

# **Ethiopian Village Studies**

(Designed and edited by Philippa Bevan and Alula Pankhurst)

## **Turufe Kecheme**

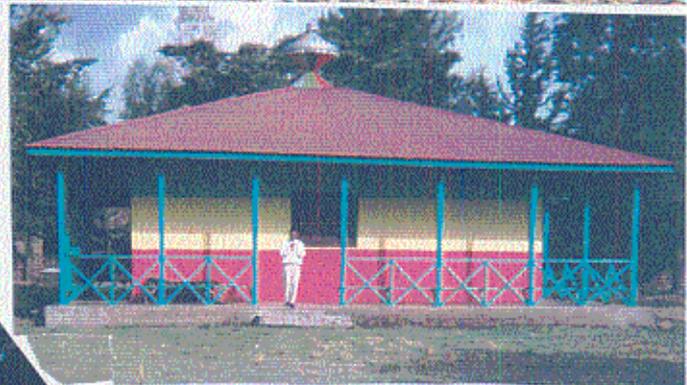
### **Shashemene Woreda**

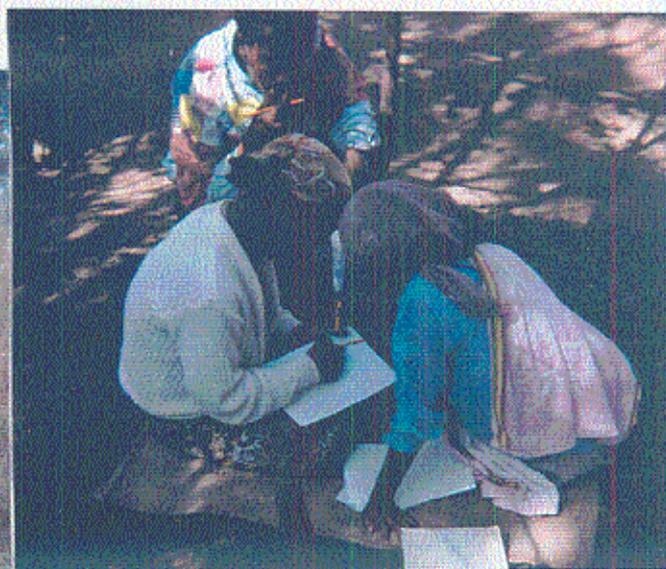
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**June 1996**

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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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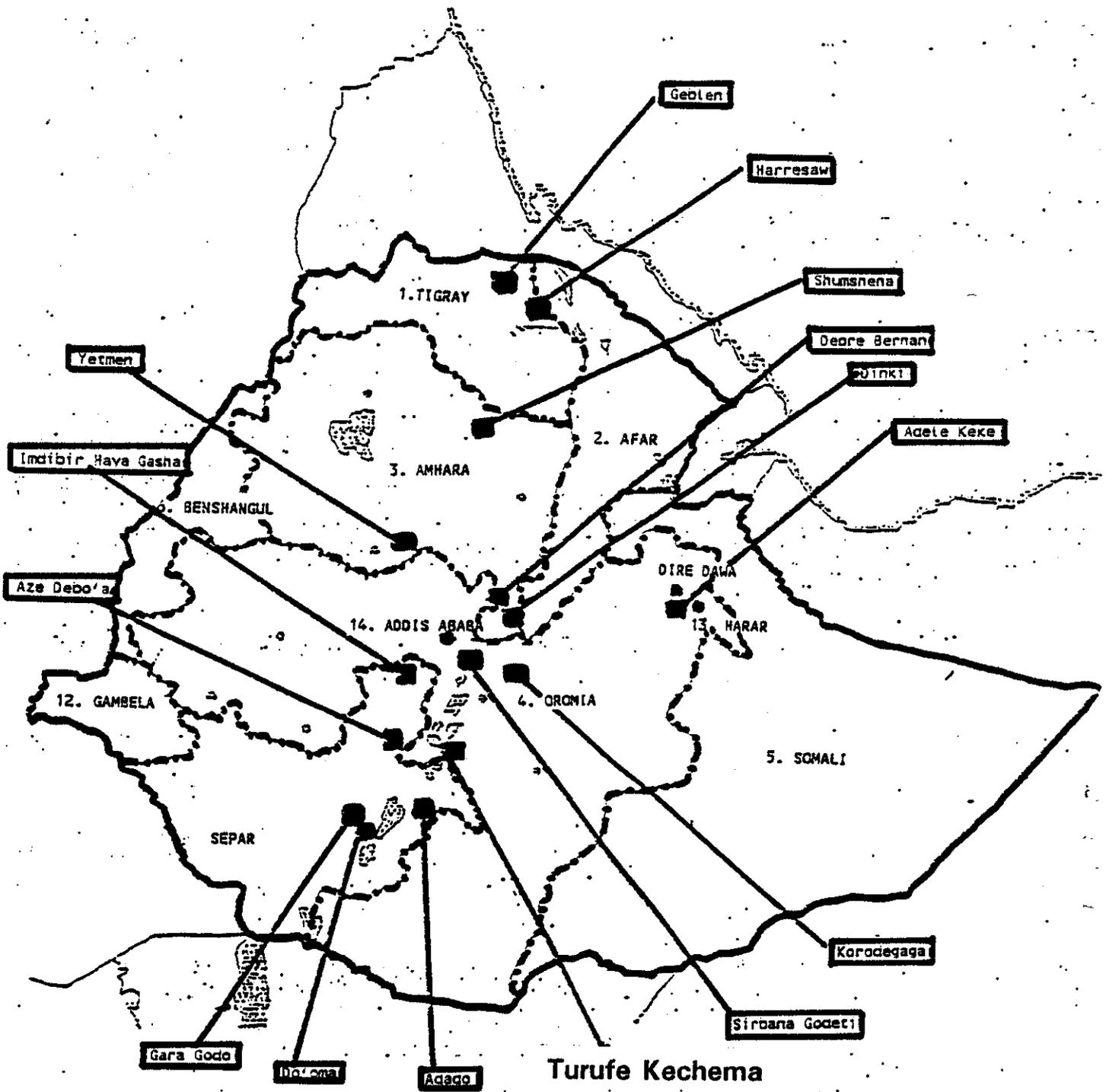
Further information about the household survey can be obtained from:

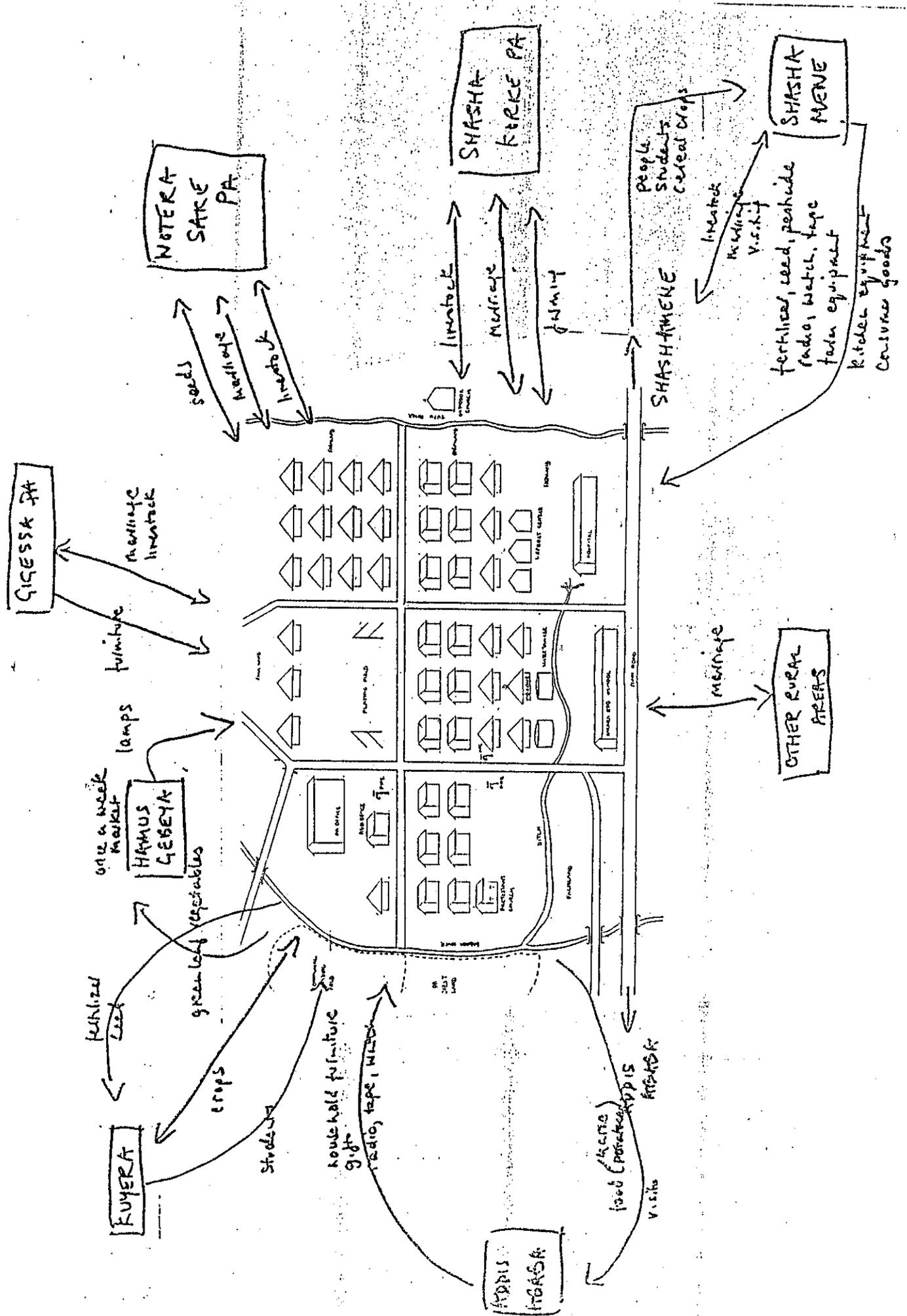
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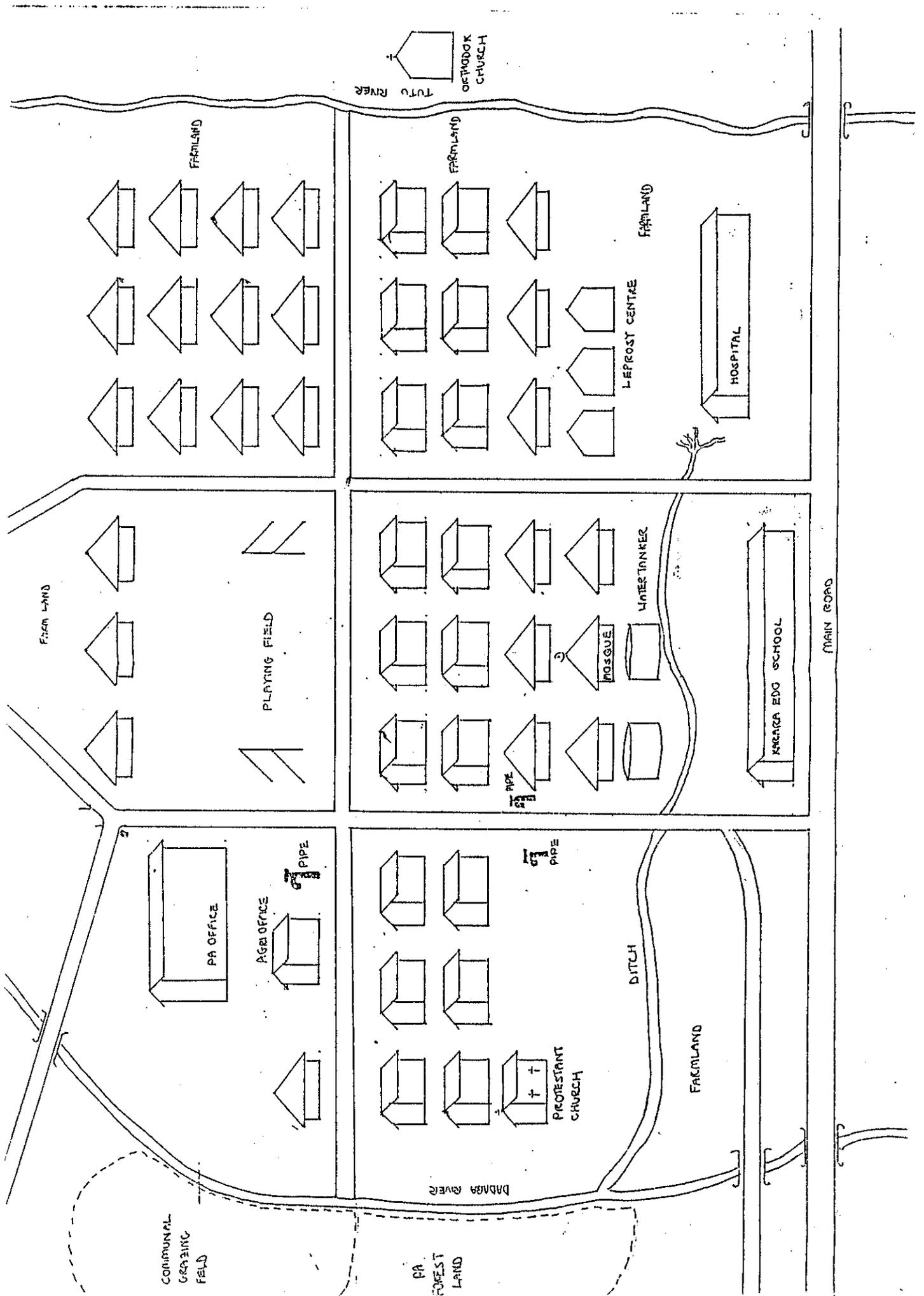
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FARM LAND

FARM LAND

FARM LAND

FARM LAND

FARM LAND

PLAYING FIELD

TUTU RIVER

METHODIST CHURCH

PA OFFICE

AGRI OFFICE

PIPE

PA FOREST LAND

PROTESTANT CHURCH

DITCH

DADA RIVER

FARM LAND

MOSQUE

WATER TANKER

LEPROSY CENTRE

HOSPITAL

KARAGA EDO SCHOOL

MAIN ROAD

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## 1. Locating the Site in Time and Place

### *Geography and Population*

Turufe Kecheme is a Peasant Association located in Shashemene *Woreda* in the Eastern Shewa zone of Oromiya Region. It includes two villages, Turufe and Wetera. In 1979 Turufe Kecheme was one of the 81 PAs in Shashemene *woreda* neighbouring Kuyara Kebele, Karrara Butte PA and Shasha Qorke PA in the north, Karrarra K'eye Filicha PA and Elemo Abiyu PA in the south, Hagugata Jallo PA in the west and Wetera Dansha and Wetera Sake in the east. The PA is about 12.5 km north east of the town of Shashemene (Halelu) in the area of the Great Lakes of Zwai, Langano, Abiyata and Shalla. It is situated at about 2,000m and is in a plain area with fertile soil suitable for agriculture. In the vicinity of the area there are large forests under the protection of the government and 3 rivers, one of which passes through the PA.

There are 449 households in Turufe Kecheme PA, 410 of whom are male-headed and 39 female-headed. The total population is estimated to be 2674. There are some households not registered with the PA but their number is not known.

