is that the medical cost is too high mainly for the poor and destitute people. Many rich and medium people prefer the private clinics to government health centres because the private ones are efficient both in time and quality of service.

6. Consumption

Food

Famine has always been with them since the early 1980s. The size of the family determines whether or not all members of the family eat together. If the family is too large to eat from one large plate, they may be served in two plates. If the family is not too large, everyone present at mealtimes eats from the same plate irrespective of age or sex.

The most important local measurement units are:

weights:	kilogram, <i>kunna</i> , <i>dawla</i> , <i>tassa</i>
volume:	bottle, <i>birchiko</i> , <i>ensira</i> , <i>goma</i>
land area:	<i>wodero</i> = 50 metres

The most commonly consumed food includes *injera* (from *tef*), porridge (*genfo*)- made from barley and mixture of maize and wheat, *nifro* - made from *boloke* (haricot bean) and maize, and roasted maize mainly during the harvest season. The rich and medium households can get eggs, chickens (sometimes), and meat of goats and sheep as well as dairy products. The very poor and destitute households do not get such kinds of special food. Milk is obtained mainly from cows but also from goats and camels (if they have camels). Some individuals catch fish from the Awash, which they use for home consumption. Everybody can get vegetables, mainly onions, tomatoes, green peppers and cabbages because these crops can be obtained at any time from the irrigation farms. Though there are some fruits like papaya, and sugar cane, they are sold at market. The consumption of vegetables started with the expansion of irrigation farms in the community. The consumption of eggs is also a recent development. The introduction of the hybrid chickens by SHI in coordination with the *wereda* agricultural and extension office greatly contributed to the presence of eggs in large quantities. On special occasions such as fasting, people drink *shorba*, a drink made from barley. On holidays they may consume milk, eat and eggs; as well as *chat* in some households.

Saving, Investment and Credit

In agricultural societies and where modern saving systems (like banks) are either non-existent or not well accepted by the local people, savings take the form of investing in livestock production. Likewise, "most farmers in Korodegaga hold savings in the form of livestock" (IFPRI,1989:32). In this society traditional saving clubs (*equb*) play only small role.

There is no saving in the form of *equb* at the present time. There are different kinds of saving mechanisms. One is the Womens' Credit and Saving Association. It was formed three years ago with the assistance of SHI. The members pay 11 *birr* monthly. The money is saved in Oromia Credit and Saving Association. They go to Dera to pay the contribution. There are 18 members. They borrowed money twice in 2004 and in May 2005. In the previous year they borrowed 700 *birr*, and then later 980 *birr*. Each member has saved about 400 *birr*. The credit has helped them to buy goats, sheep, cows and oxen, and to build houses. There is also another small women's credit and saving

association which was established in 2004. It was organised by the *wereda* extension and credit and saving offices. It has about sixty women, and they pay 1 *birr* monthly. This kind of saving is called locally '*Dubberti Woldda Gaintta*' (women's association). Now, they want to save in the bank, because the amount of money has increased.

The SHI sponsored community irrigation cooperative borrows modern inputs (fertilisers, selected seeds, pesticides and weed killer) to be repaid together with an interest of 2% after harvest. The local *iddir* lend money to their members for medical treatment. All *iddir* lend money only for this purpose, with interest. Non-members cannot borrow from the *iddir*.

People invest in house assets, productive assets, children's education and livestock assets. Rich and medium households are expanding irrigation by buying private irrigation pumps. The poor, however, buy cattle hoping that they will solve their economic problems through this mechanism. About 15 farmers have either bought or built houses in Dera town. Some rented them out; others preserved them for their children's education.

Some rich and medium and a few poor households have been trying to educate their children in higher institutions. One rich respondent told me that though they have faced a shortage of family labour, he is determined to help his son and daughter to be successful in their education. One female-headed household and leader of the women's association said that through she is one of the poorest in the community, she is determined to pay every cost that will help her son to be successful in his education (he is a grade 7 student in Dera).

The intensification of poverty greatly contributed to the decline of borrowings among the local people. Respondents reiterate that people are not keen to borrow money and grain but rather oxen for farming.

Household Assets

Very rich households have a radio, tape player and quality watches, beds of cattle skin, chairs, farm implements like a plough, *jamba* (machete), sickle, spade, hammer, private irrigation pumps, hand pumps, and sprays. Rich households have a bed and mattress made from animal leather and a plastic sheet for the floor. One farmer has a *gari*, a horse-drawn cart; another rich person has a bicycle.

Medium-wealth households have a radio, bed, plough, sickle, spade, *jamba*, hand-pump, a few have a private irrigation pump in a group, and house furniture like pots made of plastic. The beds are made from animal skin or mud (*medeb*) and the mattress of straw.

Poor households may have a plough, sickle, spade, *jamba*, jerry-can and a bed *medeb*. The destitute have a sickle, spade and *jamba*. One destitute female-headed women reported that she has only a sickle and *jamba*.

The use of spades, *jamba*, hammer and pumps for agricultural purposes is a recent development. The expansion of irrigation since the late 1990s greatly contributed to the increasing importance of these assets. Irrigation pumps are widely used by those farmers with irrigated land. Spades and *jamba* are also used for community activities like terracing, water harvesting, destruction of unwanted weeds, etc. The consumption of information (about other communities and peoples) is also increasing in recent years. Thus, many people have radios and listen regularly to understand what is going on in the country. They also use radios to listen to recreational programmes like drama, songs, etc. It is not uncommon for young and adult males to carry a radio with them whilst farming and harvesting. It is probable that the transmission of radio programmes in Oromiffa language contributes to the wide use of radio in the rural areas of Oromia region.

One change in the last 10 years is that most households do not have baskets, which are no longer made. One factor is the lack of grass used to make baskets and its price has become expensive. The other reason is that firewood sale and daily labour work are more profitable, so they prefer to buy Kenyan plastic bags for different uses rather than baskets.

Local Services

It is said that there is no *kaleecha* in the area, although there are the sheiks who may pray for people who have some complaints regarding their health in the *kebele*. In Korodegaga there is no trained traditional birth attendant, but most old women help pregnant women in delivery.

There are experts able to give traditional medicines for such misfortunes as snakebites, headaches etc. There is also one person who had to be selected by the residents to give them First Aid using modern medical treatment. He was trained for three months by UNICEF and buys medicine and other First Aid materials from the nearest Red Cross shop. He gives tablets and injections after asking about the symptoms.

There is also a person who can install electrical systems, make electrical lines etc. He learnt this when he was a factory worker at the nearest town but now he does nothing in the *kebele*.

Circumcisers (who cut a part of girls' vaginas) are also said to be local experts.

There is no big shop in the *kebele* but some women sell commodities like cigarettes, sugar, etc. in their houses. There are two shops in the nearby *kebele* (Batto Degata) of Eastern Shewa. One was established by the investor, Hailu Tuke, near his electric mills. The other is in Bole village of the same *kebele*. It is located about 100m from the Red Cross sponsored raft. In addition, there are a number of shops in Sodere. Many people buy their commodities from these shops. The nearest markets are in Sodere (there are some grains, vegetables and consumption goods), Awash Melkasa, Bofa, Dera and Nazret.

Pharmacies are found only in Awash Melkasa and Dera. But one individual in Korodegaga distributes chloroquine for malaria patients in the *kebele*. It is given to them free of charge because it is sent from the *wereda* health centre. He is not paid for this activity.

There has been DA worker in the *kebele* since 1999 / 2000. The present DA is female; she took training on agriculture for 6 months after completing grade 12. Her main works are to distribute fertilisers, selected seeds, and to organise the people for community works. She also has a responsibility to follow up the irrigation activities in the area. She has to report any fortunate and unfortunate events (drought, weather change, outbreaks of human and animals diseases, etc.) She works in coordination with *kebele* officials mobilising people for work. People complain that she has no knowledge to mobilise the people; she mainly runs her personal affairs leaving aside the critical problems affecting the community. They say that she is late to report appropriate facts to the *wereda* administration. I observed when individual farmers accused her in public for her reluctance to report the severity of the drought and hunger in the *kebele* in March 2005. They even compared her activities with the activities of her predecessor who is said to have brought important changes in the community i.e. he has good qualities of motivating people, to mobilise them for work, etc.

Veterinary services are available in Dera, but during the spread of animal disease, the professionals come and give vaccinations or give treatment. For example, in 2004 they came to give vaccinations for goats and sheep, although they came late.

7. Local Institutions and Organisations

Households

The term household (*warra*) is usually used to refer to two spouses and their unmarried offspring. In fact *warra* could refer to a wider community than what has been said above. Like in many other Oromo societies, *warra* may be an extended family including married sons (their wives and offspring included) and even classificatory brothers. What matters is, therefore, the context of the discussion. The term *warra* in a narrower sense may imply eating, farming, and living under one roof. It should also be noted that unmarried offspring who live far away from their family's residence for reasons of education or trade, etc are still members of the household.

Most people living in a house who are not regarded as a member of the household are daily labourers who come from other parts of Arssi. They may be relatives. Since they are not permanent dwellers, they cannot build a house in the community. They use the house for eating and sleeping. Religious leaders also use the house of any household for eating but they sleep in a mosque. Very old households are mainly dependent upon their male children because they are not strong enough to perform their activities. If the head has a younger wife, she can give him care. If there are no children around, relatives take the responsibility of helping them. Young household are strong enough to help themselves, and they also help others (children, old parents, etc.), they live near to the old household so that they establish an intimate relation with it.

There are very few male-headed households in the *kebele*; male-headed houses are the result of the death of the wife. In 2005 there were two male-headed households in the Buko village. After the death of his wife three years ago, one of them lives in his house. The second lives with his divorced daughter. Female-headed households are also the result of the death of their male sons and death of husbands, not divorce.

Adoption is quite widely exercised among this community. Close relatives, preferably paternal uncles, adopt sons of their brothers if the adoptive father does not have male offspring himself.

Marriage

Marriage among the Arssi is characterised by clan exogamy and religious endogamy. Marriage is not an individual affair, but the concern of the clan. It creates an important occasion in the life of the individual couples and the marriage history of the clan. Marriage unites the two clans because "a girl is considered not only as a daughter of her father but also of the clan" (Abdurahman,1991:35). Post-marital residence is patrilocal and lineages are patrilineal. Like in almost all Oromo and also Muslim societies male dominance in politics is widely observed. All the types of marriage described below are still applicable in Korodegaga between different lineages but not within. In the *kebele* all the residents are Arssi Oromos belonging to the *Sebiro* group and classified into 12 clans:

1. Sebiro
2. Bedosa
3. Amigna
4. Jawi
5. Agodu
6. *Koloba*
7. Ballekessa
8. Dayi
9. Seyimena

10. Gessela
11. Sude
12. Gulale – migrant Christians

Marriage is practical between these clans or with other ethnic groups living outside this area. The age considered suitable for marriage for girls is above 15 years and boys is above 18 years. Abdurahman identifies seven different types of marriage performed in accordance with the Allo Arssi. The two widely practised forms of marriage are *Gabara/halanga* (single marriage or marriage by purchase) and *wolgara* (marriage by exchange). *Gabara* is the type of marriage in which the parents of the would-be husband pay bride wealth in the form of a number of heads of cattle ranging from 5 to 120 (Abdurahman,1991:37).. Parents of both groom and bride are responsible from the beginning up to the end of the marriage. The bride knows nothing until the wedding day approaches because her parents are dealing secretly with the elders who come from the bridegroom's house. It is only the parents of the groom who select the bride for their son and then they discuss with their son as they are planning to do so. After both the groom and his parents are agreed the parents begin to select the elders who are appropriate to deal with the parents of the bride. Each dealing between the elders and the parents of the bride has its own Oromiffa name:

(a) *milki*: two people, one of whom is a close relative of the parents of the bride, go to the bride's house to spy on their activity. Spying starts on the journey so if, for instance wild animals cross their path, they go back to the bridegroom and tell his parents the marriage will not work. If nothing happens on the journey the elders spy on the bride's activity to know whether the marriage will go smoothly or not. If, for instance, she is carrying an empty water pot to bring water from the source, or she is carrying waste to throw elsewhere, they assume the marriage is completely useless and tell the groom's parents to change their mind and choose another bride for their son. If nothing happens on the journey and if the 2 persons see the bride is carrying a pot full of water, or carrying a baby, or preparing milk from cows, they assume the marriage will be good and the couple will live together for a long time. They will tell the parents of the groom to continue the process. In this part of the process no-one in the bride's family knows what is going on.

