

Ethiopian Village Studies

(Designed and edited by Philippa Bevan and Alula Pankhurst)

Korodegaga

Dodota

Arssi

researched by

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(Field managers: **Bereket Kebede and Shukri Ahmed**)

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Forward

All the reports in this series have been constructed from a number of sources:

- A background paper on aspects of the local culture in which the Peasant Association is located, based mainly on secondary sources;
- Some rapid assessment material collected in the PA by site managers and enumerators whose chief business was administering 3 rounds of a household economic survey which covered a whole year of economic activity;
- A field visit to the site by an anthropologist who took a draft village profile for correction and supplementation. In a few cases the profiles were not ready before the field visit was done, but the same questions were followed up;
- A questionnaire completed by the enumerators at the end of the survey;
- A community economic survey administered by the site managers.

A large number of people has been involved in the construction of these profiles. Most important are the people in the villages who answered questions, raised issues we had not thought of, and provided hospitality for our fieldworkers. The site managers, enumerators, and anthropologists played a vital role, but are too numerous to mention by name here; the names of some are on the title pages of the profiles. Etalem Melaku-Tjirongo and Joanne Moores constructed the majority of the first drafts of the profiles. Sandra Fullerton Joireman provided important assistance in the preparation of the final drafts. Backup in terms of translating, editing, word processing, mapmaking and general support were provided by Tina Barnard, Ziggy Bevan, Girma Getahun, Haile Redai, Sarah Smith, and Ruth Tadesse. Our economist colleagues at Oxford (Shukri Ahmed, Stefan Dercon, and Pramila Krishnan) and Addis Ababa (particularly Bereket Kebede, Getinet Astatke, and Mekonnen Tadesse) provided ideas and conversation from economics which stimulated our thought processes. The administration in the Economics Department at Addis Ababa University was extremely supportive.

Profiles are available for the following villages:

<i>Tigray:</i>	Geblen	<i>Gojjam:</i>	Yetmen
	Harresaw	<i>North Shewa:</i>	Debre Birhan environs
<i>Wollo:</i>	Shumsheha		Dinki
<i>Arssi:</i>	Korodegaga	<i>Gurage:</i>	Imdibir Haya Gasha
<i>South Shewa:</i>	Sirbana Godeti	<i>Wolayitta:</i>	Gara Godo
	Turufe Kecheme	<i>Kembata:</i>	Aze Debo'a
<i>Gamo:</i>	Do'oma	<i>Gedeo:</i>	Adado
<i>Harerghe:</i>	Adele Keke		

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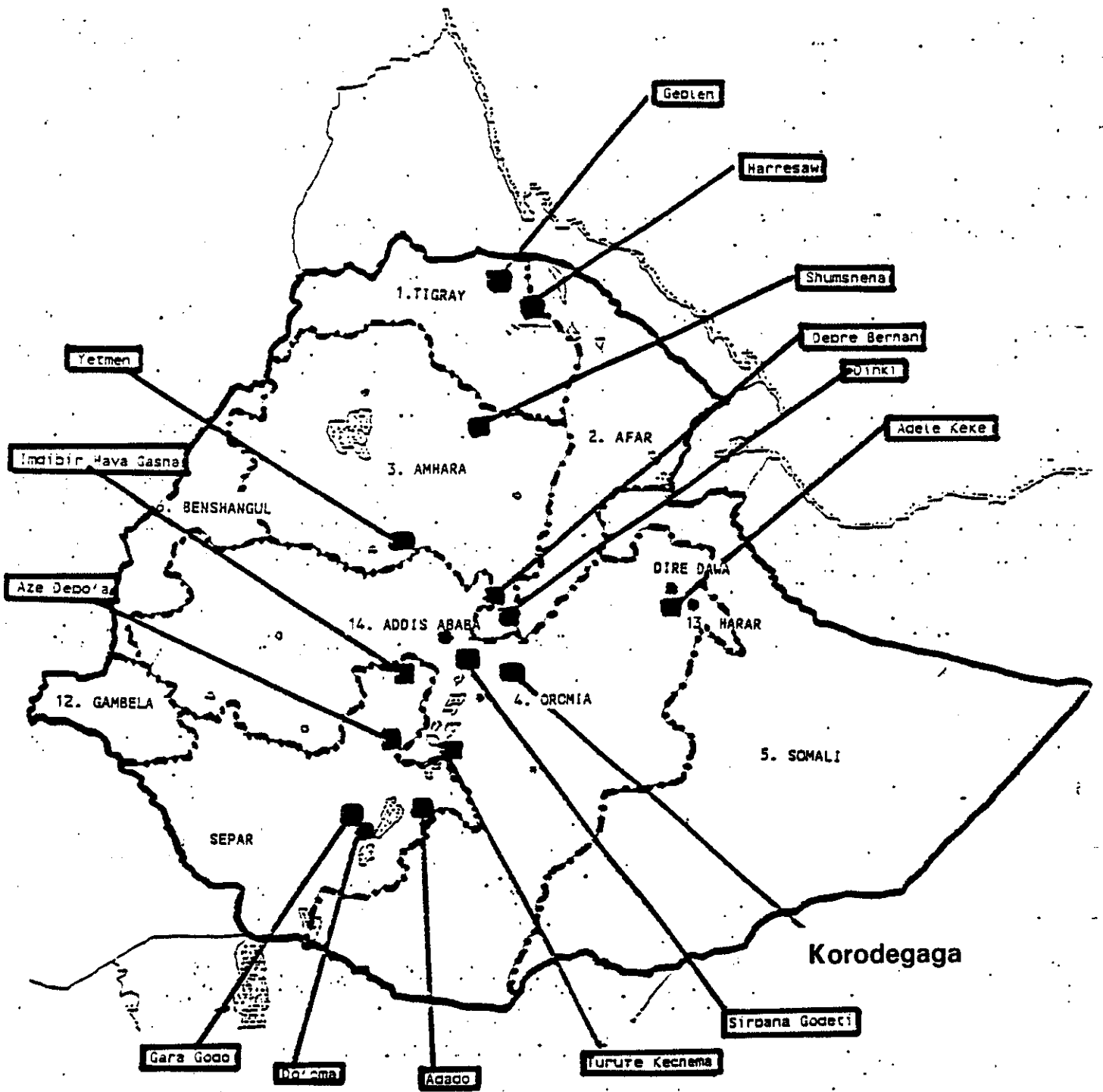
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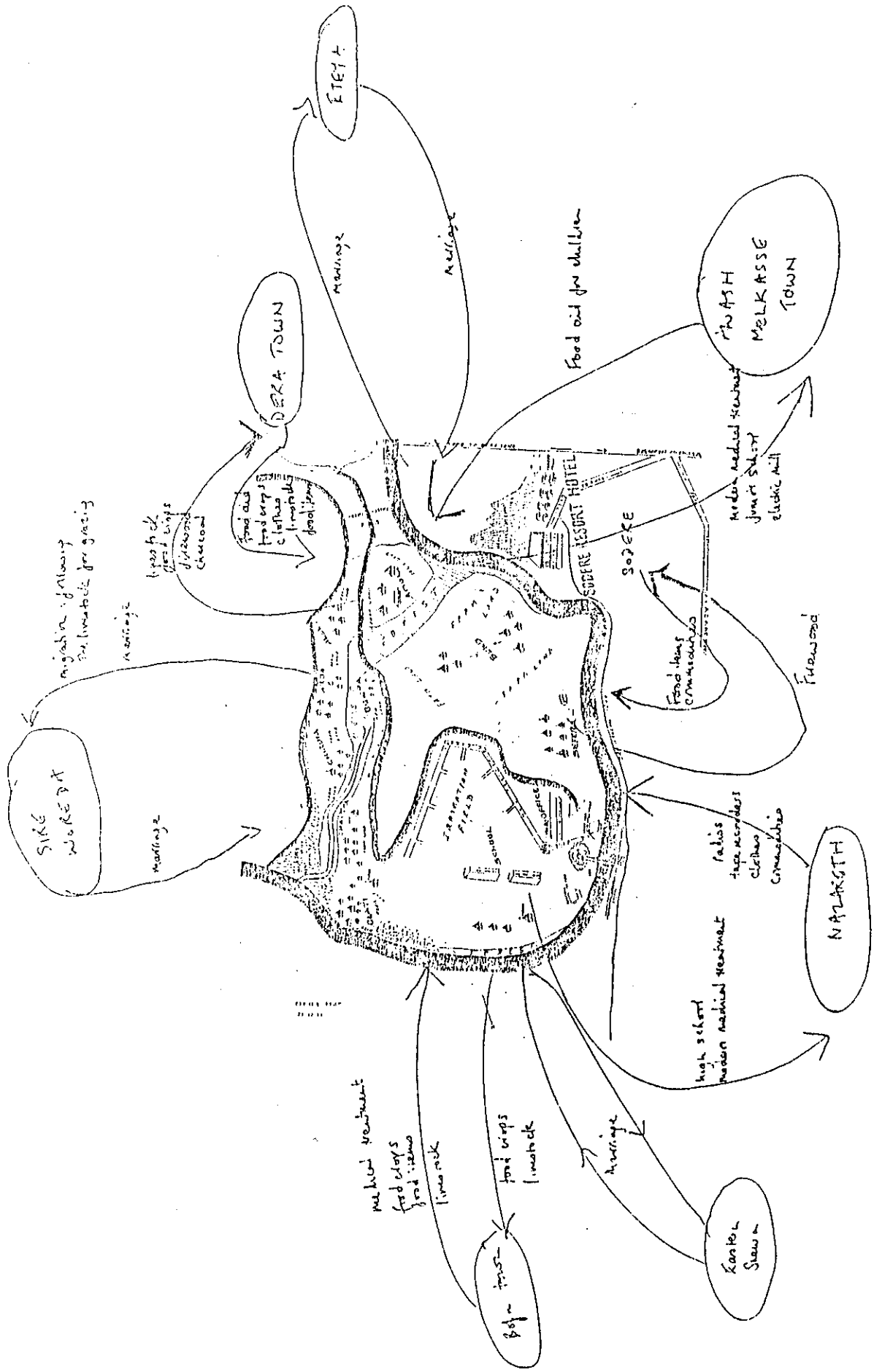
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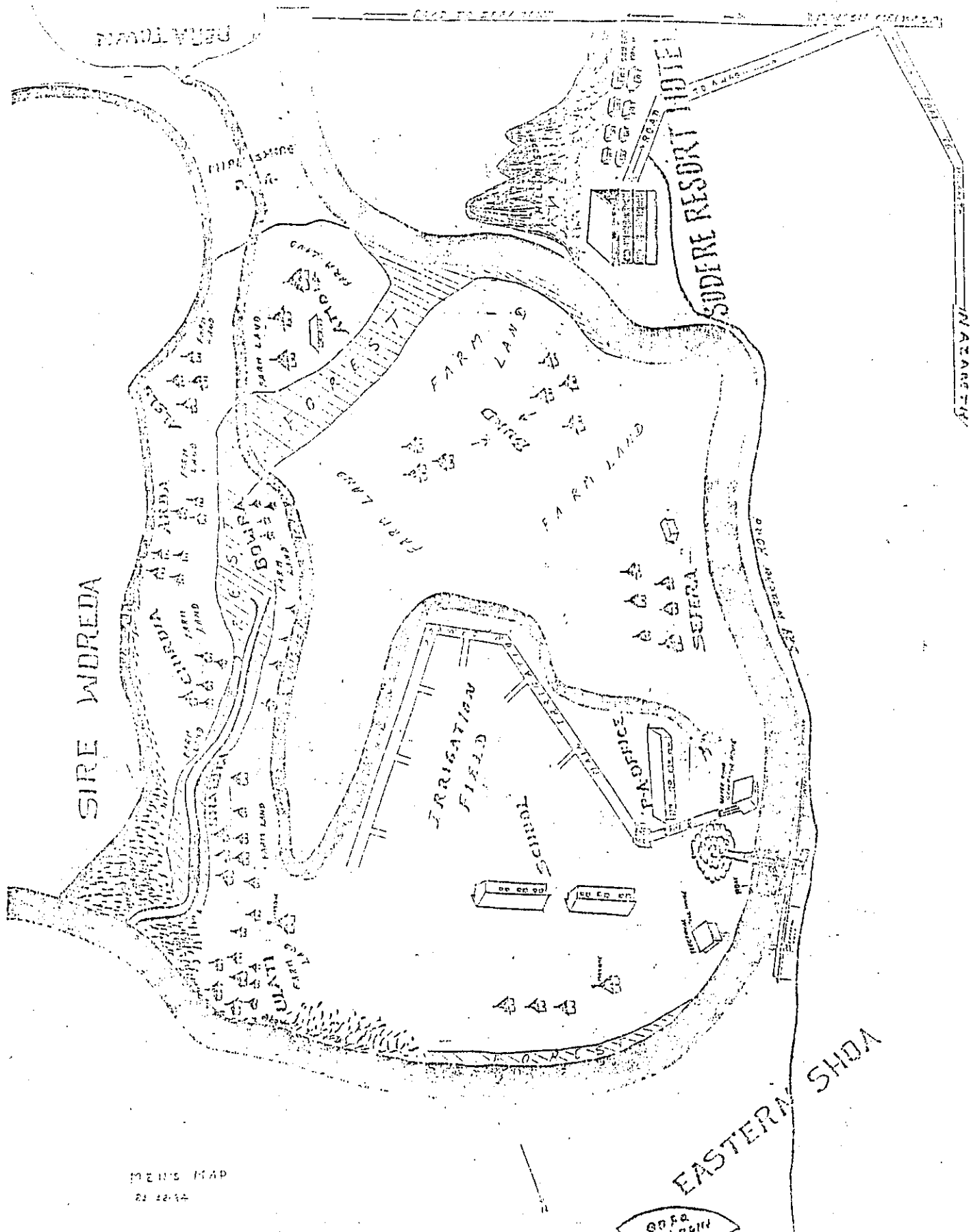
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MAP OF SUDAN