*Climate* The *meher* rains fall between June and the middle of September. This rain irrigates the *meher* crops which are produced in December and January. The *belg* rain falls from March to the end of April and irrigates the *belg* crop which is produced in June, July and sometimes August. The coldest time in the PA is in July and August and sometimes in October. The hotter time is from January (29°C) to May (31°C). During the rainy season the PA is not cut off from the nearest towns (Kuyara and Shashemene). There are no problems caused by heat but some respondents remember crops, especially wheat, being destroyed by cold which reduced the quantity of the harvest.

### *Production*

The people are primarily subsistence level agriculturalists producing cereals (wheat, barley, *tef*, maize, *dagusa*, millet), pulses (horse beans), oil seeds (linseed), and vegetables (potatoes, onions). They also grow *enset*, *chat* and coffee. The main crops they produce for consumption and cash are potatoes, maize, wheat, barley and *tef*. The PA supplies potatoes and maize to Addis Ababa through merchants both from Addis Ababa and around Kuyera.

Off-farm activities in the PA include honey production and transporting crops to markets. The villagers also go to the markets to buy or sell crops, cattle and livestock.

### *Social Structure*

In the area where Turufe Kecheme is, particularly Shashemene town, there are numerous migrants. According to farmers' estimates the main ethnic groups in Turufe Kecheme now include Oromo about 80 %, Tigrayans about 10%, Amhara about 4%, Wolayitta about 6%. There were ethnic conflicts after the overthrow of Mengistu (May 1991) and many of the Kembatas were forced to leave the area by the local Oromos. Of a total of 413 households who were then members of the PA 117 were Kembata before they left. Of the 87 households who were living in Village One 53 were left and of 30 living in Village Two 27 were left. Of those who left some went back to Kembata and some were in a relief camp near Shashemene. The aid stopped last year and the Kembatas left the camp either to work as daily labourers around Shashemene, or they went back to their region. The land they left behind was occupied by landless peasants, ex-soldiers, and some peasants who needed extra land in the PA. All of these were Oromo farmers, except for one Eritrean elder: the remaining ethnic groups had no opportunity to get the Kembata's land because it was the Oromo who drove the Kembata out in order to get land.

Oromiffa is the main language spoken. Other languages include Tigrigna, Amharic and Wolayitta. Most of the people in the PA speak Amharic. According to local informants there are few intermarriages between the different ethnic groups. Oromos intermarry with Amharas and Wolayittas

but not with Tigrayans. Tigrayans intermarry with Amharas but not with Wolayittas; and Amharas do not intermarry with Wolayittas. The major religions are Islam (about 80%), Orthodox Christian (about 15%), and Protestants (about 5%), but there have been no religious conflicts.

The native Arssi Oromo and the settlers from different ethnic groups in the PA mix with each other socially. Except for the *idir* for ox which they form on ethnic bases to help each other on the occasions of loss or damage to their respective oxen, any member of the PA can join in *idir* for mourning. All Christian members of the PA celebrate the Ethiopian New Year (*Meskerem* 1st) and *Mesqel* (*Meskerem* 17) festivals irrespective of ethnic differentiation and the same is true for the Muslims during *Mowlid* (the birth of Prophet Mohammed) and *Arafa* (*Id Al Fatir*) festivals. The Christians are predominantly Amharas and Tigrayans while the Muslims are predominantly Arssi Oromos. The community greet each other during the festivals of the respective groups in accordance with their kinship relationship. However, informants did not indicate any festival or ceremony which people from different ethnic group in the PA celebrate together. The community is not coherent to the extent that it shares customs, values, and beliefs. The Tigrayans and the Amharas in the community claim that they are closer together in their customs, values and beliefs than other ethnic groups in the community.

Festivals are held at different times by different religious groups. Almost all of the Oromos are Muslims, Wolayittas and Kembatas are Protestants, Tigrayans and Amharas are Orthodox Christians and different ethnic groups follow their own religion which prevents them from celebrating festivals together. Even Tigrayans and Amharas do not celebrate festivals and *mehber* together. It is not only religion that leads different ethnic groups not to celebrate festivals together, but also the present political conditions have an impact. Tigrayans feel superior to other ethnic groups, while the Oromos want the other groups to leave the area so they can own all the farm land. Wolayittas and Amharas consider themselves to be hardworking people and feel that it is only since they came to the area that the Oromos learned how to plough land and make themselves wealthy. Such conflicts cause the groups to dislike each other and not celebrate festivals together.

### *History*

The people in Turufe Kecheme are part of the Southern Oromo group of Arssi who live on both sides of the Wabishebele river, particularly in the Arssi, Bale, and Eastern Shewa zones of the Orimiya region. It is believed that the Arssi Oromo number more than 2.5 million people. They suffered from the protracted struggle between the Christian kingdom and the Oromo which climaxed in the conquest of the Emperor Menelik at the end of the 19th century. Between the 16th and 19th centuries the Oromo migrated over most of Ethiopia conquering various groups already living in the areas. The Oromo have experienced inter-tribal fighting within the Arssi group and with other Oromo groups such as the Jille, Borana, and Karayu, particularly over competition for grazing lands.

After the conquest of Menelik and the intrusion of the agriculturalist Amharas in the area, the mostly pastoralist Oromos became mixed farmers and sedentary agriculturalists using ploughs. Three quarters of their fertile land was appropriated by Ethiopian Government employees, soldiers, nobles, and ecclesiastics who were settlers. The Arssi Oromo became *gebar* (tenants) who were obliged to pay a portion of their produce to the settlers. Their communal form of landownership was replaced by a feudal type. The incorporation into Menelik's empire also ended their egalitarian *gada* political and administrative structure based on age grades. This was led by a council (*Abba Bokus*) whose membership was changed every 8 years. *Gada* religious ceremonies were allowed up to the 1930s.

Traditional Oromo *gada* political institutions and occasions do not take place now in the PA in the same way as they used to. During the period of the *Derg*, however, a secret organization was formed representing the different clans and lineages of Arssi Oromo in the area. After the EPRDF came to power this secret local organization named "Local Leaders for Arbitration" was officially encouraged by representatives of government and the political party (OPDO) even though it has not yet been recognized as a legal entity. Some traditions in the *gada* system are important now in resolving disputes concerning murder, marriage, divorce, and sometimes land claims through the *Shanacha* (traditional

elders). No other *gada* practices are practised in the PA.

A group of elders in the community remembered the following important events:

1. *Rukisa* (c 1850 EC: 1857): a period when the Oromo in the area ate horse and donkey meat as a result of famine. *Rukisa* means hunger in Oromiffa among the Arssi. The elders claim the famine took place owing to the loss of cattle due to a disease which caused diarrhoea. During that period the Arssi Oromo were pastoralists.
2. In 1881EC (1888) - the area was generally inhabited by lions. They still exist in the places called Chabi, Agge, and Jame.
3. 1928 (E.C) (1935) - The elders remembered the Italian occupation. The Amharas and local Arssi *balabat* (landlords) in the area fought against them.
4. 1936 (E.C) (1943) - Haile Selassie returned.
5. 1943 (E.C) (1950) - Completion of Addis Ababa to Shashemene tarred road.
6. 1950 (E.C) (1957) - Shenqute's Famine, locally known as *Rukissa Qallo* (the thin famine); took place as a result of food shortage. During this time the Arssi Oromo were predominantly pastoralists but not now.
7. 1953 (E.C) (1960) - The time of the "earthquake." This was an incident that took place around Langan: there was a massive landslide and falling down of stones from the tops of mountains in the area as a result of the earthquake.
8. 1954 (E.C) (1961) - When the day was dark. The elders remembered that this took place on Friday around 5 P.M in the afternoon and that it lasted for about 30 minutes. The elders could not remember the month in which this incident took place.
9. 1955 (E.C) (1962) - Smallpox vaccination. They mentioned that everybody was vaccinated.
10. 1963 (E.C) (1970) - Cholera vaccination. They mentioned that everybody was vaccinated.
11. 1964 (E.C) (1971) - Ethiopian Student Movement. They remembered it and the subsequent Ethiopian Student Movements and mentioned that the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution took place as a result of it.
12. 1966 (E.C) (1974) - The revolution started. The elders remember the downfall of Haile Selassie's regime and the policy of "land to the tiller", the formation of PAs, the Literacy Campaign, etc.
13. 1967 (E.C) (1974) - Haile Selassie was detained.
14. 1969 (E.C) (1976) - The United Development Campaign - the call for the Motherland.
15. 1971 (E.C) (1978) - The Red Terror. They remembered that at a place called Sole, near Shashemene General Hospital, 8 people were shot at one time and were buried in the same hole.
16. 1972 (E.C) (1979) - The Ethiopian Green Revolution. The elders remembered that it was one of the integral policies during the Revolution.
17. 1974 (E.C) (1981) - Red Star call for the Eritrean war. The elders remembered that their children were recruited for this and the other wars against Somalia's aggression in the East.
18. 1975 (E.C) (1982) - National Military Service declared. They remembered that many of the youths in the PA participated. The elders counted 22 of the youth who were officially declared by the *Derg* to have died on the battle field. They mentioned that 40 of them returned alive. There are still a considerable number of their sons who went for the service and have not returned without them knowing whether they are dead or alive.
19. 1976 (E.C) (1983) - Population and Housing Census.
20. 1977 (E.C) (1984) - Drought. The elders remembered this and argued that there were no human casualties in the PA as a result of it but that they had lost some of their cattle. At this time they were already settled agriculturalists and those who had *Qocho* could survive the hunger.
21. 1978 (E.C) (1985) - Villagization. The community in the PA was reorganized into two compact villages. The area of the site on which the houses of the peasants in these two villages were built was 40x25 sq kms. The peasants were allotted a piece of land to be ploughed far from the new villages. They were promised electricity, piped water, a clinic, etc. around the newly built villages but none of the promises was fulfilled. Now, after the overthrow of the *Derg*, many peasants have returned to their original sites and there are some who would like to.
22. 1981 (1988) - Shashemene was declared an *awraja*. This was during the formation of PDRE of the *Derg*.

23. 1983 (1991) - the EPRDF overthrew *Derg*. Under the present Transitional Government of Ethiopia Shashemene was declared a *Woreda* in the Eastern Shewa Zone of Oromiya Region.

The activities of the *Derg* (1974-1991) which the community claim affected their lives to a great extent are: the National Military Service, the formation of Communal Farming and Producers' Cooperatives, Villagization and also the *Kota* System according to which they were obliged to sell a certain amount of their produce at low prices to the government. On the other hand they pointed out that the *Derg* had ended the "feudal mode of production," allotted to the peasants equal size of land on the basis of the sizes of their respective families, and established a Service Cooperative, which benefited and is still benefiting the community. The Communal Farming and the Producers' Cooperatives were disbanded by the *Derg* during its Mixed Economy declared during its final years. Since the coming of the Transitional Government there has been peace and stability in the PA.

After the end of the *Derg* regime PA officials lost power to the elders. Then the elders gave way to a "Peace and Stability Committee" which was later replaced by the PA. All these bodies have obtained office through elections. Now the PA officials once again have greater power than the elders. It is these officials who can arrest, decide penalties, and fix the amount of tax for each farmer (which differs according to standard of living). The only difference from the *Derg* regime is that all officials now have to be able to speak Oromiffa.

The only period in the last 10 years when the people suffered from considerable hardship was during the 1984 drought which brought about famine in the PA. Because they could not practice rain-fed agriculture as a result of lack of rain they suffered from a shortage of food. They lost most of their cattle during the drought due to lack of pasture and water in the fields. They did not receive relief during those periods. The people were able to survive the famine thanks to the resumption of rains beginning on the 17th of May 1984. The PA has not experienced any shortage of rainfall since that time.

## 2. Seasonal Activities and Events

The following calendars are contained in the Appendix: crops activities; consumption; women's activities; credit needs; festivals; water and fuel availability; off-farm activities; labour (men, women, girls, boys); pests; rain; and diseases. The following notes will help to understand them:

1. Men work, within a day, not more than two hours in *Meskerem* and *T'qimt*; 8 hours in *Hedar* and *Tahsas*; 4 hour in *T'ir*; 8 hours from *Megabit* to *Hamle*, and 3 hours in *Nehase*.

2. Women work, within a day, 3 hours in *Meskerem* and *T'qimt*; 12 hours from *Hidar* up to *Hamle*; and 6 hours in *Nehase*.

3. Other than crafts and brewing, women also prepare food for the household, milk cows in the morning and in the evening, go to markets to buy consumer goods, and take care of children at home. 4. The fox is another enemy of the crops on the farm in the PA particularly in *Meskerem* and *Nehase*.

The calendars show that the life of the people is dominated by the agricultural tasks of soil preparation, planting, weeding, harvesting and processing. People grow a range of crops in two seasons and there does not seem to be a very "slack" period. The busiest time for men and boys is between December and February. Women are busier between November and February because they spend more time on brewing and craftwork. May is the most important month for men's off-farm activities.

## 3. The Farm Economy

### *Crops*

The crops and their seasons are shown in the crop calendar and a history of crops grown in the area is shown in the crop history. There are two agricultural seasons *belg* and *meher*.

Almost all farmers use fertilizer which used to be distributed through the Service Cooperative. Now

it is sold by private traders. In 1993 the Ministry of Agriculture sold the fertilizer to private traders at 69 *birr*/50kg and the retailers sell it at 96 *birr*/50kg. Households earn additional income from the sale of hops.

The major crop disease in the PA is what the peasants call *wag*. It attacks potatoes and wheat in April. Peasants in the PA control it by using a modern pesticide supplied by the local MoA. They also buy the pesticide from private traders when there is a shortage at the MoA.

The peasants in the PA use the same land for both harvests. For example they cultivate maize from March up to June and on the same farmland they can cultivate potatoes immediately from August/September up to October/November. They can also immediately plant potatoes, wheat, or barley on the farmland on which they harvested *tef* or maize.

The *belg* harvest in the PA varies between the two villages. The *belg* harvest is greater in village 1 (Turufe - where the office of the PA is sited) than in village 2 (called Wetara). In Wetara the 1994 *belg* harvest was average. In Turufe, however, this year's *belg* harvest was greater than average. For example, this year's *belg* harvest in this village for *tef* from over one *timad* of land (50x50 mts) was about 300 to 400 kgs and last year's harvest of the same crop over the same size of land for the same crop was about 250 to 300 kgs. The *belg* harvest of wheat and barley this year on the same amount of land was about 1,200 to 1,300 kgs which is greater than the average harvest.

### *Livestock*

The people are adept cattle keepers (oxen, cows, calves) and their livestock include goats, sheep, chickens, and pack animals such as donkeys, horses and mules. They also keep bees.

The main livestock diseases include *Aba Gorba (Furtu)* and *Aba Sanga (Shembe)*. These livestock diseases are commonly known also as *china* by Arssi Oromo in the PA. There have been epidemics of livestock disease which the MoA helped to stop. Epidemics mainly occur in December and January because the cattle get less and dry feed which makes them less resistant to disease. It is also the time during which cattle are expected to work hard at threshing and land preparation for the *belg* season which makes them weak. However, only a very small proportion of cattle are usually lost to disease (<1%). The last major epidemic was about 25 years ago and about 85% of livestock were lost.

There was a vaccination programme in the PA during the *Derg* period. The programme was carried out once a year and the service was provided by the MoA coming to the PA. Under the present Transitional Government the MoA is not obliged to provide vaccination by visiting the PA. Peasants have to take their livestock to the MoA office.

The farmers have access to cross-bred cattle if they pay 10 *birr* to the MoA for artificial insemination. But the farmers do not want to have cross-breeds because they need too much feed, scarcity of which is a major problem in the area. Such cattle have no resistance to disease and are also expensive to buy in the market.