(b) *edecha*: dealing with the parents of the bride starts here. It is only one person who is a close relative of the bride's parents (it can be the one who went spying) who is selected as an elder to beg the parents of the bride. They agree after the 2nd or 3rd visit of this person and decide the date for the next step in the process.

(c) *miju* (or *mensensa*): the bridegroom and 5 elders go to the bride's house while the family and neighbours prepare special food for them. At this time the elders take nothing except ½ quintal (1 *silicha*) of barley which is said to be *derrara*. *Derrara* means flower and is used to indicate that the couple are new for marriage. The neighbours and family of the bride share this barley after they invite the elders. From this day the bride wears a ring called *nika* which indicates that she is ready to marry. There is no agreement made between these 2 groups to decide the day for the next process but the relative of the bride's parents who went for *edecha* come again to deal with the parents. They tell all the goods they need from the groom's family including the amount and type of cloth to send for their relatives. The bride's uncles and aunts, grandparents and father and mother need clothes (*bulluko* for men, dress for women) from the groom's family. The number of cattle sent to the bride's parents depends on the wealth of the groom's family. All his close relatives have an obligation to contribute cattle (called *gabara*)

(d) *ayankebi*: this is the last stage of dealing between the 2 groups. Including the groom and his 2 friends, about 10 people who are considered to be the known elders go to the bride's house. They take butter and honey while the bride's family have prepared food. All her close relatives, especially those who wear the clothes obtained as *gabara* are invited to participate in the meeting and share the butter and the honey. Those who do have an obligation to contribute furniture (from the female) and cattle (from the male)

which in turn will be sent to the bridegroom's parents. On this day the couple put the rings on their fingers. The date of the wedding is decided.

On the wedding day the groom and his followers bring with them 1 heifer and 1 young bull (if impossible 2 heifers) which are given to the bride's elder brother as well as one *spir* which is given to the surrounding elders (this is known as *kerta*). Also on this day the cattle contributed by the bride's parents and relatives are given to the groom and his parents. The groom gets five cows (*jelka*) while the rest are given to his parents (*gegao*). If the bride's father is wealthy he gives a machine gun to the groom which he uses to keep wildlife from his cows and his enemies away. It is a useful gift to get respect from the bridegroom and the community. After all these processes are finished the groom returns to his home with his wife and followers. The next day is the day on which the parents and relatives of the groom give cattle, goats, sheep and money (*dofsissa*). In Korodegaga it was reported that the amount of bride wealth (*gebera*) and dowry (*gegao*) differs depending on the economic status of the families involved. Men give their fathers-in-law cash. Families which are not economically well off give *gabara* of between 1,000 – 2,000 *birr*. Gifts transferred in the form of *gegao* are between 3 and 5 heads of cattle. Wealthy families pay up to 5,000 *birr*, three to five quintals of *tef*, some amount of butter as *gabara*, while the daughter's family give *gegao* of between 20 to 30 heads of cattle and household equipment. Informants could not estimate the cost of feasts, but stressed that it varies depending on the economic level of the parties concerned. Indeed the gifts transferred in the form of heads of cattle and grains have either been highly reduced in recent years or totally replaced by money because the repeated drought impoverished the majority of the people. Thus, some households do not pay the *gabara* and *gegao*. There are also a number of households who have no cattle. Children of such households have begun to conduct “voluntary” marriage in which the couple informally agrees to make their marriage through “abduction” - the bride wealth given for the abducted daughter is very small when compared with that of formal marriage.

From now on the couple live together with the family of the groom for at least 1 month and then begin to live in their new house which was built before the wedding. Poor couples may continue to live with the groom's parents for a long time. For those who are poor the amount of gifts on both sides is less. The father of the groom also gives a piece of land (after the revolution not more than ½ hectare). Once the groom was married he had the right to be a member of the *kebele* (up to 1990 - mixed economy) and the *kebele* gave him the land at redistribution time. Since 1990 the mixed economy did not allow land redistribution and most adult males get land from their parents and are forced to plough using sharecropping arrangements. Since the last 2 or 3 years it has become common for them to live together with their parents even after they got married, because they expect there will be a land distribution a bit later on and then they will be able to get it.

Wolgara, which literally means to exchange, involves no bride wealth payment, but only exchanging of women between different families. It is mostly practised by households which are less wealthy because the number of cattle required for *gabara* is too many for them. Parents who want a wife for their son search out a family with a girl of equal age to their daughter which also has a son who can marry their daughter. The similarity of girls from both sides is important to equalise the number of cattle exchanged. If the daughter is younger than the girl who will be their daughter-in-law the number of cattle given to that household is more than the number they will receive.

The parents who want a wife for their son start the proceedings by sending a close relative to ask agreement for such a type of marriage. After their agreement the elders deal from both sides to decide the day of *miju*. Five elders and the groom go to the bride's house on one day, and the other groom and elders go to the second bride's house on another day. The wedding day of both is on one day: there is no *gabara* only *gegao* transferred from both sides because an exchange of girls is considered to be a *gabara*. It is only the parents who buy the cloth for their son and daughter.

Other types of marriage include *butta* (abduction), *hawota* (marriage which takes place by the agreement

of the 2 young persons without the consent of the 2 families), *dhaala* and *menbeto* or *hirpha* (which means levirate and sororate, respectively), and *gursumuma* (marrying a divorcee) (Abdurahman, 1991:39-42).

Asena (adabana): this happens when an average girl who has no husband makes love secretly with anyone she needs. She may be attracted by his good way of song, his personality, or his attention to work. He may be married or unmarried. She comes directly to his house without any negotiation, even with him. She brings a stick to throw inside his barn (where the cattle sleep) and a small quantity of milk to put in the same place, while a little quantity of barley is put on his bed. This is an indication of love and her wish to be his wife. After she throws the stick and the milk in the barn and then the barley on his bed she says "*Eja jejebana asena fekana*" which means I make *asena* type marriage by force. After she says this sentence no-one of his family can send her out of the house and she becomes his first wife if he is not married or 2nd/3rd if he is.

In the past, the ceremony of circumcision was a part of all first marriages. On the 15th day before the wedding the bride's parents called for an expert to cut part of her vagina. From then on she was not allowed to work outside her house (compound), for example to bring water, collect firewood, etc. Now, circumcision of female children is regarded officially as a harmful practice. Some female officials took training on this issue at the *wereda* level. Health experts also came from the *wereda* health office and teach the people about harmful practices including circumcision. Though the practice of circumcision is still conducted in the *kebele*, many people have developed awareness about its disadvantages. The attempt to raise awareness among the whole community continues.

Dalla (inheritance of widows) is one of the important types of marriage applicable in Korodegaga until now. If a husband's wife dies, the man can inherit his wife's sister. He does not make any payment (*Gebera*, clothes, etc). Equally if the husband dies, the wife may be inherited by her husband's eldest brother. If the eldest brother is too old he transfers the responsibility to the second eldest but takes a cloth (*bulluko*) from his younger brother as an exchange for the inherited woman. This type of marriage is done a year after the death of the head: this year allows her to forget her dead husband and is called *gufufa* (bad year). After a year the dead man's brother calls a meeting of his and her relatives and elders to fix the day on which he will be her formal husband called *kaya-oga* which means the last day of sadness and the beginning of a new life.

Benbetto is a marriage done mainly between 2 families which have a good and strong relationship. A man who lost his wife through death can ask her parents to give him one of their other daughters to be his wife. He and his relatives ask this question on the funeral day when her parents and relatives come to the house for the funeral. They do not allow them to bury the dead woman until the parents have agreed to give him another daughter. If they have no daughter they can give a sister or niece. Nothing is given as *gabara* or *gegao*. Latter marriage is applicable among those who are divorced, widowed or who want to have more than 1 wife. It is prohibited to marry a divorced or widowed woman unless the man is also divorced or widowed or wants to marry more than 1 wife. If his first wife cannot give birth he asks her agreement to bring another wife.

During this type of marriage there is no gift of *gabara* or *gegao* nor a ceremony as for a first marriage. A man sends 2 or 3 elders to her parents or relatives to ask permission: she has to agree. At the wedding time there is a small preparation of food and drink which makes the marriage formal and then he takes her property (furniture, cattle, food crops etc). If she has nothing her parents give her some cattle at the wedding day.

Butta is kidnapping of girls. After the kidnapping he must bring the girl to his parents' house. Unless he does that no-one is willing to help in the next stage of the process. The groom's parents have the responsibility for settling all the problems which occur after kidnapping. *Hawota* (marriage agreed on by the couple) is also classified as a *butta* type of marriage because her parents know nothing until her

daughter leaves their house when she goes to her husband's house.

In Korodegaga polygamy is widely exercised. A man can marry from 2 to 3 wives.

Divorce

No divorce is recalled by the informants, because of religious influence of sharia law, and this agrees with what Baxter observed twenty years back. He wrote "Arssi's marriage is indissoluble once the final sacrificial ceremony called *Rako Qalu* has been performed". (Baxter, 1974:180) Very rarely desertion is reported. Although formally there is no divorce in the site couples do separate themselves. When the husband has a second and third wife, he refuses the first wife and she lives with her children in separate house. He does not help in labour or finance. The properties (cattle and land) are shared by elders and mediators. The children live with their mother. Religious law does not allow divorce as a whole and the husband must care for all wives equally, but in reality this does not work. Governments, NGOs, women's leaders, etc are supporting legal divorce whereby wives can share the property equally. After separation, women are not allowed to remarry, they live with their children, but the men can remarry. If the wife tries to leave the husband without his agreement she receives nothing and must leave her former residence. She can take the children she needs to live with.

Widows and widowers can remarry unless they are too old, disabled or unable to work: if so their kin have the responsibility to help them.

Inheritance

Inheritance is done between parents and children and among brothers. If parents are too old to participate in farm activities all their property (cattle, house, furniture, and land) are still theirs, but they are controlled by the son who helps them. He ploughs the land, keeps the cattle, renews the house and uses the furniture together with all his family who are under the control of his parents. His parents also come under his control but even if he becomes head of the household he cannot make decisions about his parents property. For example, he cannot sell their cattle unless they agree. Inheritance is therefore done after death.