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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. The people have settled in 9 villages (see below). Alklellu and Amolla are 1 hour 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 national political terms Korodegaga is part of Dodota Woreda of Arssi zone of region 4 or Oromia. The boundary between Korodegaga and the neighbouring peasant associations in Shewa is the Awash river, which people cross on a raft manually hauled across the river on a steel cable. Korodegaga also shares a boundary with some peasant associations in Sire woreda of Arssi zone from which it is separated by the Qalata river (which prevents travel across the river during rainy months). But travel to Dera town (the capital of Dodota Woreda) is possible: the walking distance is 3 to 3½ hours. Korodegaga is remote. It is located at the north-east edge of Arssi administrative region, bordering on Eastern Shewa and is the farthest PA from the capital city of the region - Asela. Korodegaga is mostly in the lowland area with an altitude of less than 1000 metres above sea level. (Webb, *et al* 1992:34) but also the PA's altitude ranges from 1300 metres at Sefera/Buko to 1500 metres at Alellu/Amolla (RRA).

The community's livelihood is based on settled farming. (Ibid:35) Korodegaga has repeatedly suffered from hunger since the 1980s. For instance, IFPRI's Research Report by Webb and others (1992:35 and IFPRI, 1989:7-8) indicates 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 Woreda 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)

There are 304 households at the site and the total population is 1400 according to PA sources. The supervisors of the survey thought the population was larger. Compared to surrounding villages Korodegaga is larger in area but it is poorer.

Climate

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) What makes agriculture precarious in this locality is its reliance on rainfed production. But, 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. (IFPRI,1989:7)

The rainy months¹ 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 summer the air is a bit colder than in the winter season. But from November to January the range of temperature is very high. The night is very cold as the day is hot.

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 washing clothes and livestock. It takes 5 to 10 minutes to walk

¹ The people prefer to call it rainy months to seasons because there are only between 2 and 2½ months of rain in the community.

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 Amolla, Arda and Chirota.

Production

The principal crops in the area include maize, *tef*, sorghum, beans, and sometimes chickling peas (especially during good rainy months). The economy of the population is based on subsistence farming, characterized by small farm size, limited fertilizer 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). People do not market their output as this is not sufficient to cover subsistence needs.

There is no *belg* cropping season in the area, due to the absence of rain. Farmers can 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 best of the last five years). The 1992 harvest was better than that of 1991.

There was an irrigation system which was damaged. There is now a new irrigation channel which is not finished. This is a UNICEF-sponsored irrigation scheme started in 1989 but suspended on completion due to technical design faults.

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. Households do not get any income from the sale of animal products such as milk, butter and eggs. While they sell firewood collected from 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). There is a dirt road from the PA 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.

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 PA is surrounded by the Awash and Keleta rivers. The PA is a member of a Service Cooperative and has set up a shop.

On electricity, IFPRI's report says "The school (along with the grain mill and the PA offices) is supplied with electricity by a single power cable". (IFPRI, 1989:21)

Social Structure

The only ethnic group living in the site are Oromo. There has not been any ethnic conflict at the site in recent years. The main language spoken is Oromiffa. A few people speak Amharic.

The majority (58.4%) of the population in rural areas of Arssi region are Muslims, followed by 40.8% Orthodox Christians (CSA, 1989:27). 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 19th century. (Braukämper, 1988:769) The Ethiopian Orthodox Church adopted an offensive missionary strategy to challenge Islam since the restoration of the 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 baptized 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 Islamicized. 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.

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 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.

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 1880EC when there was a conflict between the richest Arssi Oromo Gossa Dollemo and the Amhara occupier known as *Ras* Abate Bellew. In 1885ET there was a conflict between Menelik's soldiers and the Arssi Oromo organised by Lenjiso Diga (the Kedida war). In 1927EC 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 1936EC Haile Selassie returned from England.