Cows are mostly kept in people's houses. If kept in enclosures they may be stolen, so someone has to sleep there to guard them.

During the 1984/85 major drought in Ethiopia the price of livestock was low in the area and many farmers sold many of their cattle to buy grain for food which was scarce during those times. People normally do not sell livestock even if this is profitable. For example the price of an ox has increased recently from 300 *birr* to 800 *birr* and there was a case where an ox was sold for 1,500 *birr*; the price of a milking cow with its calf has increased from 250 *birr* to about 700 *birr*; but people will not sell their cattle or livestock.

### *Land*

Before 1935 land was free and anyone could take any amount. Up to 1974 land was given by *bale rist* and around 95% of farmers were tenants. Between 1936 and 1974 the largest landholding was 8 *gasha* and there was a highly unequal distribution of land. After 1976 the smallest size of land was around one hectare and the largest around 3 hectares. Subsequently, due to villagization and population growth, landholdings have become even smaller. There was continuous land redistribution in the PA.

depending on the number of new households from 1977 to 1983. The 1990 mixed economy policy ended redistribution of land. There was a villagization programme in the PA in 1986 which was not voluntary. Around 15 households have gone back to their former places since 1991. Although most people want to go back they have stayed since it is very costly to build a new house. Limited cash rental of land is practised but is not widespread.

No people were resettled in the PA from other areas. There has been no land reallocation since the EPRDF's takeover. Generally now the smallest land holding is around 1 *timad* ( $\frac{1}{4}$  hectare) and the largest 2 hectares.

While the land proclamation abolished feudal relations of production a land problem still exists today. According to the proclamation a peasant household is allowed to possess farm land not exceeding 10 hectares (a quarter of a *gasha*) However, repeated redistribution of land within PAs due to the increase of numbers who are landless because of the development cycle, means that the amount of land a peasant possesses is now far less than that. According to the Central Statistical Office Report of 1993 the average cropland per household in South Shewa was 0.83 hectares, while the figure for the whole of Ethiopia (excluding Tigray and Ogaden) was 0.80 hectares.

As in other parts of Ethiopia after the revolution women in Turufe Kecheme PA are entitled to own land for agriculture. After the 1975 Land Reform married women and their husbands were allocated a definite amount of land and the women have the right to take their share of the land after divorce. Widowed and divorced women who are entitled to own land privately are allowed by the PA to hire the labour of landless peasants. Most female owners of land are widows. After the death of the husband it is the widow's responsibility to lead the family as their husband did. Muslim Oromos who are permitted to marry more than one wife give a piece of land as *gulma* to their first wife so she can take care of her children and herself while he marries another younger woman. Some women have inherited land from their parents or relatives. If a man dies with no-one to keep his property and/or family he gives his land to his elder daughter. Through these different ways there are between 25 and 70 women owners of land in the PA (depending on the respondent).

The size of land that one household owns decreases from year to year due to population growth. The fertility of the land is also decreasing rapidly.

There are at least 50 households in the PA which are landless at present but all these are those not registered in the PA as members. Every household registered in the PA as a member has been allotted a plot of land by the PA even though the size varies. There are members who have only one or two *timad* of land while there are also a few who have up to three *timads*. Those who had a household with many members could get more land than those households whose family size was smaller because initially the land was allotted at a rate of one *timad* for each member of a household irrespective of differences in age, sex or ethnicity.

Those who are landless make a living by exchanging land for their labour, or labour for crops. They give half of the harvest to the owner or a fixed rent either in cash or in kind. If they have two oxen they can exchange land for oxen and ploughing. They also might obtain land from their parents and/or relatives without any arrangement. The parent or relative gives a piece of land (not more than half a hectare) which is said to be *gulma*. The landless who receive this land can use all of the output because the land itself is not his property. He returns it to the owner as soon as requested to do so.

Sons who want to get married are expected to have a plot of farmland and a certain amount of money and cattle to use for the payment of bridewealth. They are given by their family about one *timad* of land which was allotted to the household in their name. They have to accumulate money, buy cattle, and build a house from the income they earn by ploughing the land. If the sons are strong and active, they can gain additional money through trade or agricultural wage labour. There is also a customary practice among the Arssi Oromo that the lineage group of a son contributes to the payment of bridewealth when he is ready to get married. After they are married the couple can request a piece of land from the PA but this is rarely obtained because there is no unoccupied arable land today in the PA.

One cannot tell the price of an average holding of land because land sales were legally prohibited during the *Derg* and continue to be so. Informants maintained that nobody wants to sell land because it

is their life. It is only when an individual decides to leave the area and the PA that he or she secretly sells his/her allotment to another person by bribing the leaders of the PA. There is no regular price for such exchange of land. What is common in the PA is renting land on the basis of a contractual agreement. A person who cannot plough his land can rent it out for 100 *birr* to another person for the whole year (2 harvests) or for 50 *birr* for half a year. However, it is not usual to rent land for 6 months because the fertiliser used during *belg* is also used for *meher*. Also, most of the people who rent land need to produce *belg* potatoes to sell for cash and then wheat at *meher* which enables them to get a lot of money.

Land disputes are not of much concern in the PA today but there is a great fear of land disputes in the future when the government redistributes land which has not been done since 1990. In land disputes, people first go to the PA. The executive members of the PA first direct the disputes to elders for arbitration. The disputes are transferred to the PA court tribunal (*Fird Shengo*) if the elders cannot resolve them. A person who feels that the PA's court did not give a correct judgement can request that the dispute be reconsidered at a higher court - the *Woreda* court - whose decision is final. The decisions of courts at PA or *Woreda* levels are more influential than those of traditional elders in land disputes. In land disputes, the role of the elders is only to arbitrate; they cannot pass decisions that can be enforced by a law. Land disputes were seen by *Fird Shengos* at local (PA) and *Woreda* levels during the *Derg* and there has not yet been any change under the new government.

There is also exchange of land within the PA. A person who has a plot of farmland very far from his house in a remote village can exchange both his land and house with a person in the village who faces the same problem. For example, a person who lives in Turufe but who has a farmland in Wetara can go to a person that has a house in Wetara but whose farmland is in Turufe and exchange house for house and land for land if the houses and the land are of the same quality and size. This and other kinds of exchange are undertaken as convenient. The partners can be of the same kin group, neighbours, people of a similar age group, and of any economic group.

### *Labour*

Before 1943 people worked together. Between 1935 and 1974 the landlord could collect *debo* as he wanted. Between 1974 and 1989 the PA could make people work in groups by force. There was wage labour and there was still *wonfel* and *debo*. Since 1989 anyone can hire labour as he needs though this is rare. Some households employ casual agricultural labourers and pay them cash. Now most labour on the farm is done by the household but there are still traditional work-sharing practices. Some farmers get temporary employment as carpenters, masons, etc, outside the PA.

Labour sharing systems such as *debo* (*dego* in Oromiffa) and *wonfel* are still practised in the area. For *debo* the person who needs help begs all his/her friends and relations to help for ploughing, sowing, weeding, harvesting, or housebuilding etc and prepares food and drinks. The amount and type depends on his/her capacity. Usually *tella* (local beer), *injera* (thinly baked circular bread), and *areki*, (local distilled liquor) are offered to the participants of the *debo*. The food and drinks for the participants also depend on whether the person is satisfied with what was done or not. The work usually starts at 8 am and the participants get their first refreshments (*shome*) between 10 and 11. They are allowed to eat a small quantity of *injera* with *wat* (sauce) and *tella* or bread and *tella*. Drinking *areke* is prohibited in case they get drunk and waste time eating *kollo* (roasted cereals). Eating *shome* takes not more than half an hour and then the work continues until the caller tells the participants to stop. It is usual in this area to work until 3 when the participants are invited to go to the caller's house to eat and drink. Here *areke* and *kollo* are allowed as well as *injera*, bread and *tella*. The quality and quantity of food depends on the wealth of the caller. The person who called the work party has no obligation to go and work for those who came to work for him. In *debo* there is no obligation for the requested person to come. But labour will not be reciprocated another time by the person from whose *debo* he was absent.