When the father dies his wife becomes the head of household and all of the property comes under her control except that the eldest son obtains his ring and a mule (if he has one) while the eldest daughter (only if she is married before her father's death) obtains a cow or a heifer. If the head has more than one wife his first wife (or if she is not present his second) has a right to decide on the type of cattle given to the remaining wives. All other property is owned by the eldest wife. If she dies next her eldest son living under her control before her death has the responsibility for managing and controlling all her property and her family. The main thing here is that this type of inheritance is only applicable if the father has no brothers to inherit the wife. If the father dies one of his brothers will inherit his family and cloth, linen, spear, shield and gun (if present). After he becomes the head of this family, a year after the death of his brother, he will take all the property including the land owned by the brother before his death. But if he has more wives, the inherited wife continues to control the properties of her deceased husband. All her children also live with her. The new husband may cultivate land for her if she has no mature son. Since she is his legal wife, the husband has to play an important role between his old and new households. He should visit all his wives (including the inherited) on equal basis. The logic behind wife inheritance is to support to the families of the deceased brother. Islam supports having more than one wife. It also supports wife inheritance. But the government and some NGOs advocate the harmfulness of wife inheritance. They teach the people by associating it with poverty and HIV/AIDS. Most of the inherited wives are not happy with being

under the influence of their husband. Since most households are poor, the husbands do not help the family of the inherited wives. Even some husbands rarely visit them.

If one of the children becomes involved in the process of marriage before the father dies there is some amount of cattle allocated either by the father before his death or by the one who becomes head of the household after his death. If a daughter is in such a process and her father dies, her future husband comes with his parents and relatives just at the funeral day, and returns home on the same day together with his wife and the cattle allocated to her.

Another respondent said that it is only male offspring who are entitled to inherit from their parents. Land is equally shared among male children and the remaining property of the parents goes to unmarried sons, since the married ones have already obtained their share in the form of bridewealth which has brought gifts in return. No illegitimate children seem to exist in this society.

Adoption is quite widely exercised among the Oromo. "Adoption (*moggasa*) has been a common practice for centuries among the Oromo of Ethiopia." (Nadi, 1958:83) Childless couples and those without male children adopt a son from among their close relatives to perpetuate one's lineage.⁹ Nadi adds "The main reason why the Oromo adopt children is the traditional belief that a man has to have an heir who will not only inherit his property but also the continuity of his family" (*ibid*). Married couples who have a daughter(s), but not a son, adopt a boy (between a few months and a teenager) since the daughter(s) will leave the house and enter other families on marriage. There are also many grandchildren adopted by their grandparents. These children take their 'father's name' from their grandfather rather than their original father because they are adopted in their babyhood and have little communication with their biological parents. The adopted children have equal treatment, care and status with other (biological) children of household.

When the father dies, the mother continues to manage and control all the properties, and children. When both parents die, the unmarried sons and daughters continue to control the properties in common. In this case the eldest son becomes the head of the household; and he takes the responsibility of leading the household. He represents the household in all matters. If all the children marry before the death of the parent, the married sons inherit the properties (land, livestock and household assets); the married daughters have no right to inherit. But civil law supports inheritance to all children. Thus, if the married daughter wants to get the properties of her deceased parents, she has to take the case to court so that she may get some of the property.

Kinship

Economic and social obligations are more to father's kin than to mother's kin since descent is reckoned through the father's line. Most of the time mothers come from distant areas for marriage. Therefore children do not have close affection for the mother's kin and they give priority to father's kin for all things. Kinship in Oromia is very wide, because they consider relatives, clans, adoptions etc to be in kin group.

Ethnicity, Clans, and Lineages

Our field research suggests that there are thirteen clans (*gosa*) in the community. These are Sebro, Jawi, Badosse, Lode, Amigna, Belekassa, Sude, Koloba, Hesensaba, Ogodu, Bedansho, Gessella, and

⁹ See Nadi (1958) on the detailed procedures of adoption among the Oromo of Säwa, which hardly differs (regarding major requirements and procedures) from adoption practices among the Oromo in other parts of Ethiopia.

Gwele. Sebro is the most dominant and powerful in Korodegaga, but Jawi is the most dominant in Arssi as a whole. Sebro are said to have been the first settlers in the area. The first Sebro settled at the Amola village, and from this place, they gradually moved to the villages of Alelu, Arda Chirota, Shelota, Buko and finally Degaga (today known as Sefera). Sebro is the largest in terms of population, and dominant in terms of economic power, and social and kin networks. Sebro is divided into six *belbela* (lineages); Walla, Alelu, Amola (the oldest), Abay, Hawtee, and Buko. The *belbela* is classified into *ibida* (sub-lineages); informants could not remember the names of all these *ibida*. At the lowest level of the social structure, we find the *warra* which literally means household.

Ogodu is the most discriminated clan because people say that members of this clan are extravagant and harsh in times of conflict. They call them “laffee gogogdu”- the direct meaning of which is “dried bones” which shows the extent of people’s hatred towards them. The *Gwele* are also not liked by many people. Members of this clan migrated to the area from Eastern Shewa in the past few decades. Thus, they do not belong to the Arssi Oromo. Moreover, they are Christian in religion while all the rest are Muslim. The number of the households of the *Gwele* is not more than five. Thus, this is one of the minority clans in the community.

The religious leaders (Sheiks) can be from any clan who learnt Quranic education and who has knowledge about Sharia law.

Life Cycle Changes and Rites of Passage

In the area, there are no recognised age distinctions. Most age groups (younger, adult and old) co-operate in most cases. They work together, participate at community work and at any organisations participate together. However, the middle and younger adults seems to be more powerful, because local and government rules are controlled by them.

The elders have responsibility to advise the younger ones and to resolve disputes. They also teach the norms and cultures for the coming generation. The middle and younger adults have responsibility to control the local government and security in the community. Adults and adolescents have to do more agricultural work to be wealthy and to form a new household. Children have responsibility to help their parents in the home as well as outside the home.

Friends and Neighbours

Most of the time, friendship is established at village level. Sometimes, immediate neighbours are also friends. For old people, living together for long time is the cause for forming friendship. The community elders (most of them are old men), in particular, move together to solve community problems like conflicts and disagreements. Young people establish friendship based on their age and gender. School children form friendship with their school mates. They walk to and from the school together; they play football and swim in the river with their friends.

Generally, friendship is age and gender oriented. It is not common to see friendly relationship between boys and girls. Even in the school boys and girls play balls separately; again during the time of swimming, boys and girls do not recreate together. People say that this kind of distinction has been practiced for many years and recently, the strengthening of the Sharia law has tightened it.

Citizenship

Sometimes, religion determines the concept of 'citizenship'; many people of Korodegaga say that they are Arssi and, at the same time, Oromo because they are Muslims. They consider the non-Muslim population of the Oromo as "Amhara" which for them, means Christianised Oromo. As one female informant puts it, "the Amhara [to mean the Christian Oromo of Eastern Shewa] like their stomach; on market days both men and women enter hotels to eat food and to drink beers and Katikala; women are not afraid to enjoy the company men. However, the Arssi do not give much attention to their stomach; they prefer to sell their farm outputs and livestock to the Amhara to consume at home; and women are culturally forbidden to enjoy themselves with men in hotels."

Thus, we can understand from the above description that people call themselves Arssi in order to differentiate themselves from the rest of the Oromo population. During the Derg regime the local governments said that, "all Arssi Muslims and Shewa Oromos must be called by the name of 'Oromo'. Arssi is the name of the region.". So some Muslims have accepted this concept but others still believe "we are Arssi".

They have equal rights with other Ethiopian people - they can govern themselves, explain their opinion freely, oppose other parties and they also get services from government etc.

Markets

The nearest market to the *kebele* is Sodere (about 2 km) which is held on Sunday, where people may sell firewood, cash crops/vegetables, chickens and eggs. They, buy consumption items like soap, coffee, sugar, kerosene, etc. Firewood selling and petty trading in vegetables are carried out every day in Sodere. Almost all the sellers of these items are women; they carry bundles of firewood or vegetables on their back and travel to Sodere across the Awash every day.

The people also get food grains (wheat, sorghum, beans, *boleke*, tef, peas, maize, etc), and other consumption goods (soap, kerosene, salt, sugar, coffee, etc) from the new investor (Hailu Tuke) at the mill. It is nearer to the community Eastern Shewa. There are also foods and drinks - *Ambasha* (bread), different breads (Afar bread and *Firno* bread), soft drinks, beer, tea and local beer. There is also a market in Bofa (Northern Shewa) they can get everything they want - food, other consumables, animals, etc. They also sell eggs, chickens and vegetables. It is weekly market.

The big weekly market is at Dera every Tuesday. There are foods, other consumer goods, animals, inputs for farm, luxury goods, clothes, shoes, etc. The price is also relatively fair. Most people go to Dera market every week, because some visit their children who learn there, some go for other services (to get treatment and medicine), others go to the law court etc.

Social Security

There are no longer any *equb* in the *kebele*. There is a women's saving and credit association in the community, formed three years ago. SHI played a vital role in its establishment. It has 37 women members and the members contribute 11 *birr* for saving, kept in the *wereda* saving and credit office. In return, they can borrow money from the association and the loans are repaid with interest. In addition, the Degaga Irrigation Development Cooperative lends modern agricultural inputs (selected seeds, fertiliser, pesticides, etc.) to its members. It is repaid in cash after the harvest with interest.

The widely accepted risk-sharing group is the *Iddir*. There are five big *Iddir*. Some people belong to two

or more *iddir*. Membership can be as large as 70-100 and the monthly contribution is usually 2 *birr* per person. *Iddir* membership is not related to the economic level of the person concerned. There are no *mahiber* in the *kebele* because this is a feature of Orthodox Christianity. *Iddir* is the only local institution which gives social services to its members. It is mainly significant in times of death, when the deceased household gets money and material labour. The poor also borrow money from *iddir* for medical treatment. The money is returned with interest within a few months.

In Korodegaga there are no local moneylenders, but people do lend money to neighbours and relatives on expressed need. This does not involve any interest. When faced with a crisis such as livestock loss or grain shortage residents have coped by selling firewood in Sodere and surrounding areas and seeking assistance from relatives living in other areas.

Redistributive mechanisms

In 1994, feasts involving sacrifices were reported as *sadaqa*, weddings, *Ramadan*, and *Arafa*. For *sadaqa*, weddings *Ramadan* and *Arafa* neighbours and relatives are invited. At *sadaqa*, *Arafa* and *Ramadan* feasts the poor are given special attention and it is the religious requirement to feed the poor especially during *Ramadan* and on the occasion of *sadaqa*.

In 2005 *Sadaqa* was no longer practiced. This is because almost all people are poor and very few have a better life. Some informants said that they could not get financial aid from external agents, e.g. Arab countries to help the poor at feasts. So it is very difficult for very few individuals to help the poor. During Ramadan and Arefa all people celebrate the ceremony in their home after praying and kneeling in the mosque together. In the past feasts celebrated at Melka, all people brought different foods and drinks and also slaughtered oxen, then all the poor and rich ate together but now it is discouraged by sharia law. During weddings, all the poor and rich eat and drink together as guests and there is no special attention for the poor.

Local Organisation

Within the village there are relationships of kinship, economic assistance and mourning at death rituals and other social activities. The interaction is strong at the village level rather than being *kebele* wide.

Iddir have grown both in size and the number of members over the past 10 years. In 1994 there were four *iddir*, compared with eight *iddir* currently in the *kebele*. These are: Arda (the oldest); Chirota; Alelu / Amola; Shelota 1; Shelota 2; Buko, Sefera 1; and Sefera 2 (Sefera small). The main reasons for the expansion of *iddir* are population increase, formation of sub-villages, and differences in interest among the different sections of the local population. In addition to the above male *iddir*, there are women *iddir* located in each village.