In 1954EC 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 1960EC Haile Selassie made Sahilu Difaye leader of the Arssi Administrative Region. In 1966EC Haile Selassie was detained. In 1975EC National Military Service was declared. In 1977EC the drought forced many people to sell their cattle, to start selling firewood and to migrate to other areas. In 1978EC the farmers started to organise under the Producers' Co-operatives. In 1983EC came Transformation (the end of the *Derg*).

There was villagization at the site in 1978EC. Since 1991 people have moved back to their original homes, either voluntarily or with some pressure.

Major events in the last ten years that stick in most people's minds are:

- road construction in 1977/8EC
- villagization in 1978EC
- the death of *Haji* Bosie in 1979EC
- the school was built in 1981EC
- land redistribution in 1983EC
- death of *Haji* Kedir Detie in 1985EC

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 1880 was not more than half a

quintal per annum.

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 organized themselves to attack the soldiers. The conflict happened at a place called Kedida and lasted 2 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

	1880	1885	1927	1936	1954	1960	1966	1975	1977	1978	1983
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
Teff			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

Tef, haricot beans, millet, lentils, horsebeans, and cowpeas were introduced around the end of the reign of Menelik. The Amhara settlers knew how to prepare *injera*, bread, *tella*, *wat* 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 1953EC (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 Melkassa 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 kilometres from the PA enabled the local people to use the public transport following the road from the hotel to Awash Melkassa, then towards Asella (the capital of Arssi administrative region) and Nazreth. The downfall of the Imperial government and the coming to power of the *Derg* emancipated them from tenancy by nationalizing all rural lands in March 1975. Under the *Derg* agricultural producers' cooperatives, service cooperatives and collectivized villages were established. Korodegaga Peasant Association is composed of two PAs which were called Korodegaga and Burkunteedagaga. *Haji Gabbi*, the current chairman of the PA recalls that the reason why the two PAs joined was the quota system of military conscription. He says: "the two PAs were required to recruit 10 militia men each, which was too much for such sparsely populated *kebeles*. Then leaders of the two PAs and elders sat together and decided to assimilate the two PAs and formed Korodegaga PA which has 1,400 ha instead of 800."

In 1978 (EC) the government ordered the PA to organize 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 collectivized 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 2000 *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 1000 *birr* in addition to the food crops grown. They were by and large richer than the farmers not organized into an association. The PC was abolished with the abolition of the *Derg* regime in 1983EC. 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 1985EC but stopped when the generator became useless due to flooding from the Awash river.

The 1977EC 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. Currently, the people of Korodegaga have nothing in common except the Service Cooperatives shop located roughly 100 meters away from Awash. A significant number of the population abandoned the new villages and the members of the producers' cooperatives divided their collective properties among themselves and started working on their individual plots. For about the last 10 years there has not been any history of good harvests. The people recall that the area has been food deficient since 1980/81.

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.

2. Seasonal Activities and Calendars

The following calendars are included at the end of this profile: crops; consumption; migration; off-farm income activities; credit; animal sales; animal diseases; average rain; pests; fuel and water availability; children's labour and school terms and holidays. Some notes of relevance to these calendars are included here.

Men's credit: Credit taken in April and May is used mainly to buy seeds because the next two months are the sowing time. From June to October most of the residents borrow money to buy food. Credit taken in October and November is mainly in the form of food crops, because some farmers have already produced crops which they lend to others who have not yet produced theirs. Almost all credit occurs between farmers who live in the PA. Some of the farmers who have close relatives outside the PA borrow either money or food from them. The four *idir* in the PA are another source of credit but they lend to their members only.

Women's credit: There is more 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 Nazreth. 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.

Women's labour: it is difficult to give the proportion of time spent on child care.

Festivals: there is one important festival celebrated by women. They prepare food - bread, *injera* with *wot*, *kollo*, *karibo* (used as *tella*) in their houses and bring it near to the Awash river. They cook coffee at this place and then the elder men and women beg Allah to make the New Year peaceful, healthy and a year of excess production. Before they begin to eat and drink the food, they throw a very small amount from each and every type of food and drink into the river. The ceremony is known as *Arete* and held in September.

Livestock sales and disease: There is no distinction in the time when animals are sold. It is mainly based on the need for cash to buy seed in May and June and to buy food from May to September. Animals are sold for health expenditure at any time when a family member is ill. There is seasonal variation in animal diseases.

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 3 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. 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 and barley grow around Chirota, Arda, Alellu and Amolla because these villages are a bit higher than the other 5 villages. The amount of wheat and barley produced is much lower than the rest of the crops grown in the PA and the farmers have no opportunity to sell them. They are only consumed between December and February. Sometimes people buy a small amount of wheat from the market until the maize is harvested in September.

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 2 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 to prepare *wot*. They buy them from the market. 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.

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. It is culturally undesirable to sell butter and milk so they simply consume them themselves.

It is unusual to eat eggs and chickens because they are a means of income to buy food or commodities like coffee, salt, kerosene, soap etc. The farmers, however, eat them during holidays: *Id-Alfatir* in April - the end of Ramadan; *Id-Aldeha (Arefa)* in June and *Moulid* in summer. The other occasion when farmers especially eat chicken is the summer which is an uncomfortable time for the birds. Sometimes they can die within a day and farmers are forced to slaughter a chicken as soon as it becomes sick.

Off-farm income activities: One important activity for women is the selling of firewood. They do this usually after they have finished their food stocks. The income is used to buy food and commodities like coffee, salt, kerosene and soap. From April onwards until the maize is harvested women work hard collecting and selling firewood. They sell it at least 4 days a week at Sodere and Dera towns.

In poor households women are forced to work on farms for payment on a daily basis. There is Degaga State farm and a privately-owned irrigation farm in a neighbouring PA (in Eastern Shewa area - see map). It is mainly after January that these women have to go to work on these farms because poor households finish their stock of food earlier than other households. The women earn 1.95 *birr* a day as a wage.

3. The Farm Economy

Crops

The main crops grown in the area are maize, *tef*, wheat, and beans. There is no cash crop in the area. In Korodegaga there is no experience of intercropping. Although there is a pest problem, people consider it as less devastating and also there is a pest control programme by the Ministry of Agriculture. The area does not have *belg* rains. The main reason for crop failure in Korodegaga is drought. *Ato* Niftalem Temesgen, the Development Agent of the PA, says that the main crop disease in the area is aphids which attacks crops such as barley, wheat, beans and peas during the shortage of rain. At least for the last ten years there has not been any good year.

Livestock

The common livestock are cattle, goats, sheep, and donkeys. The cattle are kept for their milk, meat, ploughing, manure, and cash. Goats and sheep are kept for cash and meat, while donkeys are kept for

transport and cash. Many people complain that the size of their stock has declined because of lack of pasture (resulted from long dry seasons) and animal diseases. One respondent said that the animal diseases known in the area, according to local names, are *abba sanga* (anthrax), *boxee*, *martoo*, *somboo*, *kiftinna* and *furee*. Among these diseases the last 5 attack goats and sheep. People tell that vaccination against certain animal diseases is provided, but the extension workers come after it is too late. The widespread animal diseases are lung attack and anthrax. The epizootics are in September, October and March.

Another respondent described 7 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 *woreda* 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: the timing and cause of this disease is similar to *golloba* but occurs in goats rather than cattle. It causes wounds all over their bodies.

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.

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.

Land

As was discussed above, before the 1974 period land was owned by Shewan Amhara rulers. The average landholding worked was then 1 hectare. This tenure system came to an end with the March 1975 nationalization of rural land. The whole area covered in the Korodegaga PA after the 1975 nationalization 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.

Forced cooperativization (started in 1980) and villagization (started in 1986) led to devastating economic consequences (IFPRI, 1989:17-18 and Gadisaa Birru, interview, Feb.17, 1994). With the establishment of producers' cooperatives, 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 TGE. Each household has a plot of land to which all newly married sons have a right to share. Nobody sells the land although some informants said leasing is not uncommon and indicated

that one hectare of farmland is leased for 100 *birr* a year. Another said there is no land rental for cash but there is share-cropping. The costs of seeds and fertilizers 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).

Land disputes are settled by community elders, who according to the information are more influential than the government court. There are about 40 households who are landless. Women can own and manage land by themselves. Divorced women have no rights over land. People own land that is used solely for grazing. Both private and communal grazing are practised.

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. Other observers said there was no land shortage; the problem is shortage of moisture. Another said there is a serious shortage of land; much of it is unsuitable for cultivation because the terrain is mountainous. He suggested the land should be distributed fairly so that everyone gets a similar size and quality of land depending on the size of the family.

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). It is often believed that "women do not participate in farming and harvesting crops, but assist with weeding which could also be done by men" (report from one respondent). However, another respondent who spent some time at the site reports as follows: "*Women's work on men's fields*: 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 males transport them to the threshing areas. For *tef* women sweep and make clean the floor where the crop is threshed". No crops are grown solely by women in Korodegaga.