In contrast to *debo*, which might not be reciprocal, *wonfel* (the Oromiffa name is *gessa*) is an arrangement in which two or more farmers have a contractual agreement to help each other in certain kinds of tasks. The amount of time taken for work and the type of food prepared for participants are always similar for all members of the work party. For instance 5 people may work for 3 hours and be

provided with bread and *tella* and this will be the same for each person. The time to be taken is decided by the participants in discussion. The quality and quantity of the food is usually less than *debo*; sometimes only coffee and *kollo* are prepared. However, the type of work can be different for each party: one can call for ploughing, another for weeding, the third for harvesting, etc. The members of this labour sharing arrangement are usually relatives or best friends. After making a *gessa* agreement it is unethical and prohibited for a person to be absent after using others' labour. Such a person will be socially ostracized with all his family and nobody will enter such labour exchange agreements in future.

*Gessa* and *debo* are usually practised in the PA during weeding and harvesting periods, when there is a need for extra labour. The members of *gessa* or *debo* work groups come to work with their oxen and farm equipment if they have them. Informants claimed that there are no other group labour activities in the PA.

Farmers have no farm work when the rain stops; for example in September and February and some times in March and April. They use this time to construct or renew houses and fences, keep cattle, and make new farm implements, stores, etc. January to March is a good time to build houses for a number of other reasons:

- they can prepare thatch from the *meher* crop wheat residue
- farms are empty and there are no crops so they can cut trees and carry the wood easily
- the next season is *belg* when it rains and mud can easily be obtained to finish the construction

In February there is planting of potatoes to be done whether there is rain or not. March and April are months when the farmers dig around the potatoes and during this time that wage labour is strongly needed. In September they are occupied with work such as fencing and cutting grass for cattle to feed on at night. There are also some farmers who are engaged in trade when they are not busy with agricultural work.

Wage labour is practised on individual farms. Most households employ weeders and harvesters at piece rates. The wage labourers come from inside or outside the PA. Those from inside the PA are landless or peasants who only have small pieces of land. Migrant labourers usually come from Wolayitta. There are also individuals from Wail, Gonder, Gojjam and other Oromo groups from Kofelle and Shewa who are working as wage labourers, but they did not come specifically to be wage labourers as the Wolayitta did. Previously the Kembatas used to come but now no longer do so. For employees that come from outside the PA, employers provide 180 or 200 *birr* annually if they are given shelter and food, but 5 *birr* per day if they do not demand shelter and food. For seasonal migrants harvesting one *timad* of farmland, the employers pay 35 *birr* if they do not demand shelter but 30 *birr* if they do. If it is weeding and digging during cultivation they are paid from 25 to 30 *birr* if there are few weeds and from 30 to 40 *birr* if the weeds are thick. One person can finish weeding one *timad* of farmland in two and half days and the maximum period it takes is three to four days for one person. The payment for weeding decreases if the labourer demands shelter from the employer. No-one in the PA wants to work ploughing at a daily rate since this will make them inferior to others. PA residents will plough for piecerates. In this case they must bring their own oxen which few can afford.

### *Interlinkages*

Sometimes there is an arrangement for temporary exchanges of land for labour for one harvest period; this is locally expressed as "giving land for contract" but there is no Oromiffa name for it. The owner of the land marks off a portion of his land and temporarily leases it to a person who needs land in exchange for annual labour service on his farmland. Both the giver of the land and the receiver cover their respective expenses for seed. It is usual to give 0.25 hectares (1 *timad*) of land and 200 *birr* per annum to hire labour for farm work. The labourer is considered to be a servant and lives with the landowner. He does all the agricultural activities such as ploughing, weeding, harvesting etc, rearing cattle, selling and buying goods, etc. The amount of produce he obtains from the land and the 200 *birr*

make up his annual salary. If he wants to leave before the end of the year the owner estimates the amount of produce and pays in cash.

A piece of land can also be exchanged for oxen and ploughing in an arrangement according to which a man who has no land but has oxen makes an arrangement with a person who has land but no oxen. The one who has oxen not only provides the service of his oxen but his own labour as well for the whole farming period. This is known as "*lafa duda gurguracha*", literally meaning offering land for compensation, and it is frequently practised in the PA. There is also an arrangement for exchanging labour for oxen (no Oromiffa name) in which a person who has oxen and a piece of land enters into an agreement with a person who has no oxen to give two days labour service with the oxen on his own land in exchange for one day service of the oxen for himself. The labourer has no obligation to do any other farmwork apart from ploughing. Another arrangement is what is known as *Qite* or *Kota* in which a man who has oxen, seeds and the money necessary to buy fertilizer enters into an agreement with a person who has land but not seeds and money to provide the service of his oxen and human labour on the land in exchange for an equal share of the produce. The person who gives the service of his land in exchange for labour, oxen, seed, and money for fertilizer has no obligation to help with labour. There is also what is called *sello* in which two persons who have only one ox each bring together their oxen to plough one day for the one and another day for the other on their respective farmland.

Labour can be obtained by payment in cash: for one *timad* (0.25 hectares) ploughed the landowner has to pay 15 *birr* a day for both labour and oxen. For harvesting the payment is 30-40 *birr* regardless of how long it takes.

Exchanging labour for crops started in the PA in 1992/93. The arrangement includes paying 5 *birr* for one day's labour service on the farmland but the labourers prefer taking the payment in kind (particularly potatoes) rather than in cash. During the time when they were pastoralists, a poor individual would come to the house of wealthy person to work in his house in exchange for money or food, an arrangement which was known as *fansho*. If the poor person developed a good relationship with the wealthy one, he might receive a bull or heifer from the latter; but this practice does not exist today.

### *Technology*

Before 1928 people used sticks; then the hoe was introduced. The plough and the saw were well known after 1928. The tractor was introduced in 1955.

Women in the household use *ele sibilla* (iron pan) or a mud pan to prepare bread (*dabbo*) or *injera*. When it is to be eaten they put the bread or *injera* on a metal plate or *gebeta* (wooden plate) or *lemat* (grass plate). They use *ele fara* (a big pan made by potters) and *gombissa* (a cover of *ele fara* made from bamboo plastered with mud) to make *injera*. They also use *foso* (pieces of torn cloth with linseed (*dankalle*)) to make the *ele fara* smooth so that the *injera* will not stick on it when it is prepared. To make *afella* (boiled maize, wheat, beans, or peas) they use *okote* (a big jar) made of clay. To cook *wat* they use a *kere* (a small clay dish). They do not drink tea; for coffee they use *jabana* (a small jar), *rekebot* (a wooden tray for coffee cups). When they want to cook any kind of food they put the cooking pot on *gaffissa* (3 stones) which are placed on the fire. The material they use for cooking is wood. The people in Turufe Kechemma do not use cow dung because it is eaten by termites in the soil.

Food crops are stored in granaries. Where there is no granary, the crops are stored in sacks in the home. Informants argued that no food crops are lost during storage. The food crops are transported to the stores using a cart pulled by a donkey. About 30 farmers have such a cart which is estimated to cost about 700 *birr*. If the food crop is small, and when their home is near the harvest, the peasants put the crops in sacks and carry them to their granaries. Informants said that between 1/8 and 1/4 kilo of food crops are lost while transporting and threshing on the ground (*awdma*) respectively. A greater amount of loss or spoiling of the crops happens when the rain falls suddenly while the peasants are harvesting, transporting and threshing. One farmer who produced 180 quintals of potatoes in August 1994 estimated his loss at about 1 quintal, while from 20 quintals of wheat in December 1994 he estimated he lost 2 quintals between the field and storage. Loss of food crops in storage was estimated as follows: from 50 quintals of potatoes produced during *belg* about 8 quintals can become useless when stored for

a month. This is because the *belg* harvest is during a wet time (August). The loss of *meher* harvest in store is half that of the *belg* loss. Wheat loss during storage is less than 1%.