If a person loses a lot of property (e.g. house, money, furniture) all at once, all of the residents have an obligation to contribute money, food, crops, furniture, etc and also to build a new house. But if a little property is lost (e.g. an ox) only the members of his *iddir* are responsible for replacing it. For an ox that dies they pay 200 *birr* whether it is big or small. They also plough his land for one season when he loses his oxen, but there is no contribution when other livestock die.

Informants on local institutions recall that the first *iddir* was established at the Arda village during the time of Haile Selassie, probably by the end of 1940s / early 1950s. An old man of 90 years said that *iddir* is not part of the tradition of the Oromo society. It was introduced to the Arssi by Christian settlers and Christian migrant labourers following the occupation of the Arssi by Emperor Menelik II at the end of the nineteenth century. Then, the people of Korodegaga copied this institution from the rest of Arssi

some decades later. Kin, wherever they are living, give cattle (this is not an obligation), furniture or money according to their ability. Friends and neighbours also do the same thing depending on the intensity of their relationship. Lineage is not so important in such conditions as the problem is met by *iddir*.

There is no longer a farmers organisation nor youth association. But some of the farmers are organised under the community irrigation project. Women's associations are working in the area. The *kebele* women are organised as '*Dubberti Walada gamtfa*'. They have their own representatives in the *kebele* leadership, social courts, *kutitir* committee members, and different *kebele* officials.

Equb are not really possible in this community since the farmers have little non-farm income apart from that raised by the selling of firewood and charcoal. The income obtained from such activities does not even cover the need to buy basic goods like coffee, salt, kerosene, soap etc.

Disputes and Resolutions

The elders have more influence to solve disputes or problems which occur in the community. The most respected persons in terms of ability to resolve problems are called *Jarsa biya* (community elders); they are chosen on the basis of age, wealth etc. Most of them are religious leaders which makes them superior to others. The community elders and the *kebele* officials work cooperatively. Attempts are made to resolve disputes or problems by elders first. If it is beyond them or the disputants are not willing to agree, they pass the case to the *kebele* court.

However, the role of community elders in conflict resolution has declined with time. Their activities are sometimes limited to solving minor disagreements like conflicts between individuals, husband and wife, etc. The main reason for the decline is the reluctance of the younger generation to accept the decisions passed by elders. They consider the decisions and ideas of elders as backward, useless and that they do not go with modern ideas. Moreover, most people choose to take their cases to the *kebele* social court rather than to elders. Thus, most of the major disputes are resolved by the social court.

The *kebele* officials have two different jobs to do. The first group controls the administration (e.g. tax collection and implementing rules and regulations made by higher officials). The other is the *Kore Hawasa* (*Kebele* social court). It has five members: the chairman (judge), vice-judge, secretary, and two members, one of whom is a woman. It meets twice a week. The social court is responsible for major disputes such as conflicts over land, cattle entering crops, group fighting, minor theft, serious conflicts between husband and wife, serious quarrelling between individuals, etc. It has a right to decide a penalty up to 500 *birr* but no right to decide on imprisonment.

Major crimes like serious theft, murder, rape, abduction, ethnic or clan-based disputes are passed to the *wereda* court. The *kebele* social court's accountability is not to the *kebele* administration but to the *wereda* court. It seems that the presence of this court helps the people to get solutions to their security problems. People go to the court even for minor cases. Some informants said that the court is giving fair justice to the people. The social court works in coordination with the *kebele* administration (*kore bulchisa*) and the *kebele* security (*Abba nagga*). Sometimes, it also coordinates with community elders. Elders complain that the increasing role of the social court in dispute resolution greatly contributes to the decline of the role of traditional conflict resettlement institution.

Local Government Organisation

After the 1990s the *wereda* and *kebele* administrations were recognised. The previous Dodota and Sire *wereda* were merged together and took a new name called Dodota–Sire *Wereda*. The Korodegaga *kebele* was reorganised for administrative purpose. The *kebele* administration and *kebele* social court are the two major formal organisations. The *Kebele* administration is accountable to the Dodota-Sire *wereda* administration. It is run by a special body known as the cabinet which has five members: The chairman, vice-chairman, chief secretary, security leader and a DA worker. Apart from the DA worker, who is the formal employee of the government, the cabinet members are elected by the people. Apart from the DA worker, all of them are men. The responsibilities of the cabinet are administering the public, mobilising the people for community development works, controlling the security of the people, tax collection, distribution of extension services and food aid to the people.

The *kebele* administration is restructured into three *gott* (sub-*kebele*). These are: (1) Degaga and Boba-Sodere; (2) Imo and Ollati; and (3) Koro and Chirota. Each *gott* is administered by five *gott* leaders who are elected by the public at a meeting. Thus, there are fifteen *gott* leaders in the *kebele*. Their accountability is to the *kebele* administration (cabinet).

Below, the *gott*, there are eight *gare* (sub-*gott*). Under the Degaga and Boba-sodere *gott*, we find two *gare* (Degaga (Sefera), and Buko), Imo and Ollati *gott* is divided into three *gare* (Shelota 1, Shelota 2, Imo and Sodere), and finally Koro and Chirota *gott* is classified into three *gare* (Chirota and Ada, Alelu, and Amola). Each *gare* is headed by a committee of five members. Thus, as a whole, there are 40 *gare* leaders in the community. At the grass roots level of the hierarchy, we get the ordinary people, the farmers and family labourers. Since the *gare* is closer to this group, it has the responsibility of following up security problems; it mobilises people to participate in meetings as well as development activities.

A *gare* administers from 30-50 households, and a *gott* administers from 60-150 households. Each leader of each *gare* is responsible for reporting any issues that affect its members, to its respective *gott*, which in turn reports to the cabinet. While the cabinet and two members of the social court have monthly salaries (ranging from 45 *birr* for the vice-chairman to 150 *birr* for the chairman), the rest of the *kebele* leaders work without any payment.

Officials said that the reorganisation of the *kebele* in this way is to facilitate developmental activities in the community, and to improve the administration system. However, some knowledgeable people stated that the aim is also to control and suppress oppositions and resistances to the government.

Kebele officials collect taxes. The amount of land tax is determined by the amount of land occupied by the household, and by the economic status of the household. It ranges from 30 *birr* up to 100 *birr*. It is collected immediately after the harvest season. In 2004/05 people repeatedly complained to the government for imposing taxes on them because they said these years were characterised by severe drought and hunger; thus they needed food aid from the government. In short, though the government knew that the people needed support, it reluctantly forced them to pay taxes. Landless peasants do not pay land taxes.

Since the *kebele* is a crop-deficient area, it is quite obvious that people feel that the tax is too much. In the *kebele* there are some recognised and respected elders to whom certain disputes among people are referred. It is the *kebele* leaders who refer the cases for settlement to them. Therefore, there is no apparent conflict between the *kebele* leaders and the community elders. One observer said that the local elites include those elected by the community but they do not serve the members themselves but rather they serve the government and implement policies. These people are not rich and do not have conflicts among themselves. They derive power and influence from activities outside the community as well as within. Another observer said that the community selects those who have some background in education

or natural intelligence. They are not better-off in any way than others. They do not derive power and influence from activities outside the community. Another said that well-known individuals are selected to serve the community. They are famous because of their background in language, religion etc. They are also somehow richer than other community members.

In 2004 and 2005 there were many meetings about different issues organised by *kebele* leaders, officials, social courts, *wereda* officials, SHI, and extension service workers. At the meetings, they advise, teach about different issues like social security, rehabilitation programmes, irrigation schemes, community development work (FFW), sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS, women's issues (abduction, rape, violence, inheritance/*della* and *Fudha*, polygamy, female circumcision, etc), family planning, saving and household management, and evaluation of leaders in the *kebele*. The meetings are not only in the *kebele* but also at the *wereda*.

The local elites are well-related to economic and political structures through the Ministry of Agriculture at *wereda* level. Should they require more force to catch thieves and other outlaws the *wereda* police and administration cooperate with them. One person said that the so-called elites are elected by the community because of their good ideas on matters of community interest. They are not richer nor getting wealthier; there are sometimes conflicts between elite members, or between the elites and the community, when they are not doing their jobs efficiently and honestly.

The elders' council provides support through the *kebele* structure. The elders motivate people to participate in development activities, and to get involved in meetings and support government programmes. Since they have developed good experience in mediation, and local politics, the elders represent the people in all matters affecting the community. Most of the members of the council are also social elites. They develop such status through personal effort as well as due to their exposure to participation in meetings (both government and public) and involvement in conflict resettlement process.

Elders are involved not only in mobilisation but also participate personally in community development programmes. The most important community works in the past three years include: water harvesting which was part of the FFW, Environmental rehabilitation such as terracing and reforestation, campaign against unwanted weeds like peritoneum weed, roads works, digging irrigation canals, etc. In most parts of the year, people participate in these works once a week on Sunday. All individuals above the age of 18 should take part in the programme. In the case of FFW/safety net programme, however, any individual, who can work, may participate in the programme. Thus, even children of the age 12 are involved in it. But very old people as well as physically handicapped are exempted from community works; they are also not forced to participate in meetings.

The elders' council and local government work cooperatively. In the community the elders' council has a great role in dispute resolution and problem solving. The people also respect them, and accept their advice. The council consists only of males; there is no women's elders' council in the area.

In the area government and NGOs have great roles in people's life. They try to improve the lives of the community members by giving aid and technology, like food aid, irrigation pumps, fuel saving wood burner stoves, hybrid chickens and sheep, etc.

8. Social Inequality, Conflict and Politics

Poverty and wealth

In absolute terms the site is poorer when compared with other villages in the area.

Old people recall that the people in the community were generally rich 20-30 years ago. They had large numbers of livestock and produced a good amount of food crops. The local climate has changed from wet to dry and windy. Drought greatly affects their livestock assets so that livestock no longer reflect the economic power of an individual. Only a few households have a large number of livestock. Many households have almost no cattle, and the destitute ones have no livestock. The richest households are those who have private irrigation pumps and 0.5-1 hectare of irrigated land. Adding to these, having more cattle and camels make the individual among the richest in the community. Having large tracts of rain-fed farms does not symbolise the wealth status of the individuals because the repeated shortage of rain causes serious shrinkage in agricultural outputs every year. The poorest and destitute have land which is used for rain-fed agriculture, do not have any cattle, goats, or sheep. They live by renting their land, selling firewood and working as daily labourers. They include those who are too old to help themselves or have no support, such as female-headed households who have a severe shortage of farm labour.

Although the richer people have large amounts of resources, the men have more than two wives and a lot of children. So their resources are divided between a number of households (wives). When a rich man's children get married, he spends a lot of money and cattle for wedding ceremonies, *Gebera* and bridewealth. His wealth decreases and decreases. But as a whole, considering the number of cattle from two/three households and lands, he is called rich person.

One rich person said that when he was younger, his parents were among the richest in the community; during his adulthood he was also among the richest in the community. But he is currently poor compared with the status of his parents in the past, even though now, at his old age, he is among the richest in the community (he has two pairs of oxen, ten cows, some goats and sheep, irrigated land and a private irrigation pump, and corrugated sheet houses in the site and in town). He concludes that the wealth status of the people in the community has diminished. Many people move into poverty. Only in recent years have some irrigation farmers begun to move out of hunger and economic hardship.