Girl's labour: Girls are busy helping with household work. It is unusual for girls to look after cattle in the field. They would prefer to look after babies while their mother's are doing farmwork. Collecting and selling firewood is another important job for girls. It is rare in Korodegaga to send girls to school: there are only 8 girls out of 41 students at school at the moment. In the PA there is only 1 woman, who came from another region for marriage, who has completed 7th grade and no other woman who has completed even elementary education. The only reason for this given by parents is cultural influence.

Only rarely (for weeding) one finds people engaged in wage labour (wage labourers come both from within the *kebele* and outside the *kebele*). The wage labourers work on a contractual rather than on a daily basis. They are paid in either cash or kind. They are not looked down on.

Traditional labour parties are common among the Oromo. In the Korodegaga PA both *wonfel* (providing labour in return) and *jijigi (debo)* take place. *Jijigi* involves someone who, for various reasons, cannot farm, harvest, weed, or clear his field by family labour requesting neighbours and relatives to help him/her for which food and drinks are served. *Wonfel* is a labour-sharing arrangement with reciprocal obligations where labour spent on one farmer's land is paid back in exactly the same manner on the other farmer's land.

Interlinkages

IFPRI's Baseline Survey of Korodegaga Peasant Association (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". Oxen sharing is common since all households do not have at least two, which the plough requires. Those who do not have their own oxen to plough their plot exchange their labour for oxen with those who have oxen but need some additional labour power. According to one informant there has not been any share-cropping since March 1975; however, it is mentioned as important for getting wealthy by others.

Technology

The farming technology of the community is based on the ox plough. Fertilizers are available from the MoA. As explained there used to be irrigation in the community but is no longer. The price has increased slightly recently. Cooking technology is traditional. Grain is ground and cooked at home using firewood and locally made pots. The PA is linked to the nearest towns of Dera and Awash Malkaasa by a dirt road that runs between 18 and 20 km and by a raft that is manually hauled across the Awash on a steel cable, respectively. After crossing the River Awash by a raft there is a distance of only two km to reach Sodere, which has an asphalted road connection to Awash Malkaasa (7 km), Dera and Nazareth 25 km each. Dera takes between 3½ and to 4 hours on foot by the dirt road, while mini-buses are easily available from Sodere to all the towns mentioned above.

Innovations

Fertiliser and improved seed are modern inputs recently used. The *Dodota woreda* Ministry of Agriculture Office gives 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 have 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 2 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 5 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 has 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.

Two farmers in the PA used herbicides for the first time in the 1994 *meher*. They did this by copying when farmers in other areas were using it.

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 PA fetches water from the Awash and Keleta rivers to which all have equal rights of access. There is no problem of theft in the PA.

It seems that, with the establishment of Producers Co-operatives, certain areas of communal

land have been reduced because the relatively fertile lands were taken over by the PC from the private holders who were forced to include new fields into their farm lands.

There are 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 PA took it in 1981. The PA paid 6000 *birr* (ie half of its price) to the owner when they took the mill. It works using electrical power by installing a transformer to the main line which passes near the PA. This line goes from Sodere Resort Hotel to the highway station which is about 6 kilometres between the 2 places. The transformer was installed in the middle of these 2 places which is about 1 km from the mill. It serves only PA residents because no-one wants to cross the Awash river to get the service. So the PA obtains a monthly income of not more than 100 *birr* which is used to pay for the consumption of electricity as well as for the per diem of the PA officials when called for a meeting at the *woreda* or regional offices. However, it stopped its service from September 1994 because the PA have no money to pay 300 *birr* for the electricity consumed from June to August 1994.

2. *Grazing land*: the grass is always on sale once a year in August for the nomads living in neighbouring *woreda* such as Sire, Jeju, Huruta, Hamda and Kulla. Most of the areas in these *woreda* are lowlands which are not appropriate for food production. The life of the residents therefore depends on cattle rearing. They come to Korodegaga PA in August because the grass grows very well in June and July. A nomad must pay 1 *birr* for one cattle and can keep it there until the grass is finished. The land is not delimited for each nomad because they all come at the same time (within a difference of not more than a week) and can keep their cattle together. The PA obtains about 1000 *birr* per year and uses the income to buy stationery for the office and other office requirements. The PA 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 nomads 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*: Korodegaga had a service co-operative all on its own because of its remote location. In 1978EC when the government allowed the PA 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 2 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 PA 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 (ie 1.30 *birr* a kg). Hence the EDDC stopped giving paid goods for regional branches.

4 *A boat*: It was in 1964 that General Mebratu Fiseha established a boat on Awash river when he started modern farming on 20 hectares of land. The boat was tied on a long rope made of metallic materials and one can pull on another similar rope to move the boat. It is made of wood and of 9 metallic barrels which are used to float it. The barrels and the wood are joined together with metallic

pipes which are all tied together with plastic straps. After 1977 when the farmers' organisation was established they took both the boat and the land owned by General Mebratu and started to be responsible for it. Before 1977 anybody could use it without payment, but it was the General who maintained the boat when it needed it. But when it became the property of the PA it is only the PA residents who do not pay when crossing the river. Other people have to pay 0.25 *birr* per day giving them the right to cross as much as they like on one day. The income is used to pay the monthly salary of the employee (35 *birr* a month) who controls the boat as well as to buy grease for lubricating its parts. There is no fixed amount of income but on average it is estimated to be about 40 *birr* a month. It was renewed in 1989 by the PA spending 6000 *birr* which was obtained from the bank saved by UNICEF on the part of the PA. UNICEF saved 21000 *birr* in 1987 for the PA and now 15000 *birr* is saved in the bank. The boat can transport 20 people for one trip across the river.

Environment

There is a serious problem of erosion, caused by wind and water in the summer, because the land is so ragged 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 fertilizers (which started just this year), 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)

4. Off-farm Activities

Within the community

Within the community the principal non-farm source of income and activity is fuelwood marketing. Carrying of wood bundles to the nearest towns of Dera, Sodere, and Awash Malkaasa markets is a daily chore for a good number of women. Fetching water and collecting firewood are the sole activity of women and girls (IFPRI,1989:22). "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). Men, on the other hand, were more active as manual labourers" (Webb, 1992:42). According to my informant, 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.

Migration

There is no seasonal migration in this community.

5. Reproductive Activity

House management

House management is the duty of women.

Fuel and lighting

The main sources of lighting are fire and naphta kuraz, and in some houses one can also find lantern lights. For cooking they use firewood 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.

Water

The community of Korodegaga PA 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.

Sanitation

There is no latrine in the PA.

Fertility

Informants were bold enough to say that there is no divorce because of infertility. They say that one of the reasons for polygyny 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.

Since children are regarded as the manifestation of the blessing of God, the use of artificial contraceptives is regarded as going against the will of God. There are many people (especially the young) who know about family planning. But it is not practised.

Childbirth and Childcare

Pregnant women, especially during their last couple of months, perform only domestic activities rather than engaging themselves in farm-related work. After childbirth women stay at home between two and 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.

Socialization

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.

It is useful for women to be able to read, write and calculate since they can participate in local organisations like *idir* 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 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 farmwork 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 *idir* 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 2 men at high school, 5 men at junior school, 5 have completed 6th grade (1 female), 4 have completed 4th grade (2 female) and there are 41 students in grades 1-4, 8 of which are female.

Education

The school attendance rate for the whole of Arssi was a little more than a quarter (26.7%) of the population aged 5 years and above (CSA,1989:74). The proportion attending school was 55.3% and 24.2% for urban and rural areas, respectively. School attendance was significantly higher among males than females (*ibid*:81).

The elementary school in Korodegaga was built in 1990 and provides from grade 1 to grade 4. There are 41 students of which 33 are male. They learn Oromiffa which is used as a working language, and all other subjects are taught in it. They study English, Maths, Geography, History, Sport, Music and Drawing. They also learn handicrafts - how to make cooking pots, baskets, carpets etc. They are taught how to prepare food, how to use and save money as well as how to keep themselves and their surroundings clean under the subject of home economics. There is a primary school (grade 1 - 6) in Sodere.

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 0.50 *birr* for sport and another 0.50 *birr* for a certificate in a year. Third and 4th grade students must pay 1 *birr* book rent for books borrowed from the school.

Children in the PA also learn religious education in 2 places. There are 20 students in both places. To complete this religious education one must learn all of the 5 sections included in the curriculum:

1. *Kure-an*: this is simply learning the words and sentences written in the *Kure-an*. 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 *Kure-an*.
3. *Hadiss*: the student who learns this can write Arabic words and translate the *Kure-an*. They can also become a teacher of the *Kure-an* and *Kitab*.
4. *Tefsiral Kure-an*: here the student learns about the meaning of the *Kure-an*. it need students who are perfect in writing and reading of Arabic words to be able to translate the *Kure-an*.
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 5 sections take 10 years to complete. Even if there were religious leaders in the PA who can teach all these sections parents are not interested in their children learning because they do not know what might be learned and because they need the children for farm labour. Most children learn only the first 3 sections for 3 or less years.