Fuel such as kerosene for domestic consumption and wood are transported by carts pulled by donkeys if the loads are great; but by human being if the loads are light. Duncakes are not used for fuel since the farmers use animal waste as manure. There are many donkeys and horses but few mules. Donkeys are used as pack animals by the majority of people and they are also used to pull carts. Horses are mostly used for pulling carts that transport goods and human being particularly in Shashemene and Kuyara towns; but sometimes they also provide service between Kuyara town and Turufe Kecheme. Mules and some horses are used for long journeys. There are no carts pulled by humans; but trolleys are made with a big iron wheel and are pushed to transport crops and goods.

An all weather road links the PA with the city of Shashemene. From the first village (Turufe) only 2 kms of the 12 kms are dirt road while for the second village (Wetara) 4 kms are dry weather roads. It costs only one *birr* to get to Shashemene by taxi and it takes 15 minutes; but on foot it takes about an two and half hours from Turufe and 3 hours from Wetara.

There has been no watermill since the land reform in 1975 because the landlords used to maintain it and no-one took this responsibility after the land reform.

### *Innovations*

A group from the community identified the following 6 innovations as being most useful (1) new crops (introduced in 1945); (2) ditch digging (1946); (3) planting to conserve soil (1983); (4) tractors (1962); (5) water mills (1956); and (6) villagization (1985).

- (1) The new crops were finger miller (*dagusa*), *tef*, wheat and coffee. They were introduced by the Tigrayans. Before that only maize was common in the area. The Tigrayans brought these crops from the area in which they lived before. It was successful and almost everyone in the area copied its use especially Oromo and Amhara. The long-run effects have been good.
- (2) Ditch digging was first introduced by the missionaries in the area in 1946. It was not very successful because people lacked the finances to do it. About a quarter of people did it and it and the long-run effects have been good.
- (3) Before the *Derg* people did not know much about conserving soil. Conservation was introduced by professionals who taught local people. It was very successful and everyone in the area copied. The long run effects have been good.
- (4) The missionaries brought tractors to the area in 1962. The use of tractors saved time and improved the quantity and quality of production. They were taken over by the *Derg*. Ordinary people do not use tractors because they are so expensive.
- (5) The water mill is well known in this area; there is no electricity so there is no electrical mill. It was introduced in 1956 by Girazimach Ture. 99% of people could not copy since only those who were owners of *rist* could do so. The long run effects were good.
- (6) Villagization was introduced in 1985 in response to the drought which happened in 1984. The *Derg* proposed it and farmers did it. Not everyone moved to a village if they were very far from their farms and could not control the thieves. It was good for schooling, marketing and milling but it was bad for farming since the village was far from home and the produce was taken by thieves.

Two different people asked for the names of ten people in the PA who are always willing to experiment with new things. Only two of them are common to both lists:

Name	1st list sex	age
Kedir Tuntamo	Male	35
Mammo Desta	Male	40
Kebele Shanko	Female	50
Dube Amiyu	Female	35
Mehari Getachew	Male	25
Demissie Sessega	Male	35
Ahdem Haji Gada (Sheik)	Male	43
Mohammed Kedir	Male	30
Behabtwa Getachew	Female	18
Medina Sheko	Female	28

Name	2nd list sex
Kedir Tuntamo	Male
Mammo Desta	Male
Kebede Kassa	Male
Zeritu Alebachew	Female
Fetene Belew	Male
Anegagrign Glyes	Female
Bizunesh Tedla	Female
Yeshitla Zemedkun	Male
Hamiyo Gelcha	Male
Hailu Zewde	Male

### *Common Property Resources*

The following communal properties are used by every member of the community: grazing land; forest (natural and afforested); water (river and pipe); service co-operative; seedlings (raised by the extension agent). The forest and grazing land is semi-regulated by the *Kebele*. The rule regulating forest usage is that any member of the PA has the right to request permission from the PA to cut and use trees from the commonly owned forest. A member can appeal to the PA in written form when he or she needs wood to build a house, when his wife or she is in childbirth, and when he or she has a feast for the dead (*teskar*) in the house. The laws are enforced by the leaders of the PA. The PA has also hired a *zebegna* (guard) who looks after the communal forest. People usually request permission from the PA to use the communal forest but there are occasional thefts and people bribe the guard to cut trees from the forest. If thieves are caught they are liable to be punished by the PA.

Three or four times a year, the PA officials fix a day when they sell the trees from the communal forest to the residents. The price varies according to the thickness of the tree. A tree may cost between 2.50 and 10 *birr*.

Grazing lands are found in the two villages formed during the villagization programme. These grazing lands are meant only for common grazing. Any PA member can graze his cattle on these areas. The land is mainly used when there is no feed on the farm, between February and October. The number of cattle in the PA is beyond the carrying capacity of the grazing land. The owners of cattle are grouped according to their membership in blocks of villages and each member of the group has a fixed turn to send a herder. The cattle herders can be little boys or elders but not females. The family that sends a herder later than the exact time agreed upon is punished by having to provide a herder for two additional days. If a family in the group fails to send the herder for his turn without a reason such as a wedding or mourning, he will be dismissed from the group. For community projects labour is recruited within the PA in the form of *zemecha* (campaign) in which every member of the PA is expected to

participate in the form of food for work.

### *Environment*

The soil was fertile until 1962 and dung was used to fertilize. Today, farmers put manure on the land after harvest and before sowing. Fertilizers were introduced in 1962. Without fertilizer yields are very low. Around 1974 crop rotation was adopted to increase fertility. At present about 1/20 of the land is out of cultivation due to loss of fertility.

Tree cover reduced alarmingly up to the time of the *Derg*. This is because people did not have much knowledge about the use of trees. Tree planting was started after 1963 by the foreigners in the area but the technique did not become well known until after 1974. The state taught the people. There is a programme of afforestation by the MoA and people are accustomed to planting trees around their dwellings.

There is no serious problem of soil erosion or flooding since terraces were constructed with the help of the MoA.

## 4. Off-farm Activities

### *Within the Community*

Weaving was introduced in this area in 1928 when people with weaving skills settled in the area. Pottery was known after 1881; before that people used calabashes. The preparing of wood was introduced in 1936 but carpentry did not come to the area until 1943 when it was brought by other people who settled in the area. Building was adopted in the area after 1954 but it was well-known elsewhere before 1954.

For women beer-brewing was introduced to the area after 1955 by Amharas and Tigrayans. Food selling was adopted in 1936. Spinning was brought to the area by migrant women in 1943.

Apart from specific occupations such as weaving, carpentry, and house construction, male trading supplements the farm income. For females making basket products from straw and traditional hair dressing are sources of income. Informants said that there is no pottery or tanning practised in the PA.

Renting out a donkey and cart is a business activity. On average the owner of a donkey and cart can rent them out for 2.5 *birr*/quintal/3kms and gets between 100 and 200 *birr* a month during the harvest season (July and August for *belg* and December and January for *meher*).

Women who earn money themselves through off-farm activities in the household can spend it themselves rather than giving it to their husbands.

### *Occupational Structure*

Men and women used to practice pastoralism until it was replaced by agriculture. The people are still adept at keeping livestock and cattle but they are predominantly agriculturalists. Herding cattle, hunting and house construction were, and (with the exception of hunting) still are, the responsibility of men while women were and still are responsible for food preparation and keeping children at home. In addition to farming, men are occupied in house construction, trade, weaving, thatching, and carpentry. Women can be occupied in beer-brewing, preparing local liquor (*arage*), spinning, first aid during child birth, hair styling (*shuruba*), and making home utensils from straw in addition to preparation of food and looking after children.