When we compare the number of cattle in the past and now, there is a big difference. The reason is the change in weather conditions of the area and also the population size increasing. So to increase cultivated land, they started to cut down the trees. As a result, the area is badly hit by drought, and a number of livestock have died because of drought and different diseases.

In the past the main sources of wealth included: (a) wedding: the woman's parents get a number of cattle collected from the relatives of their son-in-law as *gebera* while the man's parents get *gegao* collected from the relatives of their daughter-in-law; (b) inheritance: if both father and mother die the eldest brother inherits all their property which is an opportunity to become wealthy; (c) a hardworking person can become wealthy. He can plough land through sharecropping arrangements to solve the shortage of land and he can get oxen through an oxen-sharing arrangement (he can use the oxen 1 day for him and 2 days for the owner); and (d) economising: if one is able to plan income and expenditure it is easy to save sufficient property within a short space of time. Recently, however, a person who has irrigated land and an irrigation pump has a better chance to accumulate wealth. In addition, hard working persons can rent / share-crop irrigated land from weak farmers and become wealthy persons. A few households have sent their daughters to Saudi Arabia, and obtained money in the form of remittances. They use this money to build good houses in towns or to buy private irrigation pumps.

The repeated crops failures, which is caused by recurring drought have broken the social and economic wellbeing of many households in the past two decades. The poorest and destitute people are the main victims of these changes. Since hunger / famine visits the houses of these people every year, they are forced to live under the poverty line.

Economic mobility

It is common that people born in wealthy families have a greater chance to become wealthy. The reverse is true for the poor. However, in the past the wealth status of the parents greatly contributed to the wealth status of their children. This is because rich households gave a large amount of property, including livestock, to their children in the form of bridewealth and endowments. In addition, parents gave continuous support to married children until they became independent economically. But today there are not as many wealthy households which transfer / inherit large amounts of wealth to the next generation. Thus, as many local people agree, personal effort is the main reason for moving from low status to high status, and poor to rich. In other words, knowledge and skills about farming techniques, local environmental conditions, and market mechanisms, as well as concrete life experiences affect inter-generational mobility. One community elder stated that continuous learning from knowledgeable individuals and understanding the socio-cultural condition of the people are the main causes for the development of social and political elites in the community. Another respondent said that people can be rich if they do their activities very systematically. He added that many people become very poor because of lack of systematic knowledge and skills to fight poverty. Since 2001, as a result of the interventions of government and NGOs, people who have irrigated land and are members of credit-saving associations which are improving their life compared to the past.

Social crises such as deaths may lead to a decline in the wealth status of the household. The death of the husband, for example, may be immediately followed by lack of farm labour in the household. This may force the household either to rent or share-crop the farm lands, which in turn deteriorates their economic condition. Death of livestock due to epidemics and drought also undoubtedly causes decline in the wealth rank of the individual. The expansion of the irrigation scheme since 2000, however, has helped many farmers to improve their wealth status. Farmers who continuously participate in irrigation works have been moving up the ladder of social structure. They are able to build houses in town, others are able to build house with blockets and iron sheets in the community, and others are able to buy private irrigation pumps. The movement may be direct from poor to rich or from poor to medium. One respondent reported that he was a tenant during the time of Emperor Haile Selassie. He was poor during the Derg, he was reduced to the level of destitution between 1991 and 2000, but, with introduction of community irrigation scheme in 2001, he has been able to move to the rich category. Most of the poorest people in the community are those who have no land, no oxen, and no irrigated farm. They are also daily labourers and firewood sellers, which was the most discriminated work in the past.

Status

The bases of status are leadership qualities in local institutions (*iddir*), age, wisdom and concern for communal interest (selflessness). There are people who, because of the above stated personal traits, are called *Abba mandaraa* (father of the village). Those elders (*Abba biyii naga*) involved in making negotiations for marriage and keeping the peace are also respected.

Social Stratification

Previously, in Korodegaga, the wealthier households were the former landlords. However, there are also households, which become richer through the efforts of the members of the household. One respondent said that thirty years ago, he was one of the poorest in the community, and he traded in hens. Through his personal effort, he was able to become one of the richest individuals in the community; he has thirty camels and many cattle. As described above, having large tracts of irrigated farmland also symbolised high economic position. Furthermore, political power and influence reflect the status of political eliteness. Given the economic position, if the individual has good qualities to play in conflict resolution, religious activities and local politics, he will be the most respected social elite. It is known that commonly in the rural areas of Ethiopia status and power coincide, and the basis of status is wealth, age, knowledge or education. This is also seen in Korodegaga; the person who is wealthy becomes respected in the community. He also gets political power and status (becomes important person in the community).

Social Conflict and Politics

There have been conflicts between youngsters of the Buko and Sefera villages in the past three years. They are organised into groups, and fighting occurs between groups. The community leaders of both villages have tried to solve the problem through reconciliation at different times, but no practical result is obtained because the reconciliation process has not satisfied the disputants. The disputants choose to take their cases to the court. The disputants from Buko have been imprisoned at Dera prison. In 2004 three of them were imprisoned in Asella (the zone capital) prison for six months. After they were released, they continued to commit crimes. In June 2004, they seriously beat Jille camel herders and they asked the herders to give them money. When the news of the conflict was heard in Jille, 40 people with guns came to Korodegaga and asked the people to hand over the crime makers. The local elders tried to solve the problem through discussion. Finally, they agreed that the case had to be taken to the police in Dera, and the locals showed their consent to cooperate with the police in the attempt to present the three youngsters to court. Three policemen tried to catch them in coordination with *kebele* officials. Two of them were imprisoned but one escaped.

The local officials (*kebele* and *wereda*) officials repeatedly promoted the programme of the government, and mobilised the people to vote for the EPRDF (the ruling party). Opposing parties did not promote their programmes in the *kebele* but people listened to radios to understand their programmes. High school students also played roles in introducing the programs of contending political parties. On the date of the election the majority of the people voted for an opposing party called The Oromo National Congress, (ONC) which had joined the Union of Ethiopian Democratic Forces (UEDF), coalition party at the national level. This shocked the *kebele* officials.

The government policy on marriage is based on the voluntary consent of couples. By this principle, two youngsters (female and male) may get married without the parent's agreement. This marriage may happen between the same clan or different wealth status so this breaks the cultural norms of the society. As a result elderly and middle age people oppose this policy. Other policies like female circumcision is forbidden in the government rules but it is done by the society informally. They believe that, if the female is not circumcised, she will be referred to as 'Nejas', or impure.

Conflicts have been increasing in the past ten years. Different reasons can be mentioned for this. One major reason is the recurrent drought and the resultant intensification of poverty. Poverty has degraded social networks, mutual support and the economic base of the people. It has destroyed community-oriented conditions of life, and brings individualistic kinds of life. Thus, traditional ways of solving conflicts have been losing space in the community. This, in turn, leads to the expansion of disputes of different kinds. The other reason is the population increase and the increasing shortage of

land for farming and grazing. The expansion of irrigation also creates competition for irrigated land. Thus, conflicts over lands have become common phenomena in recent years. The other important factor for increasing disputes is the increasing gap in knowledge and access to modern information between the older and younger generation. Parents complain that they could not manage their children because children do not obey their instruction and advice. Young people, on the other hand, state that they need only reasonable advice from their parents and community members; then, they can decide for themselves. They add that forcing them to accept imposed ideas and instructions is against their *mirga* (democratic right).

The most common conflicts are: between wife/wives and husband, between co-wives, between youngsters of different villages over loading vegetables on lorries, disputes over land, disputes over cattle entering crops and vegetables, and conflicts between irrigation owners and daily labourers mainly over payments.

In the pre-election period, the *kebele* and *wereda* officials organised people and promoted the future government programme. They urged the people to vote for the ruling party. At the end of each meeting people were asked to prove their support by raising their hand. But people secretly discussed to give their support to opposing parties. No opposing party introduced its programme in the community but people attentively listened to radio programmes. On the date of the election, the majority of votes went to the opposing parties. This greatly shocked the local government after the election. In the post-election period, meetings were organised and people were blamed for voting for the “non-democratic” parties.

During the pre-election period women wanted to elect EPRDF, because they noted that during this period their lives were improving due to the assistance of government and NGOs. They were also taught about their rights. During the election women who are housewives changed their mind and elected the opposing party (ONC) but female-headed and other inherited wives elected the EPRDF, and were happy that the EPRDF won overall as they hope that their future life will be changed. However, generally the community people tend to oppose this government (EPRDF).

At the present time, people do not have a good attitude to the national and regional governments. During the time of the National Election, most local people stated that most of the high rank politicians belonged to one ethnic group (the Tigrayans). As a result the role of other ethnic groups in national politics was hindered in most cases. Furthermore, there was no fair distribution of resources and income to different regions of the country. As one farmer said, in the last fifteen years the government has built three airports and more than fifty factories in the Tigray region, which is one of the smallest regional states both in size and population; but almost nothing was established in the Oromia region which is the largest both in size and population, and the most resourceful region of the country.

Another informant stated that even the Oromia regional government officials were puppets, “their minds were moved by the minds of the Tigrayan People’s Liberation Front leaders, they have no free mind to think and to do good things for their people. That is why”, he said, “the people of Oromia have suffered from poverty and lack of democracy.” One woman expressed to me her hatred of the national and regional government, “we have been beaten by bees [symbol used by the ruling party for the May 15, 2005 election] for the past fifteen years. We wouldn’t again allow the bee to beat us in the coming couple of years. The bees should return to their home [Tigray] because we want our flowers for ourselves.”

The two communities of Arssi and Jille were historical enemies. Theft of the properties of one another was very common in the past. The robbery led to inter-community conflict, in which large numbers of people lost their lives during the time of fighting as well as through surprise attacks against the members of each communities. The conflict was resolved during the time of Transitional Government. The settlement of the dispute was provoked by the killing of three young people of Korodegaga by a member of the Jille. They were killed in the night while they guarded maize crop from wild animals

(e.g. baboons). The people of Korodegaga were alarmed by this surprise attack; and reported to government expressing the view that unless the government took action against the crime makers, they would retaliate with the death of their children. The government tried to solve the problem through reconciliation. Respected community elders (from both sides) and famous traditional religious leaders played key roles in the reconciliation process. On the date of the arbitration, feasts were prepared and cattle were slaughtered (which symbolised the end of blood-shed). Since then, with the exception of minor tension and strains, there have not been major conflicts, although suspicion between the two sides persists.

9. Beliefs and Values

Land

In the *kebele* there is a communal area of land reserved for burial.

There are many landless young men in the *kebele*. Though they are members of the Korodegaga community, they are not considered as members of the Korodegaga *kebele* administration. This is because they have no land, and do not pay land tax to the government. To be a member of the *kebele* administration requires a person to have land. Thus, most of these members of the community aspire to the redistribution of farmlands. They believe that getting farmland may help them not only to ensure *kebele* membership but also to play significant roles in the developmental activities of the people.

Almost all people believe that all lands in the *kebele* belong only to the people of Korodegaga. They said that giving their land to an outsider without their consent is an illegal act. In this case, they blame the *wereda* administration for giving about 40 hectares of irrigated land to private investors some ten years ago. They add that these lands were given to the individuals without consulting the people. They regret that if these lands had not been given to outsiders, many landless people would have got farmland, and this would have changed their life condition for the better, enabling them to produce cash crop vegetables.