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 to 6 kilometres from Sefera, Buko, Olati, Shalota and Bowra villages and 10-15 km from Arda, Chirota, Alellu and Amolla villages. Hence it is only appropriate for children from the first 5 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 5 children who have completed elementary education and become farmers. Junior school is found at Awash Melkasse which is 10 kilometres from the nearest village (Sefera). Any student who wants to go to this school must use public transport paying 1 *birr* for 1 way travel to Awash Melkasse. If this is impossible the student can live for 5 days in Awash Melkasse. Both of these choices are difficult for parents. Currently there are 5 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 Nazreth which is 28 kms from Sefera village. More sons than daughters are sent school. No one has been to college from the PA.

Training

No-one from the PA has received any kind of training.

Health

While it is clear in other parts of this report that traditional medicine is a valued and important part of community life, the respondents for this section did not mention it. It is likely that they were chosen from the more "modern" elements in the village. This was also found in other parts of rural Ethiopia, particularly when individual households were asked about medical services used.

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 winter they do not have such soft food but rather hot drinks like coffee and sour food. They also eat less in the winter which is another cause of gastric.

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.

A group of women ranked the 4 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. All except tonsillitis should be treated by modern medical treatment. In addition, for tonsillitis they can be given traditional medicine and their tonsils can be cut.

A group of men ranked the diseases causing problems in order of severity as malaria; amoeba; diarrhoea; TB; gastric; 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 PA, including children, have malaria. The shortage of medical services is the main reason for the increase in the number of patients. The malaria control centre is located in Nazreth town which 25 km from the PA and the PA residents are not able to go and get the service. This is because the treatment needs at least 2 days until

the blood test result is obtained and they get the tablets. The ability of the mosquito resists the medicine and this is also another problem producing an increase in the number of patients.

About three-quarter of the residents of the PA suffer from amoeba. The source is the Awash river which is the only water source for all purposes in the PA. The waste from Akakai 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. They cannot see after sunset.

There are no health facilities in the village. The nearest government health facility is located in Awash Melkasa, 8 km from the site. During a visit to the health clinic the Health Officer said he could provide medicines for diarrhoea, coughing, malaria and any pain. They also has in store chloroquine, bacterium, tetracycline, measles drugs, O.R.S. etc. They have no preventive programmes. A typical visit costs an average of 5 *birr* which includes 2 *birr* for a registration card and 3 *birr* for testing the illness. He said there were no traditional practitioners in the area but this is very hard to believe (see below under *Local Services*). The nearest private health facility is in Awash Melkasa while the nearest hospital is in Nazareth, 30km from the site. Although services are provided no medication can be got.

6. Consumption

Food and other day-to-day goods.

Famine has always been with them since the early 1980s. Although *injera* is rarely eaten the widely consumed food among the community is porridge with milk. 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 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, *kunna*, *dawla*, *tassa*

volume: bottle, *birchiko*, *ensira*, *goma*

land area: *wodero* = 50 metres

Saving and Investment

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.

Housing

In the whole PA there are only two tin-roofed houses and one is very old and on the way to becoming useless. One household is living in the store of the school covered by corrugated sheeting. The rest are small *tukul* some with incomplete partitions for bed and cooking and storing food containers. Although there is a difference between the house of the wealthy family and the poor ones as in some other areas of Arssi, the difference is less significant in Korodegaga PA since there is little difference in wealth. Since no finance is involved in the construction of a house, people find it very difficult to tell how much building a new house costs. Informants doubt whether a house could last more than ten years.

Household assets

Informants suggest that only very few households own a radio or tape player. Some villagers have watches of different qualities. In almost all households one would find beds made of cattle skin.

Local services

There is no shop in the PA apart from the Service Cooperative shop. The nearest shops are in Dera, Awash Malkaasa, and Nazareth. The nearest drug shop is in Awash Malkaasa. The agricultural extension worker visits the PA very frequently. He visits those farmers who have started using chemical fertilizers and gets feedback on how far the services are effective.

It is said that there is no *kalicha* in the area, although there are the *sheiks* who may pray for people who have some complaints regarding their health in the PA. 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 snakebite, 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 3 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 PA.

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

7. Local Institutions and Organizations

Households

The term household (*warra*) is usually used to refer to two spouses and their unmarried offsprings. 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 offsprings 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 offsprings who live far away from their family's residence for reasons of education or trade, etc are still members of the household.

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 characterized 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 PA all the residents are

Arssi Oromos belonging to the *Sebiro* group and classified into 11 lineages:

1. Sebiro
2. Bedosa
3. Amigna
4. Jawi
5. Agodu
6. Kolloba
7. Ballekessa
8. Dayi
9. Seyimena
10. Gessela
11. Sude

Marriage is practical between these lineages or with other ethnic groups living outside this area.

Abdurahman does not tell us the age considered suitable for marriage both for girls and boys, but only mentions a state of womanhood and manhood required for marriage (Abdurahman,1991:37). He also 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 bridewealth in the form of a number of heads of cattle ranging from 5 to 120 (*ibid*). 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 5 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 bridewealth (*gabara*) 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 one and two thousand *birr*. Gifts transferred in the form of *geegawo* 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 *geegawo* 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.

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. 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 PA (up to 1990 - mixed economy) and the PA 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 bridewealth 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 equalize 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), *hawata* (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 jehebana 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.

For all first marriages there is the ceremony of circumcision. On the 15th day before the wedding the bride's parents call for an expert to cut part of her vagina. From then on she will not be allowed to work outside her house (compound), for example to bring water, collect firewood, etc. But if the marriages are *butta* or *asena* circumcision is done in her in-laws' house.

Dalla (inheritance of widows) is one of the important types of marriage applicable in Korodegaga until now. 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. *Hawata* (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 polygyny is widely exercised. A man can marry from 2 to 3 wives.

Divorce

No divorce is recalled by the informants and this agrees with what Baiter 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. Another respondent said that divorce is rare because of the religious influence (*sharia* law for Muslims) but it does sometimes happen by agreement. The husband and wife make such an agreement mainly when she is unable to manage the family or do household activities due to illness or other reasons, she has a childbirth problem, or she is old and needs rest. No woman has the right to leave her house even if the husband becomes disabled or overaged unless he allows her to.

When they agree to separate she lives near (it can be in the same compound) in a house constructed by her husband. This is because he has a responsibility to help her until her death. The children can live with either of the 2 except those who are breastfeeding. The father can order all the children who are living with their mother. After the separation he gives some cattle, goats, sheep and part of his land to this former family and provides all the household assets for them. The man can marry another female under this kind of divorce but the woman cannot. 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 overaged, disabled or unable to work: if they are their kin has 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.

If one of the children is 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.² 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.

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.

Lineages/Clans

There are lineages linked together in clans.

Age grading, life cycle changes and rites of passage.

There are no active *gada* activities. There is no importance attached to *gada* practices because people say that it was made to die out due to the rule of the Ethiopian empire. No specified and ritually celebrated rites of passages are performed.

Friendship contracts

No friendship contracts are binding beyond family or kinship ties.

Citizenship

It is very difficult to explain the concept of citizenship, because it is elusive since they consider themselves Arssi first and Oromo next.

Markets

In the PA there is no place or day reserved for the market. The nearest market places are Dera, Awash Malkaasa and Nazareth.

Credit and Social Security

There are only very few small *equb* in the PA and they are usually composed of women. The widely accepted risk-sharing group is the *idir*. There are five big *idir*. Some people belong to two or more *idir*.

² 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.

Idir membership can be as large as 70-100 and the monthly contribution is usually 2 *birr* per person. *Idir* membership is not related to the economic level of the person concerned. It is possible for households to have same members both in *equb* and *idir*. There are no *mehber* in the PA because *mehber* is a feature of Orthodox Christianity.

In Korodegaga there are no local moneylenders interested in the collection of interest, 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.

Community decision-making

There is no local political organization which is influential in the PA. The PA leadership is elected by the people. *Kebele* officials collect taxes which are fixed by the government at 20 *birr* for a household.

Since the PA is a crop-deficient area, it is quite obvious that people feel that the tax is too much. In the PA there are some recognized and respected elders to whom certain disputes among people are referred. It is the PA leaders who refer the cases for settlement to them. Therefore, there is no apparent conflict between the PA 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. The local elites are well-related to economic and political structures through the Ministry of Agriculture at *woreda* level. Should they require more force to catch thieves and other outlaws the *woreda* police and administration cooperate with them. Another 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 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 *shenicha*, meaning representative of the people; they are chosen on the basis of age, wealth etc. Most of them are religious leaders which makes them superior to others. Most people use them because they finish the affair in a short time and the amount of penalty or compensation they decide on is based on the ability of people to pay and not on laws and regulations, as is done by the PA officials. The PA tries to solve problems which the elders or the people involved are not willing to submit to the elders.