Religion

The local religion is Islam and the people are Muslims. Some of the Muslims in the area go on pilgrimages to Mecca and Dirre Sheik Hussein. Every Muslim who is wealthy enough has an obligation to go to Mecca. Unless he does this there is a religious belief that his future life will not be comfortable because it is Allah who gave him wealth and he has to go to Mecca to pray and get a religious position known as *Haji*. This requires more than 3000 *birr* for transport and 2000 *birr* for other needs. There are 3 people in the *kebele* who went to Mecca and are *Haji*. There is one month fasting each year (*Ramadan*) but the elders and religious leaders add 6 days of fasting (*shewala*) and they have 36 fasting days. There is also a fasting called *Rejeb* which started 2 months before the 1st day of *Ramadan*. The number of fasting days for *Rejeb* varies from 5 to 30 depending on the need of a person. No food is eaten until dinner in both fasting times but the ceremony at the end of *Ramadan* (*id-alfatir*) is celebrated more intensively than at the end of *Rejeb*. The date when both fasting times start is not fixed but varies from year to year: on average the next *Ramadan* or *Rejeb* will begin 15-30 days earlier than the starting date of the previous fasting.

Id-aldaha (*arefa*) the day on which the worship in Mecca and Medina starts and *Rebi-al-awol* (*mowlid*) the birthday of Mohammed are also the 2 big holy days celebrated by Muslims in Korodegaga. At all of these ceremonial days the consumption habits of followers tend to change. In all of the fasting days the consumption of meat, *chat*, cigarettes, sugar, milk, coffee, food crops and even charcoal for fuel increases. It is only on Friday that all farmers stop working as Christians do on Saturdays and Sundays.

The Muslims consider Friday is the day on which Allah will come to earth to give his decision on whom he likes and dislikes. Hence it is considered an appropriate day for praying.

Recently, the strengthening of the Sharia law has led to the diversion of most people from tradition religion (which was practiced side by side with Islam). Sheiks preach against traditional worship, and urge the people to believe only in Allah (one God) and to stop worshipping tree or river spirits, which is, according to them, a belief in the devil. Today, only a few individuals go secretly to the religious site of Sheikena Hussen; and only a few individuals participate at a yearly local festival near the Awash at a place called Degaga.

Modern mosques have been expanded, Quranic education has been strengthened, Sheiks from other areas have strongly encouraged the people to accept the Sharia, and to convert all the principles of Sharia into practice. Most of the sheiks and Quranic teachers are members of the Wahabiya sect (Islamic fundamentalism). Promoters of tradition beliefs and practices strongly complain that these strict religious followers are destroying their forefathers' religion and are changing their true Islamic religion. The sheiks get support from Wahabiya followers in other areas of Ethiopia, and the money for the construction of mosques comes from private individuals in Saudi Arabia.

There are a few people (more than three) who follow Orthodox Christianity. But only one person has legal residence (permanently). He has his own land and paid government tax. Others have lived for a long period of time in the area. There is no religion discrimination. There is also assimilation, i.e. at some period the permanently resident Christian converted his religion from Christian to Muslim and then returned back to the former religion Orthodox Christian. One old woman said that all her children are Muslims and that she married a Muslim, but that she is an Orthodox Christian.

Three major mosques have been constructed in the villages of Chirota (2003), Shelota (2004) and Sefera (2005). There was a minor mosque in the Sefera village before the bigger one was constructed in March 2005. The minor mosque was constructed six years ago, and it was used by the Sefera and Buko people for praying purpose. Following the building of the new and bigger mosque, the old one is used for education. The three bigger mosques are constructed through the coordination between local people (who contribute labour and land) and Dera and Nazret Sharia offices, which organise and direct the construction process. The money is / was contributed by individuals in Saudi Arabia. The materials used for construction include wood, stone, sand and cement, tin sheets and wires.

In addition to these community mosques, some rich people have private mosques in their surroundings. They are *gojjo* houses. Some of these mosques are used by sheiks for residence and for teaching the Quran. This is mainly true in Buko, Alelu and Arda villages. Most of the time, however, Quranic education is given in the community Mosques. The Chirota and Shelota mosques are used for teaching children, for praying and as residences for sheiks and guests. In Sefera, children learn the Quran in the primary school in the afternoon. The minor mosque is also used for teaching the Quran on Saturday and Sunday.

Explanations of Misfortune and Illness

There does not seem to be any practices of witchcraft and sorcery in the *kebele*. Misfortunes both to the society, the family and the individual are attributed to God's will (Allah). If one is ill or has an accident it is the punishment of Allah - the family calls for a party mainly for the religious leaders (*Ulemas*) to pray that the patient will get well. The family prepares food and provides *chat*, which produces concentration for praying, and milk and coffee to drink. The ceremony is called *Dua*.

Older people associate misfortunes including death with a curse from God. They state, for example,

that the expansion of drought and poverty are mainly the result of people's failure to believe in God and to respect their forefathers' religion. With regard to death, one old person said that "We don't worry [about] death because we came to this world only with the will of God and it is his right to take out our soul whenever he likes; we have to accept all the decisions and acts of God without any complaining."

In 1994, rainmaking by praying was still common in the *kebele*. When the rain was late the *Ulemas* called for all the residents to meet in one place under a big tree and they prayed all night. However, such kinds of practices have greatly reduced in recent years. Participation in praying under a big tree leads to stigmatisation by sheiks and local promoters of the Sharia. Young people in particular are going against these practices. But old people have still a strong stand to preserve this tradition, and to pass it to the next generation. They believe that practicing both religions side by side has no disadvantage; it rather helps the people to overcome most of the misfortunes. In June 2005, about 15 people (most of them old people) prayed under a big tree, asking their God to give them rain, for three days. One respondent said that on the third day, rain came. But they faced resistance from the sheiks, *Ulemas* and strict followers of the Sharia. These sections of the population are the main promoters of the Sharia, and opposition to traditional religion.

Community Values

Traditional cultural practices are dying out and being replaced by the values of Islam. But still it seems that there is a conflict between religious leaders and the commoners which should be emphasised. The commoners tend to fall back on their traditional religious performances, such as sacrificing to God, when there is community wide misfortune (such as drought or epidemics of both animals and humans).

The most important customary values in governing the behaviour of the people include: respecting others, learning from elders and helping each other in times of problems. After the coming to power of EPRDF, however, some of these values have been facing challenges. The young people are reluctant to preserve the traditional values. The involvement of the government and some NGOs may play their role in this regard. Some of the traditional values are being considered harmful. Thus, the local government, SHI, and the media teach the people about democratic rights, gender issues, harmful cultures, and religious and cultural equalities. Their teachings seem to bring behavioural changes among the young people. The expansion of voluntary marriage, girls' education and family planning are the results of these influences. The old people, however, complain about the government for its attempt to kill their good values and traditions.

Political Beliefs and Attitudes

People, especially women appreciate the attempts by the government, to change the life of women and to ensure gender equality. Developmental activities such as terracing, soil conservation strategies and expansion of irrigation also get popular support in the community. Though they are not satisfied with the final result, many people, especially the young, appreciate the government for bringing a "democratic election" for the first time in May 2005. Some state that it was for the first time that they observed strong political debates among the contending political parties and it was for the first time that they were able to vote for the parties for which they would like to vote. The election was conducted freely and fairly in the site though there had been strong pressure from the local government to elect the ruling party. The imposition was prevalent in the immediate pre-election period but there was little problem on the date of election.

Many local people believed that the ruling government (both at the national and regional levels) would

be defeated and hoped for a change of government. But when they heard from different medias that the election result was rigged by the ruling party, they felt dissatisfaction and feared that the local government would retaliate against them for voting against the ruling party.

In the post-election period, the *wereda* officials repeatedly organised meetings in the *kebele* and blamed the people for voting for the opposition parties. Some individuals who had mobilised people against the government, were summoned to the *wereda* office and given warnings. The rest of the people were asked, in meetings, to stand with the government in the coming five years and to move against the activities of the opposing political parties. But, it seems that the people do not accept this political propaganda and they internally support the opposition parties. They are discontented with the government. There is also an ethnic complexity, as they explain their opposition by saying that, “we don’t want the government which is governed by Tigrayan people. The minority ethnic group shouldn’t have govern the major one [Oromo].”

10. Relationships with Other Communities and the Wider Society

Ethnic Groups and Clans

People of Korodegaga have strong social relations with clans in different parts of Arssi and some areas of Eastern Shewa (Bofa area). Almost all the local people came to the site from different areas of Dodota and Itaya areas through migration. Thus, they have kept strong interactions with their clans, and relatives of these areas. They have also good marriage ties with different clans in Dodota, Itaya, Sire, Amigna and Bofa. Most young people bring in wives from these areas. One major reason for this is strong historical and religious ties with these communities. Moreover, since the majority of the people belong to the Sabro clan, and since intra-clan marriage relationship is culturally forbidden, marriage relations are mainly conducted with other clans living in the above-mentioned communities.

The other kind of relationship is economic. In times of crises such as drought and famine, local people moved to their relatives and lineages in other parts of Arssi to get support (both in cash and kind). In the past when the majority of the local people where cattle herders, they migrated with their cattle to Sire area in the wet season. In reverse, the cattle herders in Sire moved to Korodegaga in the dry season to find grass for their livestock. The decline in the size of cattle population due to drought, the decline of grazing land due to population increase and expansion of agriculture, and the continued destruction of forests and bushes has led to a decline of such kinds of relationships in the past few decades. Drought is the main cause for the decline of cattle population in all communities of Dodota-Sire *wereda*.

Relations with Other Communities

People in Korodegaga have settled far from each other by grouping themselves into nine villages: Alellu, Amola, Arda, Chirota, Olati, Shallotta, Bowra, Buko, Sefera. Most of the settlers in one village are related either by birth or marriage but are different lineages. These nine villages have good relations and close contacts with each other at the time of crises or when any other events happen.

The people of Korodegaga are generally poor. Drought and famine are the main factors for the gradual impoverishment of the people. In the years of serious hunger, the poorest and most destitute people migrate to Sire and Itaya to seek food support from their relatives. The movement is during the harvest seasons. They stay there for some weeks helping their relatives in labour, and then return home with some food grains. There are also conditions when they get money and grains.

In one of our focus group discussions on distress migration the young people reiterate that these kinds of

distress migration have declined in recent years. The main reasons, according to them, include: the expansion of drought and poverty into all areas of the neighbouring communities, which bring the people into more or less similar economic status; and the recent development of irrigation activities in Korodegaga which have created daily work for the poor and destitute.

Most of the women come from the neighbouring *kebele* of the *wereda*, such as Koloba, Bele, Jawi, Badasa, Lode, Dire Kilut, Dega and highlands of Dodota-Sire. Therefore, there is a strong relationship and close contacts between these places.

Relationships with Wider Ethiopia

In the past there were conflicts with Jille Oromos (Shewa) and Kereyus (Northern Shewa). Informants said, the reasons for the conflicts were that they had used natural resources like trees and grazing land by force and they also stole some livestock from the area. Therefore, there were repeated conflicts between the groups and finally the elders from both sides resolved the problems. The Kereyu and Jille are forbidden to use any resources from Korodegaga. Although the conflicts are resolved, they are suspicious of each other. For example, the people in Korodegaga do not move around Shewa at night. And after dark the raft should be stopped at the Korodegaga side and kept by guards.

They have strong identification with the local name Arssi, and then Oromo, less with Ethiopia. They considered themselves as Ethiopian subjects until 1974.