The PA officials have 2 different jobs to do. The first group controls the administration (eg tax collection and implementing rules and regulations made by higher officials). The other is called *fird shengo* which is used as a court. It is responsible for dealing with lawbreakers (thieves, murderers etc) even more than elders, and has a right to decide a penalty up to 300 *birr* and 3 months in prison.

Local Organizations

It is only *idir* in which the farmers in the PA organise themselves to help each other in times of crisis. There are four *idir* in the PA:

<i>Name</i>	<i>No of members</i>	<i>Amount of contribution/month</i>
Shallotta	35	1 <i>birr</i>
Arda	65	2 <i>birr</i>
Seferra	70	1.10 <i>birr</i>
Alellu Amolla	45	1 <i>birr</i>

If a person loses a lot of property (eg 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 (eg an ox) only the members of his *idir* 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. Respondents cannot remember when *idir* were established but believe it may have been during the reign of Menelik after the private ownership of land was started.

Kin, wherever they are living, give (this is not an obligation) cattle, furniture or money as their ability allows them to provide. 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 *idir*.

In 1977 a farmers' organisation was established and in 1980 there was the formation of public associations. A group ranked the following local organizations in order of their usefulness:

1. *idir*
2. farmers' organization
3. Youth association
4. Women's' association

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 finished goods like coffee, salt, kerosene, soap etc.

It was in 1977 that farmers in Korodegaga organised themselves and made the PA official. The Women's and Youth Associations were also established in 1977 having 100 and 120 members respectively. They did nothing except require contributions of 0.25 *birr* per month.

Redistributive mechanisms

Feasts involving sacrifices are *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*.

8. Beliefs and Values

Land

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

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. It is only the wealthy who can afford to go to Mecca on pilgrimage. There is 1 month fasting a 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 held 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 at which the worship place of Mecca Medina opens and *Rebi-ala-awole* (*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.

There are 2 places of worship where the PA residents go and hold a ceremony once a year. The first and most important one where Muslims from Korodegaga and also all Muslims living in Arssi region go is located in Bale administrative region. It is the place where one of the biggest Muslim leaders, Sheikena Hussien Ebumelkaya, lived. Only those who can travel a long distance can go here. Those who cannot, go to the place where Sheik Dulfekar, the second religious leader, lived. This place is about 15 km south of Korodegaga. They go to these places to pray on behalf of the 2 leaders. They spend 2 or 3 days praying, singing, dancing etc. There is no mosque - they just gather at the plain area to do all the things ordered by elders and *oulemas*. They take cooked and dry food and smoke a lot of cigarettes and chew chat. This holy day is called *Muda* and it varies from year to year. The next is 15 days earlier than the previous.

Going to these 2 places does not bring status as does going to Mecca. 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*. It needs more than 3000 *birr* for transport and 2000 *birr* for other needs. There are 3 people in the PA who went to Mecca and are *Haji*.

There is no mosque constructed in Korodegaga but people pray in their houses. Some of the farmers have 2 or 3 houses one of which is used as a mosque. The settlement pattern (in 9 villages) is not conducive for building either a mosque for each village, or one to be shared. On the other hand there are 4 burial grounds in the PA which do not take more than 20 minutes from the corresponding village: Allellu and Amola; Arda and Chirota; Shallotta, Olati and Bowra; and Sefera and Buko.

There is a traditional belief system which has survived the changes.

Explanations of misfortune and illness

There does not seem to be any practices of witchcraft and sorcery in the PA. 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 (*oulemas*) 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 *Du'a*.

There is no witchfinder in Korodegaga because it is prohibited by Sharia law for Muslims. However, rainmaking by praying is usual in the PA. When the rain is late the *oulemas* call for all the residents to meet in one place under a big tree and they start to pray all night. The *oulemas* order the participants to fast for the next 3 days. On the 4th day they pray again at the same place. All the participants bring food from their house to eat and drink and they believe this is effective to bring rainfall.

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 emphasized. 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 people are reluctant to answer questions related to politics. The other problem is that they relate every question to the possibility of relief distribution and inquire whether the survey will bring them something in return.

Political beliefs and attitudes

Although it is very sensitive to ask questions related to politics and assess people's attitudes towards the state and political exercises, informal discussions revealed that people are suspicious of all state political exercises.

9. The Community

Community organization

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 PA wide.

Politics

The Elders' Council provides support through the PA structure.

Although the fieldworker is not sure whether it has something to do with the regionalization policy of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia, people report with confidence that the conflict which existed between the Arssi and the Jille has been resolved since the establishment of the TGE. According to the people the reason why the conflict was resolved was that they only very recently came to know that both belong to the larger Oromo people.

One observer reported that the people complained about the elections held on 29 April 1994. The government made them choose someone they did not want to be a member of the regional administration. The person was elected because he was a spokesman for the government.

Another said that very few people who were working with the *Derg* government are now

serving as politicians in the present government. Even these politicians do not believe wholeheartedly in the politics of this government, because it mainly belongs to Tigrayans only.

Social conflict

There seems to be little conflict between groups in the community.

Poverty and wealth

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

It is the number of livestock that makes a person more wealthy than the rest. The one who has many goats, sheep, cows, oxen etc is richer, while the richest may own camels (which can cost up to 1200 *birr*). At present in Korodegaga a man who has 30 cattle (including 4 oxen), and 50 goats and sheep is said to be the richest man. A man who ploughs 5 to 6 hectare of land can get up to 30 quintals of output per annum in a good harvest season and can be classified as within the richest group. The poorest households are characterized by lack of food and not being owners of cattle, goats, sheep, donkeys or poultry.

In the first place there are no people who could be taken as wealthy in the PA. As has been discussed elsewhere in this report the difference between the rich and the poor is the number of heads of cattle, goats and sheep. Therefore, the wealth of someone has very little, if at all, to do with the poverty of another.

The main sources of wealth are categorised as follows in terms of their importance:

- (a) wedding: the woman's parents get a number of cattle collected from the relatives of their son-in-law as *gabara* 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)
- (d) economising: if one is able to plan income and expenditure it is easy to save sufficient property within a short space of time.

An observer suggested that economic and social changes are affecting the poorest members of the community. The price of goods in the market are often too high for them to afford. Another said that the changes have created a crisis in the living circumstances of the poorest members of the community: they can no longer buy necessities in the market. A third said that the poorest are the first victims of drought and famine, and that in addition they have been affected by recent changes. A fourth observer said that the poorest members are affected by recent changes. The richest members benefit from economic and political changes because of their status in the community; they can bribe officials and get things they want before the poor know or have heard about them. This will only get better when the right representatives are elected to the various administrative and development positions.

Social mobility

One respondent said that normally people born to a wealthy family have a greater chance of becoming wealthy themselves. It should, however, be noted that being born to a wealthy family does not guarantee one to be a wealthy farmer. The management skill of the heir determines how he manages the inherited property. If he abuses and mishandles the wealth he will soon become poor. The child of the poor family can become a wealthy person if he is creative and hard working. Whether the parents tend to help a child who is becoming poor depends on how he handles the property over which he has control. If he is extravagant, they may tend to abandon him. It is difficult for a child of a poor person to get rich

unless he gets the above opportunities. Poor people are those who are lazy.

A wealth-ranking exercise in the community suggests there are 3 groups in the community: rich, average and poor (although "rich" is a relative term). People can move down from the rich group in 1 year; typical reasons are death of livestock, lack of output due to rain shortage, expensive crops and cheap livestock, malaria which needs medical expenditure. Within 2 years a person can be wealthier; typical reasons are intensive work on the farm, good weather, inheritance of livestock, obtaining livestock and/or money as bridewealth. People move frequently between categories 2 and 3 in both directions, depending on economical use of income (or its opposite) and fluctuations in family size. People become wealthier by getting involved in off-farm activities, and increasing the number of goats and sheep they own. They become poorer when they lose male labour due to death, illness, migration etc, increasing their family size beyond ability to provide, and when oxen die.

Status

The bases of status are 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). As it was discussed above there are no 'caste' groups in the PA. There are no urban status symbols in the PA (although there was a mention of educated people needing smarter clothes and watches).

The respected people are *shenicha* who are selected by the residents as representatives, and the religious leaders (*oulema*) who are influential in solving local disputes and making negotiations for marriage, divorce etc. The ability to solve problems, religious knowledge, wealth, and age are the main reasons why people are respected.

Social stratification

In Sire *woreda* the main bases of status, in their order of importance, are wealth, lineage, religious status, and education. The main routes to wealth are good farming, business entrepreneurship, and political position. (Gadisaa Birru). In Korodegaga the wealthier households are the former landlords. IFPRI (1989:29) says "...the 5 households professing to having been landlords before 1975 (owning land that was farmed by tenants who paid them a share of the harvest) hold assets worth an average of 83 ETB [Ethiopian Birr]". The report said that the former tenants and the former small farmers own assets worth half of those belonging to the former landlords.

Primarily what one should take note of in this PA is that very few people own more than 20 heads of cattle (including 2 wo pairs of oxen), 20 goats and 10 sheep. According to the local informants there are only a few rich people. Status and power may coincide since the bases of status are age, wisdom and concern for communal interest. Wealth in itself does not necessarily guarantee one status and power. There seems to be no indication of class formation in the PA. People with the above stated bases of status are treated with reverence; it is not a matter of superiority.

Dissent

It is difficult to obtain information on political issues.

10. Relationships with Other Communities and the Wider Society

Clans and tribes

It seems from what people discuss in informal meetings among themselves that there were some clan

distinctions in the PA, especially during the elections of the PA executive. But after the villages were disbanded and the cooperatives were dissolved there is no manifested problem related to clan differences.

Villages and regions

There are some families who have relatives in other PAs whose interaction is based either on lineage or kinship ties.

Relationships with wider Ethiopia

People in Korodegaga have settled far from each other by grouping themselves into 9 villages:

Alellu
Amolla
Arda
Chirota
Olati
Shallotta
Bowra
Buko
Sefera

They are forced to group into 9 groups to make defence easy. Until the beginning of the 1970s there was a conflict between Kereyu nomads living in Fentale (northeastern Shewa - near Afar) and the Arssi Oromos as well as with the Shewa (Jille) Oromos living in the neighbouring *woreda*. The reason for this conflict is the question of rights to grazing land and drinking water for livestock. The Kereyu nomads own a lot of camels and bring them to Arssi (around Sodere) to drink a natural hot water used as medicine for camels. The Arssi Oromo then take these camels by force and both begin to fight each other using machine guns and spears. The Jille Oromos also have a lot of cattle and bring them on to Arssi land for grazing. The Arssi Oromo take these cattle by force and conflict ensues.

However, informants report that these conflicts have been resolved during the last three years because overall ethnic affiliation is emphasized rather than minor clan differences. Relations with the Jille and the Kereyu are not hostile although it may take some time to establish friendship which actually requires physical proximity, for which the Awash is a barrier. They have strong identification with the local name Arssi, and then Oromo, less with Ethiopia. They considered themselves as Ethiopian subjects until 1974.

The presence of forest in the area allowed the existence of wild animals like lions, hyenas, tigers etc which force the people to settle together to defend their cattle against these wildlife. Most of the settlers in one village are related either by birth or marriage but are different lineages.

Effects of government policies

Ten years ago, 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 regionalization policy they have recently returned but, because some of them arrived after the latest redistribution of land, they are now landless.

One observer reported that the farmers agree they were better off before Mengistu left, because at that time there was a better programme for the agricultural economy and the people had benefitted

from irrigation installations. Now the irrigation facilities are degraded and the present government is not bothered to repair them. People in the community are unhappy with current economic and political policies because they are not helpful to them. They say they are meant to serve to keep the government in power. Government is not providing farmers with tools or inputs and these are very expensive. These items are also not available in the market at the right time when they are most needed. He said that people regretted the regionalization of administration because this has led to nationality conflicts and anyone from one region cannot leave for another for any reason. They do not know much about the Constitution. "The people know well about democracy and understand that democracy meant division in Ethiopia. Government talk about democracy but killing and imprisonment are common. They concluded that Ethiopian democracy is not any different from military rule".

Another observer agreed people were better off before the departure of Mengistu. The youngsters, especially those who fought in the civil war, have got very little to do. There are no jobs for anyone and no recreational centre to pass their time. He said that people in the community are not happy with government policies because the cost of living is high, and there are security problems and as a result people are subjected to underground suppression. They like regionalization in the sense of self-administration. However, those who were selected are not helping the people and are not doing their jobs sincerely. People know about the Constitution and understand there is a lot of difference in the economic and political policies of the present and past governments. They know about democracy and believe it is good for them: it is about freedom to speak, write and live in peace. A different observer said that very few people understand or know about the Constitution. People who have been executives in farmers' associations during the Mengistu regime and the returnees from the former army do not believe in the new Constitution. They are not sure whether it will be practically used. People do not know a lot about democracy although they do understand and exercise their rights to object to ideas and candidates in meetings. However, they do not dare to oppose government policies because the area is prone to drought, and they think if they do they will lose aid in future. For example, during the elections for members to draft the Constitution only those candidates who supported the government were elected and none of the people's choice were selected.

Another observer said that members of the community claimed they have become worse off since 1990/1 mainly because the value of the *birr* is reduced and hence buying power is reduced and goods in the market are too expensive for the farmer to buy even if they are essential. He said that people are pleased by regionalization because they use their own language in local administration, they are administered by people of their own and they are free to develop their culture and their religion.

60 farmers were conscripted from the site and of these 48 have returned. One of them has received an ox, while the rest were given farm implements. People are happy at the ending of the marketing board and hardly realize the effect of the devaluation policy. Compared to previously there is more peace at the site. When diseases (human or livestock) break out PA representatives notify the *woreda* office for it to solve the problem and/or initiate livestock vaccination.

An observer reported seeing no security problems during a visit but suggested this might be because of the presence of a heavily-armed army in the area.

Government activities in the community

In 1961 the veterinary service came to the PA: 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 Nazreth or Asela. 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 BCG) and women (Tetanus and TT) 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 PA when specialists come once a month for this purpose. There was an afforestation 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 PA 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 5 members they could separate into 2 groups each of which could consider themselves one household. A household obtained 50 kgs 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.

A group of people ranked the government's activities in terms of usefulness to the community as follows:

1. Literacy programme and agricultural extension agent
2. Vaccination
3. Veterinary service and clinic construction
4. The elementary school
5. The service and producer co-operatives
6. Food aid
7. Dry weather road construction

It was the *Derg* that the farmers acknowledged in terms of its concentration on developing rural life. They disliked the government only because of its declaration of National Service under which 62 adults went to different battlefields. Eight died and 19 went missing while the remaining 35 have returned. The farmers also disliked the villagisation policy.

One observer said that the people said the aspect of the regionalization programme they do not like is that, unlike the previous government, this one does not help them. This government tells them that whatever they want done should be done by their region and themselves.

NGO activity in the community

Table 1 shows the PC production of crops and related income in 1987. In 1986 there were 242 farmers who were members of the PA and of these 85 were members of the Producers' Co-operative.

Table 1: Producer Cooperative production, 1987

<i>Crop type Income</i>	<i>Land size</i>	<i>1979EC production</i>	<i>Sale</i>
Food crops (maize, teff, millet haricot beans)	43 hectares	984 quintals	
Permanent crops (orange and papaya)	3.5 hectares	550 quintals	31500 <i>birr</i>
Semi-permanent crops (sweet potato, tomato onion, cabbage, green pepper, beetroot)	6 hectares	570 quintals	22000 <i>birr</i>

Source: Document from the PA

UNICEF gave 242 oxen between 1987 and 1990. However, most of the farmers lost these oxen. Some died and others were sold to buy other oxen which cost less. The farmers were forced to sell these oxen to buy food with the balance they got from the sale.

Regarding opportunities for medical services, IFPRI's report says "the closest medical facilities to the village are a dispensary in Awash Melkassa (8 km), a small health clinic in Dera (18 km) and a hospital in Nazareth (25 km)". (IFPRI,1989:22)

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. A group ranked the activities in order of usefulness as follows:

1. the generator
2. the oxen
3. maintenance of the dry weather road
4. construction of the new irrigation

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 orange was planted in 1964 by the capitalist called General Mebratu Fiseha which the farmers took after the revolution. 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 legs of orange 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 indicated above. At this time the number of PA members decreased to 200 which is true now. Each group now comprises 20 farmers. They still used the generator to pump the water 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 the PA there is an irrigation project financed by UNICEF and administered by the RRC which started construction work in 1990. The construction took some four years (1990-3) although it was not completed; the local people suspect the money was abused by the officials in the RRC and the contractor. The irrigation scheme was intended to develop 154 hectares of agricultural land. In the PA 240 oxen were bought and distributed to the farmers by the UNICEF. In 1990 UNICEF gave 1.6 million *birr* to the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission in order to construct a new irrigation system. The Commission started its work by maintaining the dry weather road and this was useful for transporting the materials needed to construct the irrigation system. It is 10kms from Awash Melkassa to the PA via Sodere but it is difficult to cross the Awash river. Hence the Commission was forced to go 23 kms from Awash Melkassa to Dera town - 8kms of asphalted road then 15kms of dry weather road.