In the past, the presence of forest in the area allowed the existence of wild animals like lions, hyenas and leopards which forced the people to settle together to defend their cattle against these wildlife. Forests have been cut down for house construction and local fuel consumption. Most of the forest areas have been turned into smaller bushes within the past ten years. Recurrent drought and the intensification of poverty contribute to the increase of firewood sellers. The destruction of the forest environment also contributes to the decline of large wild animals like lions, hyenas and leopards; only a few hyenas exist in the bushes at the present time and around Arda there are monkeys which destroy their crops and beat small children. There are no lions and leopards but there are a large number of wild beasts in different areas of the *kebele*.

Adults and older people recall the presence of many types of larger animals in forests in the past. They know that these wild animals have evacuated the area when forests, which they used as their homes, were destroyed by the people. People have mixed feelings about the vanishing of these wild animals from the area. Some state that the absence of carnivorous animals in the area enables them to keep their cattle in simple shelters. Some knowledgeable people regret that they have lost important natural resources, which are the beauty of the area and the people young people also worry for the vanishing of wild animals from their community.

Thus, today, forests and wild life cannot be the major factor for the settlement pattern of the local people. Rather, searching agricultural and grazing lands, and expansion of irrigation farms may be critical reasons for settlement and resettlement. The establishment and expansion of Sefera village, for example, is the direct result of the expanding irrigation scheme.

Effects of Government Policies

Around 1985, during the worst famine in these areas, many farmers migrated or the government moved them, to fertile areas where they settled happily. Because of the regionalisation policy they later returned but, because some of them arrived after the latest redistribution of land, they were landless.

Since 1995, people have many complaints about government policies. The price of agricultural inputs (fertiliser, selected seeds, weed killers) are so expensive that they cannot afford to buy them. The land tax is also increasing with time and though they are repeatedly hit by drought, the support from the government is not sufficient to reduce the impact of drought and to combat poverty. Generally, the government policies have not helped the people to improve their conditions of life in the past fifteen years. The economic base of many households, deteriorates with time. One important recent development is, however, the expansion of irrigation works. In addition to the SHI sponsored irrigation scheme, private individuals produce vegetables by using private motor pumps. A few households benefited from irrigated farms and even the poor have benefited by working as daily labourers. But many irrigation farmers stated that due to the increasing prices of modern inputs and fuel, they could not increase their production.

Almost all people, especially males, know about government policies as well as the constitution. Most of them have their own radio and listen to the news. They clearly know the policy difference between the Derg regime and current government (EPRDF). Many felt that some economic policies were better under the Derg. In contrast, with democracy, the official language became Oromiffa and the learning language also became the local language (Oromiffa), which they prefer.

Since 1995, there has been relative peace in the area. The restructuring of the *kebele* organisation into cabinet, *gott* and *gare* greatly contributes to the establishment of relative peace. In addition there is a security body, which is responsible for managing and controlling security problems. The security leader is a member of the cabinet. Each *gare* has its own security person. Furthermore, policemen from the *wereda* always follow up the security conditions in the *kebele*. Crime makers are immediately taken to the *kebele* social court. But serious crimes are reported to the police, and the cases are seen by the *wereda* court.

Government Development Activities in the Community

After the 1974 revolutions farmers took over the orange plantation established in 1964 by the capitalist landlord called General Mebratu Fiseha. Until 1986 when it became the property of the PC the farmers grouped themselves into 10 groups each of which comprised 24-5 people. A group took 22 orange trees to keep and use the produce. They used no irrigation but they brought water in pots because the trees were planted near the Awash river.

When the PC was abolished in 1991 both private and co-operative farmers again grouped themselves into 10 groups and shared the oranges as well as the land to grow the crops. At this time the number of *kebele* members decreased to 200. Each group now comprises 20 farmers. They still used the generator to pump until 1993 when it became useless because of the flooding of the Awash river. Nobody tried to maintain the generator and all the crops, including the oranges, dried within a year.

In 1961 the veterinary service came to the *kebele*: free veterinary service became available twice a year - in August and October for all the peasants living in the area. The clinic at Awash Melkasa was started in 1963: before that they went to either Nazret or Asella. In 1979 the first round of the literacy campaign began which is why most of the residents know how to write and read. In 1980 the agricultural extension agent began to give advice and this enabled farmers to increase their grain production. Different types of improved seeds of wheat, barley, maize and millet were distributed to the farmers through this agent and NGOs made contact through him. In 1984 there was the Population and Housing Census and vaccination for children (TB, tetanus, polio, measles, DPT) and women began. Vaccination for children is given three times: at the 2nd, 3rd and 9th months. Women only get vaccination if they are pregnant. The service is provided in the *kebele* when specialists come once a month for this purpose. There was an reforestation programme which began in 1984 for 3 consecutive

years but, because of the drought and lack of rain since then the programme was useless and no trees are grown in the area. In 1984 the severe drought and famine happened and the government tried to construct about 15km of dry weather road from the *kebele* to Dera town to be able to distribute food aid. New clinics at Dera and Sodere were also established at this time. In 1986 there was villagisation and producer and service co-operatives were established. Farmers who joined the PC had priority to select and plough the most fertile land, to get improved seed and equipment through the extension agent and different assistance from NGOs. In 1990 the "Mixed Economy" was declared and the elementary school was built.

In 1994 the second famine occurred and the government provided food aid between April and August. The amount of food crops given to each household depended on the size of the family. If they had more than five members they could separate into two groups each of which could consider themselves one household. A household obtained 50 kg of wheat or millet and 2.5 litres of edible oil per month. Most of the residents were satisfied with this aid and were grateful to the government.

In 2000/01 the SHI sponsored irrigation scheme was established, the organisation covered all the costs including the cost of the initial modern agricultural inputs such as fertilisers, selected seeds, weed killers and pesticides. In 2003 the women's credit association was established. SHI played an important role in organising the women. The extension worker (DA) also gave advice to the members of the association in order to strengthen their capacity. In 2004, water harvesting and terracing programmes were started. The activities were parts of the FFW. While the water harvesting failed, the terracing is still continuing today. In 2005, attempts have been made to restore the damaged UNICEF sponsored irrigation scheme; and people hope that it will start functioning in early 2006.

There is no veterinary service in Korodegaga, but vaccination for livestock is given when they start to be affected by diseases. The services are provided in the area when the specialists come from *wereda* extension services.

The people get health service from the *kebele* for malaria. There are two people (one at Sefera, the second at Anda) who give chloroquine and fansidar for patients by asking the symptoms of disease. They get these tablets without a fee and if the disease deteriorates they go to Dera, where a blood test is given for free. If the disease is malaria they take medicine from this health centre without a fee. Vaccination for children (polio prevention) is given in the area, the specialists came from the *wereda* health centre. Women get vaccinations in the area once every year. The environmental rehabilitation programme is highly active in the area. People do different works like terracing maintenance of the dry weathered road, weeding for partinium weed and, previously, attempts to use water harvesting. The extension service agents are mobilising the people to use different improved seeds and natural fertiliser (compost).

Respondents stated that the past fifteen years have been characterised by severe drought and hunger. The government has provided food aid at different times. But all the time, the aid was not sufficient to satisfy the food consumption needed by each household. In 2004 and 2005, there was severe droughts which resulted in the failure of crops. People began to purchase food from the market in November 2004. Since many people had no cattle to sell and in order to purchase food crops, they suffered a lot from hunger. They got income only by selling firewood or by doing daily labour in the SHI sponsored irrigation scheme. The government was very reluctant to give them food aid. At the beginning of November, the *wereda* officials organised a meeting in the *kebele* and warned the people that since there was no food aid from the government, the people should feed / help themselves by expanding private irrigation farms. But since most farms have little power to purchase private pumps, the suggestion from the government was not changed into practice. The local people were angry with the government for not giving due attention to their problems which were caused by natural problems. They repeatedly reported, through the DA and *kebele* official, to the government that they reached the level of not supporting themselves so that proper aid should be given to them.

In March 2005 wheat was distributed to the people but it was discontinued in April. It was restarted in May and continued up to September. The food aid was given as part of the Food for work programme. It was given for those who could participate in community works / terracing, road construction, etc.). An individual could get 15 kg of wheat, 3 kg of fafa (supplementary food for children), and 1.5 litres of food oil per month. The maximum amount of wheat that households with a large household size got is 75 kg. Interestingly enough, the food aid was given twice per month in August and September 2005. Though the distribution was carried out by the *wereda* office, the aid was sponsored by donors and relief institutions. It was given in the form of the safety net program.

They disliked the Derg for introducing farmers' agricultural cooperation because this policy benefited only members of the cooperative. The majority of the population, who did not join the organisation, were forced to lose their fertile lands to the cooperative. Moreover, they were forced to be daily labours in the cooperative farms. Thus, while the members of the cooperative were enjoying better life, the rest of the population were suffering from economic hardship.

NGO Activities in the Community

130 households were organised by SHI under the community irrigation scheme which helped the people to establish the irrigation motors which could irrigate 40 ha. of land.. So they produce different vegetables (tomatoes, onions, papaya, banana, green peppers, cabbage) and crops like maize. It also organised women under a credit and savings association. They get aid, hybrid animals like hens and sheep and loans. In the past five years, the organisation has also given training to the members of the irrigation and credit and saving association. The training includes: family planning. HIV/AIDS, extension services and how to produce outputs from irrigation farms.

The agricultural extension service gave money for the costs of oxen for twenty-five selected farmers and for twenty farmers were given money for the costs of sheep in credit in 2005 It also distributed hens for women but their cost was very expensive at 135 *birr* for five hens, which compared to the SHI hens at 35 *birr* for five hens.

In 2001, the Ethiopian Red Cross society set up a raft on the Awash River. This raft has given important service for the people till today. Some five years ago the Ethiopian Red Cross society signed a contract with the local people to establish a motor pump, which would irrigate 50 ha. of land. The people agreed to give 15 ha. of land to the organisation freely so that the people would use the remaining 35 ha. for themselves. These lands are found within the UNICEF sponsored irrigation scheme, and it is even the most suitable part of the project. The agreement remained only on paper. The Red Cross received the land from the people and has kept it idle over the past five years. Though people showed good interest to cultivate the land by using rain-fed agriculture, the local officials prevented them from doing so. The lands grow unwanted weed called partinium every year, and people are forced to participate in the destruction of the weeds. As time passes, people have become discontented with the action of the Red Cross. By the end of April 2005, the Ethiopia Red Cross society president and regional officials visited this land; talked to the people about the issue; and agreed to start the construction of the pump in the near future. But the people moved against this, saying that since the government has planned to resume the damaged pump, now they do not want to work with the Red Cross because it was not them but the Red Cross who violated the agreement. The Red Cross officials have not returned. The present project (by the government) is, thus, going to be implemented on this land. The technical works are being carried out, the electric power, which had been discontinued is also expected to give light to the nearby villages (like Sefera, Buko), and the primary school. The present community irrigation pump was planted in 2000 with the help of SHI. It started to function in 2001. 130 households divided 40 ha. of land among themselves and each

household holds ¼ ha. SHI covered all the costs of motor (diesel generator), expertise expenses, the initial costs of fertiliser, selected seeds, insecticides, and weed killer. It also gave training to the members on how to irrigate their land, and sell their harvests. The local people contributed labour during the construction of the motor pump and they contributed an initial contribution of 70 *birr* each.

In 1987 there was a donation of oxen and the gift of a generator for irrigation. In 1990 there was the construction of a new irrigation system and the maintenance of the dry weather road which was constructed in 1985 by the government. The second and most important activity by UNICEF was the gift of a generator. It was used only for those farmers in the PC and it could cover 52.5 hectares of land to plant permanent, semi-permanent and food crops.