The construction of this new irrigation system began in May 1990 and most of the manual work, like canal-digging, the construction of small dams etc were done by farmers living in the PA. The ordinary workers got 3 kgs of wheat flour and 0.5 litres of oil per day while those who were a bit experts, like builders, got 6kgs of flour and 1 litre of oil per day. Almost all farmers worked during the slack season on the farm (winter) and the construction continued for 3 consecutive years. Three generators were installed near the Awash river to pump enough water to cover 152 hectares. This project however is no use to the farmers. The canals were not properly prepared by the RRC experts. The water flowed very fast down into the Awash river washing the soil down the big canals instead of distributing water to the smaller canals. The regional Ministry of Agriculture officials therefore refused to take the project from the RRC unless they made an adjustment so it worked. But the RRC left following this disagreement. The 1993 flood of the Awash river made the 3 generators useless and no-one from the MoA office, the RRC or the PA wanted to be responsible for executing the project so until now it has been of no use to the farmers.

Future

Observers argued that people in the community, especially the poor, need the government's aid with such things as improved seeds and livestock, and fertilizers and pesticides. They should be taught about farming and modern tools introduced to them. Also the farmers in the area could make use of the Awash river to grow crops; their irrigation scheme could be made to work. A bridge over the Awash would reduce their isolation.

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GLOSSARY

<i>Abuna:</i>	Leader of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.
<i>Belg:</i>	A short rainy season usually occurring during February/March/April. The harvest from this season takes place in July and August.
<i>Birr:</i>	The currency of Ethiopia (9 birr= approximately £1).
<i>Debo:</i>	Communal working party in which labour is exchanged for food and drink.
<i>Dejzmach:</i>	A military title.
<i>Derg:</i>	The name of the military government that ruled Ethiopia from the revolution until 1991; Amharic for committee.
<i>Equb:</i>	A rotating savings and credit association.
<i>Fetto:</i>	Medicinal plant.
<i>Gesho:</i>	A plant, the leaves of which are used to make beer.
<i>Idir:</i>	A burial society.
<i>Injera:</i>	Ethiopian flat bread.
<i>Kaleecha:</i>	Witch or witch doctor.
<i>Kebele:</i>	A political boundary marking a village, an association of villages or an urban dweller's association
<i>Kollo:</i>	Roasted grain.
<i>Mehber:</i>	A religious 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>Tef:</i>	A millet-like cereal.
<i>Tella:</i>	Home-made beer.
<i>Tukul:</i>	Traditional round hut with a thatched roof.
<i>Wat:</i>	Stew eaten with Ethiopian flat bread.
<i>Woreda:</i>	An administrative division.

ACRONYMS

IFPRI:	International Food Policy Research Institute
MoA:	Ministry of Agriculture
ORS:	Oral Rehydration Solution
RRC:	Relief and Rehabilitation Commission
TGE:	Transitional Government of Ethiopia

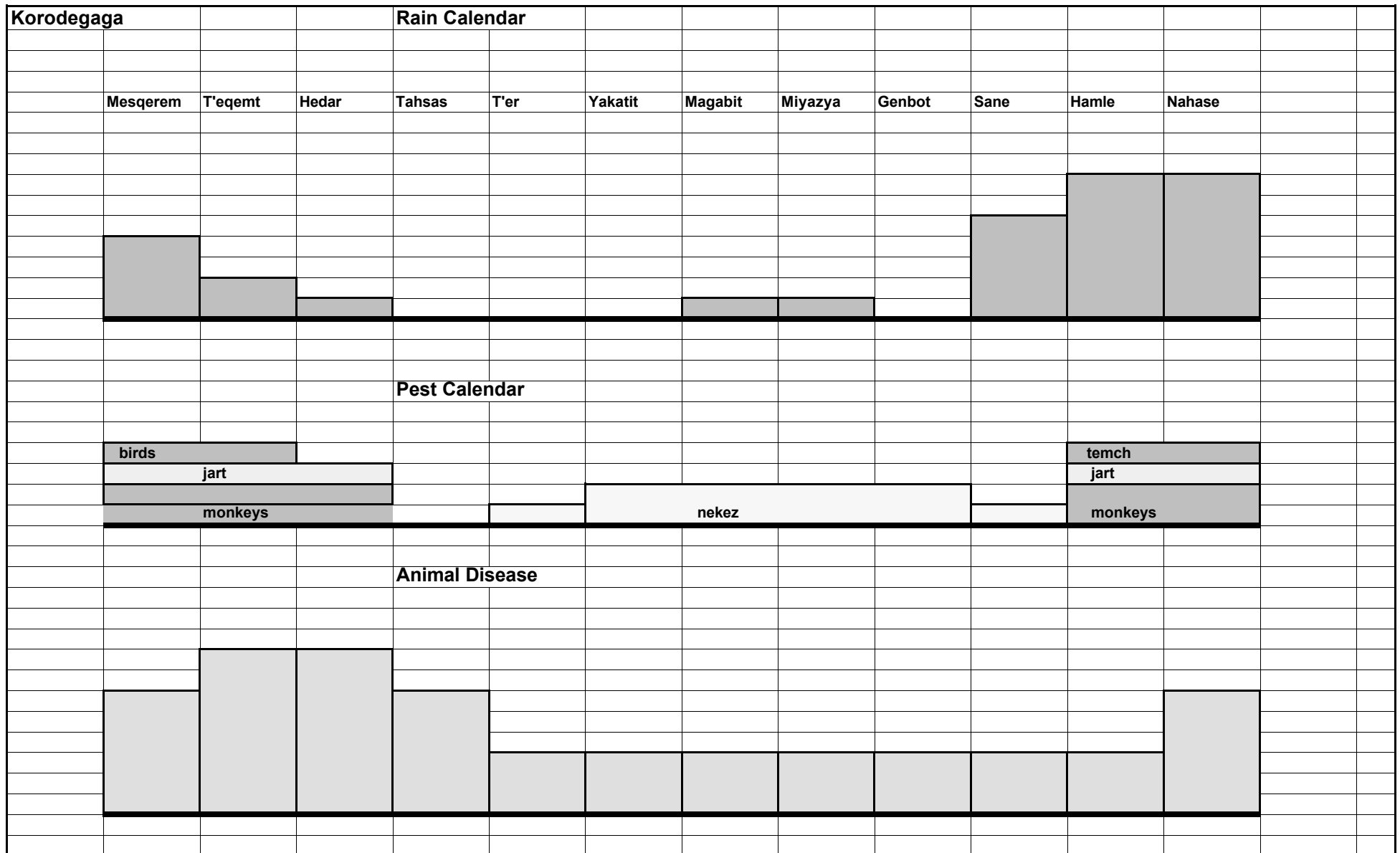
Korodegaga

Womens' activities		Korodegaga											
		Mesqerem	T'eqemt	Hedar	Tahsas	T'er	Yakatit	Magabit	Miyazya	Genbot	Sane	Hamle	Nahase
Men's fields													
millet and maize	harvesting		collecting							soil preparation		weeding	
teff and wheat			from farm		preparing	threshing area				soil preparation		weeding	
horsebeans and lentils	harvesting		to a place										
barley			from where men										
			transport to threshing area										
Women's labour													
		collecting firewood									preparation of food for		
		childcare									debbo or wenfel		
		water fetching							childcare		water fetching		
	food for household	food for debo or wenfel		preparation of threshing place	childcare				food preparation		soil preparation		weeding
	harvesting maize and horse beans	harvesting or collecting in special place			food preparation			water fetching		collecting firewood for sale			
					water fetching					collecting firewood for sale			
					collecting firewood for sale			collecting firewood for sale					

Korodegaga

	Mesqere	T'eqemt	Hedar	Tahsas	T'er	Yakatit	Magabit	Miyazya	Genbot	Sane	Hamle	Nahase		
Children														
Boys	schooling								collecting firewood to sell					
	keeping of cattle								keeping of cattle					
	helping with farm work harvest, threshing				schooling				helping with farm work harvest, threshing					
					keeping of cattle									
									food preparation for debo/wenfel					
Girls	collecting firewood to use at home								collecting firewood to use at home					
	water fetching				water fetching				water fetching					
	childcare				collecting fire wood for home				collecting firewood to sell					
					collecting of dungcakes				childcare					
School terms														
Festivals									id alfatr		arefa		moulid	

Korodegaga



Korodegaga

Crops												
	Mesqerem	T'eqemt	Hedar	Tahsas	T'er	Yakatit	Magabit	Miyazya	Genbot	Sane	Hamle	Nahase
maize		harvesting		threshing				soil preparation		planting	weeding	
millet		harvesting		threshing				soil preparation		planting	weeding	
tef		harvesting		threshing					soil preparation		planting	weeding
wheat		harvesting		threshing					soil preparation		planting	weeding
barley	harvesting			threshing					soil preparation		planting	weeding
lentils	harvesting			threshing					soil preparation		planting	weeding
haricot beans	harvesting			threshing					soil preparation		planting	weeding
Men's Labour on the Farm												keeping
	keeping wild animals off farm							ploughing		planting	weeding	keeping wild animals away
			collecting crops from farm					burning farm waste	ploughing			
		harvesting		threshing				preparing farm implements	burning		planting	weeding