The Future

The community faced serious hunger because of crop failure and animal diseases and death caused by drought. Government and NGOs started to intervene helping them with food aid and other support. For instance the *wereda* agricultural office gives different support like the community irrigation motor pump, the organisation of women in a credit association, and the men also benefited from credit, getting oxen, sheep, and different agricultural tools. Generally, their lives have revived in the past five years, and they may have good life conditions in the future.

From the in-depth research, we can conclude that people need continuous support from the government and NGOs to expand the irrigation scheme. The young and adult people predict that in order to change the life conditions of the people for the better, all supports and activities should revolve around the use of the river water for irrigation purposes. The promotion of irrigation works and increase of infrastructure is very needed. People aspire to have dry weather roads that will help lorries to load the cash crops vegetables. They also need markets to sell the cash crops. A bridge is extremely important to connect them with other communities. If a bridge were constructed on the River of Awash, the problem of roads would easily be solved because Korodegaga is only about 2 km from the asphalted road that connects Sodere with Awash Melkasa and Nazret and then with Addis Ababa. The people also want to develop the primary school to a junior level. The increase of school attendance in the primary school clearly shows the interest of the people to educate their children. The people of Korodegaga greatly need health stations, both for people and livestock, in the community because the area is always prone to different kinds of human and animal diseases. Furthermore, they need electric light and electric mills.

Since modern agricultural inputs are extremely significant for the expansion or irrigation farms, people require from the government the provision of fertilisers, selected seeds, weed killers and pesticides, in proper amounts and at fair prices. Extension workers are also important in introducing modern ways of agriculture to the people; the DA may also serve as a communicator between the people and the government. In order to improve agricultural production, the expansion of credit and saving associations is vital. Credit and saving associations may help the poorest and destitute people to have farm oxen and other domestic animals. Some farmers argued that the FFW programme should be designed in such away that it would bring basic changes in the lives of the people i.e. it should not be restricted to food aid that is distributed to the people only in times of drought and famine, but rather it should be continued in the years of food harvest so that sustainable development may come in all aspects of life.

Most local people do not have a good attitude towards the regional and national government. They believe that the existing government is not democratic, that it tries to impose its interest on the people, and the interests and opinions of the government is not taken into account. Thus, they aspire to see a change of government. Many people argue that the involvement of NGOs and donors in developmental activities is significant to improve wellbeing.

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Glossary

- Abuna*: Leader of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.
- Balabat*: A local chief.
- Belbela*: Lineage.
- Bekolo*: Maize.
- Belg*: A short rainy season usually occurring during February/March/April. The harvest from this season takes place in July and August.
- Birr*: The currency of Ethiopia (16 birr = approximately GB £1).
- Blocket*: A type of mud brick used in house construction.
- Boloke*: Haricot beans.
- Debo*: Communal working party in which labour is exchanged for food and drink.
- Dejazmach*: A military title.
- Derg*: The name of the military government that ruled Ethiopia from the revolution until 1991
- Equb*: A rotating savings and credit association.
- Fetto*: Medicinal plant.
- Gada*: A traditional social, cultural and political system of the Oromo.
- Gare*: A sub-*gott* administrative unit.
- Gebera*: Bridewealth.
- Gegao*: Dowry.
- Gesho*: A plant, the leaves of which are used to ferment beer.
- Gojjo*: Traditional round hut with a thatched roof.
- Gossa*: Clan
- Gott*: A sub-*kebele* administrative unit.
- Ibida*: Sub-lineage.
- Iddir*: A burial society.
- Injera*: Ethiopian flat bread.
- Ishet*: Fresh harvested produce.
- Jamba*: A machete.
- Jigi*: A form of traditional labour sharing, another name for *debo*.
- Jornata*: Daily labour (from the Italian *giornata* "daily work").
- Kaleecha*: Traditional religious healer or leader.

<i>Karibo:</i>	Non-alcoholic drink prepared by Muslims.
<i>Kolo:</i>	Roasted grain.
<i>Kuttitir:</i>	<i>Kebele</i> security committee
<i>Mashilla:</i>	Sorghum.
<i>Mahiber:</i>	An Orthodox Christian society which meets monthly on a Saint's day; each member takes a turn to host the group providing food and drink.
<i>Meher:</i>	The main rainy season - in most places from June to mid-September. Crops sown during this period are harvested from October to December.
<i>Nifro:</i>	Boiled grain.
<i>Shengo:</i>	Another name for <i>Iddir</i>
<i>Tef:</i>	A millet-like cereal.
<i>Tella:</i>	Home-made beer.
<i>Timad:</i>	Measurement of land size. 1 <i>Timad</i> = 0.25 hectares.
<i>Warra:</i>	Household.
<i>Wereda:</i>	An administrative division above the <i>kebele</i> .
<i>Wenfel:</i>	A traditional form of labour sharing; labour in kind.
<i>Wot:</i>	Stew eaten with <i>injera</i> .

Acronyms

CSA:	Central Statistical Authority
DA:	Development Agent
DIDC:	Degaga Irrigation Development Cooperative
DPT:	Diphtheria, Polio, Tetanus
EDDC:	Ethiopian Domestic Distribution Corporation
EPRDF:	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front.
FFW:	Food For Work
IFPRI:	International Food Policy Research Institute
MoA:	Ministry of Agriculture
ONC:	Oromo National Congress
ORS:	Oral Rehydration Solution
PC:	Producers' Cooperative
RRC:	Relief and Rehabilitation Commission
SC:	Service Cooperative
SHI:	Self-Help International
TB:	Tuberculosis
TGE:	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
UEDF	Union of Ethiopian Democratic Forces
UNICEF:	United Nations Children's Fund

Appendix A: Ethiopian Calendar

Ethiopian Month	Gregorian calendar starting date in 2005
Meskerem	11 September
Tikimt	11 October
Hidar	10 November
Tahsas	10 December
Tir	9 January
Yekatit	8 February
Megabit	10 March
Miyazia	9 April
Ginbot	9 May
Sane	8 June
Hamle	8 July
Nehase	7 August
Pagume	6 September

There are 13 months in the Ethiopian calendar, 12 of 30 days and the last one, Pagume, of 5 or 6 days depending on whether it is a leap year. The above table provides the starting date for the Ethiopian month in the Gregorian calendar for 2005.

Appendix B: Seasonal Calendars

Women's activities													
		Meskerem	Tikimt	Hidar	Tahsas	Tir	Yekatit	Megabit	Miyazya	Ginbot	Sene	Hamle	Nahase
Women's agriculture													
Men's fields													
	maize		Harvest collecting									weeding	
	wheat		collecting										weeding
	Barley		collecting										weeding
	haricot	harvest collecting											weeding
	Beans												
	Lentils			harvest									weeding
	onions	Hoeing, weeding, watering and collection on the irrigated farms.											
	tomatoes	Hoeing, weeding, watering, and collecting on irrigated farms.											
	irrigated	weeding and harvesting											
	maize												

Off-farm activities												
	Meskerem	Tikimt	Hidar	Tahsas	Tir	Yekatit	Megabit	Miyazya	Ginbot	Sene	Hamle	Nahase
Men												
building houses		not seasonal										
making furniture												
migration		migration for education										
		male migration	for daily	labour	female	migrate	to other	areas	for	marriage		
Women												
trading	only	few	women	traded	in vegetables							
		fire-wood selling and charcoal										
Livestock sales												
ox												
cows												
sheep												
goats												
donkey												
hens												
Livestock diseases												
anthrax (ox and cows)												
black leg (ox)												
? (donkeys)												
nameless (sheep)												
nameless (goats)												
CBPP (ox and cows)												
Fuel Availability												
wood												
keras (maize)												
keras (sorghum)												
gutos (maize)												
gutos (sorghum)												
dungcakes												
ginds (maize)												
ginds (sorghum)												
Water availability		since the site is surrounded by Awash and Keleta Rivers, there is no shortage but the water is full of impurities.										

Children's Labour												
	Meskerem	Tikimt	Hidar	Tahsas	Tir	Yekatit	Megabit	Miyazya	Ginbot	Sene	Hamle	Nahase
BOYS												
	Weeding										farming /hoeing	
		harvesting /									and weeding	
		threshing			irrigation		works					
	cattle											
	Herding										cattle herding	
	school					school			school			
										Quranic school only		
GIRLS												
	harvesting											
	maize											
	school					school			school			
School terms												
Modern												
Quranic												

Consumption and credit														
	Meskerem	Tikimt	Hidar	Tahsas	Tir	Yekatit	Megabit	Miyazya	Ginbot	Sene	Hamle	Nahase		
Consumption														
Injera														
bread														
porridge														
nifro														
tomato														
milk														
eggs														
meat	Eaten during the fasting seasons like the Ramadan													
hen														
fish	only a few individuals consume fish, caught from the Awash River													
vegetables														
Hungry season														
Credit needs (women)				They borrow from the credit and saving association										
Credit needs (men)														
Festivals		id alfafir, 1 day, well celebrated						Arefa, 1 day, not well celebrated			mowlid, 1day, not well celebrated			

Health Calendar												
	Meskerem	Tikimt	Hidar	Tahsas	Tir	Yekatit	Megabit	Miyazya	Ginbot	Sene	Hamle	Nahase
Disease												
Women												
lung cancer												
diarrhoea												
malaria												
liver												
inability of giving birth												
Men												
malaria												
lung cancer												
gastritis												
amoeba												
coughing												
cold												
diarrhoea												
Children												
meningitis												
toktik												
measles												
diarrhoea												
TB												
polio												
anaemia												
amoeba												

		Rain Calendar											
		Meskerem	Tikimt	Hidar	Tahsas	Tir	Yekatit	Megabit	Miyazya	Ginbot	Sene	Hamle	Nahase
Average rainfall	HIGH												
		LOW											
		Pest Calendar											
army worm													
stockborer													
maize and sorghum													
weevil													
maize and sorghum													
chirinko													
maize and sorghum													
hudo													
potatoes and chat													

Crops	Meskerem	Tikimt	Hidar	Tahsas	Tir	Yekatit	Megabit	Miyazya	Ginbot	Sene	Hamle	Nahase
Maize		harvesting		threshing				soil	preparation	planting	weeding	
sorghum												
wheat		harvesting	threshing					soil preparation			planting	weeding
barley								soil preparation	ploughing	planting	weeding	
millet												
field peas												
haricot beans		harvesting		threshing					soil preparation		planting	weeding
beans												
fenugreek												
lentils									soil preparation		planting	weeding
potatoes												
sweet potatoes												
onion					produced from irrigation throughout the year							
chat												
grass												
trees											planting	weeding
cow peas												
Tef		harvesting		threshing					soil preparation		planting	weeding

Labour	Meskerem	Tikimt	Hidar	Tahsas	Tir	Yekatit	Megabit	Miyazya	Ginbot	Sene	Hamle	Nahase
Men												
a working day												
	keeping	wild animals							sowing seeds			keeping wild
	off the	farm	collecting crops									animals away
				Threshing	community works							
		community	Threshing		(digging terracing)							
	community	works									community works	
	works										e.g.. Destroying pertineum	
									ploughing			
											weeding	
Women												
	water	fetching			water			water			water	
					fetching			fetching			fetching	
	wood	fetching			wood	fetching			wood fetching			
	harvesting		collecting									
	beans and maize		crop at		daily labour					hoeing / weeding		
			one place							weeding		
	community work											
	house work				house work			house work			house work	