Blacksmiths, weavers, thatchers, and carpenters are assumed to be experts. Women who the previous government trained to give First Aid during child birth are major experts. A person who knows traditionally how to treat sick cattle is another expert.

### *Migration*

Men or women in the PA rarely migrate to other areas for seasonal wage labour or trade. A few leave the PA for education, marriage or employment in government service and there is a slight increase between March and September to rear cattle, because some disease problems are exacerbated by the weather, and for schooling. Twenty men went to Bale, Jimma and Wollega to cut and prepare wood for construction and furniture in the Government forests. The rate is 15 *birr* for 1<sup>3</sup> metre of wood.

There is a great scarcity of grazing land and feed in the PA. It is mainly crop residue (straw) that is used to feed cattle but many farmers have run out after 2 or 3 months and are forced to take their cattle to neighbouring PAs or *woreda*. One or two members of the family take the cattle around the areas where their relatives are living. The relatives help by providing food and shelter. After September grass can grow and after November the cattle are required for threshing. The oxen (unless they are in excess) are not allowed to go to other places since they are always needed for ploughing.

During the summer disease is a serious problem. Mainly people who have asthma want to leave in July and August and go to better areas where their relatives are living.

Most of the rich farmers allow their children to live near schools many of which are in Addis Ababa. They live in the house of relatives but get food (not cooked) and all other expenses from their parents. Students come back to the PA during vacations.

## 5. Reproductive Activity

### *Household Management*

The main tasks involved in house management are organizing, cleaning, washing, cooking, fetching water, preparing food, making clothes, and controlling the activities of children. In the average household, in a day, cleaning may take about 15 minutes, fetching water about 30 minutes, collecting and preparing wood 2 hours, and eating food 25 minutes.

### *Fuel and Lighting*

The main source of lighting is *kuraz* while wood is the most important source of fuel for cooking. The wood comes from individually owned trees such as eucalyptus from the garden or other trees including *mekanissa* (*Croton macrostachys*), *birbirssa* (*Podocarpus gracilior*), and *sigeda* (*Oleo hochstelleri*) in the forest or bought from individuals or in the market. People use crop residue, particularly from maize, for fuel.

### *Water*

Water is not a problem in the PA. Streams and taps provide sufficient water for the people in Turufe Kechemema. Water comes from a river and streams which are described in the water calendar. The river is located only five to ten minutes walk from the village PA office. Kale Hiwot church dammed the stream and brought the water to the village by pipe in 1990.

### *Sanitation*

When the community houses were reorganized under the Villagization programme (1985) there were 285 latrines in Turufe and more than 330 in Wetara. These were introduced during the *Derg*; people were forced to dig latrines near their new houses. None of these latrines are being used at present. Some are already full and others were closed by the owners because they did not feel comfortable using them.

### *Fertility*

In most cases a married woman gives birth two years after the previous delivery. The average fertility rate in the PA seems to be between 6 and 7 children. Infertile women usually go to ritual specialists (*kaleecha*) to become fertile. There is no way to handle the infertility of men. Their wives cannot marry another husband just to have offspring. There are also no traditional or modern treatments for infertility of women. Husbands do not divorce them; but they usually marry another wife to have children.

During the *Derg*, there were continuous campaigns by the government to familiarize people with family planning. This has not continued under the present government. With the agreement of their husbands, wives used to use contraceptives. Most women felt ill and became thin and weak when they used contraceptives and abandoned them with the agreement of their husbands. Apparently most have now stopped using contraceptives. However, some women unilaterally decide and secretly use the contraceptives. This practice has resulted in quarrels with their husbands. Some husbands are not on good terms with their wives because they suspect that the use of contraceptives gives them the opportunity to have secret sexual intercourse with other males. Also, Muslims who follow their religion seriously are prohibited from using contraceptives. The need for male labour on the farms also makes husbands disagree with the use of contraceptives by their wives.

### *Childbirth and Childcare*

Pregnant women and women in childbirth used to be given vaccinations during the *Derg* regime. The workers of the Ministry of Health (MoH) in the Shashemene General Hospital used to come to the PA to provide the vaccinations to help the mother and their babies to become healthy. This service has been stopped since the coming to power of the new government. Now, the workers in the MoH prefer going to Shashemene where they can obtain per diems.

Pregnant women receive nothing although they may change their consumption habits, especially those who are wealthy enough. Women in childbirth receive milk, butter, grain flour and sometimes sheep and goats from their parents, relatives and friends. The mother of a pregnant women is meant to look after her daughter during childbirth. If she lives in another area she comes to her daughter's house 15-30 days before the baby is due. In an Orthodox Christian family she stays until the baby is baptised (40 days for boys and 80 days for girls) so long as there are enough females at her home to take responsibility.

In Orthodox Christian families (mostly Amharas and Tigrayans in the PA), women in childbirth are not expected to resume housework, wood and water fetching, and agricultural activities until their babies are baptized. In these families, if a baby is a male, he is baptized on the 40th day; but if she is female she is baptized on the 80th day. In an Arssi Oromo (Muslim) family in the PA, a woman in childbirth will resume work on the 16th day after the delivery if there is no other person in the house who can work in her place or after the 60th day if she has an assistant in the house. In between these days, however, she can perform simple jobs such as cooking food and cleaning the house (not the place for livestock), but she will not go to a river to fetch water or wash clothes.

There is a belief, particularly among the Orthodox Christians, that it is better to give birth to male than female children. They believe that males can defend themselves and their family from any danger while females are easy victims for enemies. A husband feels happiness when his wife gives birth to a son and the wife also feels proud. The husband may kill a sheep or a goat for the wife who gave birth to a son. When a son is born, women who gather in the house of the woman giving birth make a thin loud clamour called *ililta* seven times, but only three times if the child is female. Male and female babies are circumcised seven days after the birth. A man is forbidden to circumcise a female baby but a woman can circumcise both male and female babies.

### *Socialization*

Parents are responsible for socialization and non-school education. Children are expected to behave well and are taught all methods of farming. They are expected to help their parents in all the necessities of life such as housing, food, clothing etc.

The local conception of intelligence involves clever performance in regular schools, persistence and effectiveness at work, curiosity, inquisitiveness, creativity, language ability, the ability to resolve disputes, and social awareness. These measures of intelligence in the PA refer to both males and females.

A male group of the community agreed that the following traits are very desirable in men: intelligence, leadership, hard work, a sense of humour, being good at arguing, bravery, independence, cleverness, and strength. A female group listed intelligence, being good with their hands and a hard worker, courtesy, obedience, humility, cleverness, dexterity, kindness and honesty. Men believed people could be born with these qualities or they could learn them, or both were involved. Boys learn by observing the behaviour of parents and elders and by getting advice and practical training. Undesirable traits in men are cheating, stealing, drinking alcohol, laziness, lack of respect, and adultery. A successful farmer is one who has all the necessary farm implements and tools and who knows when and what should be done at particular times, who uses his land efficiently and improves his activities by learning from his mistakes and by getting knowledge of best practice from other farmers. The skills a good farmer has include being able to treat his animals when they get sick, and to invent a system of water utilization for his farm, for example, by mulching tree crops, making ditches, and even water harvesting to produce fish of his own. Ability as a carpenter, blacksmith, painting etc are also useful skills. Technical skills that are most respected include the ability to prepare good farm tools, construct special living houses, the practise of traditional medicine, healing, blacksmithing, the ability to repair mills, and to divide the garden into different types of vegetables and permanent tree plots. A good farmer has good products every season, can feed his family satisfactorily throughout, has milking cows, attractive garden crops and enough pack animals.

It is useful to be able to read, write and do sums as it helps one to exchange messages and gain information and knowledge. Also one can keep track of one's income and expenses and other useful information. The social skills most respected include kindness and politeness, being respectful, the ability to produce convincing ideas in case of arguments, to reconcile people, and to give advice, tolerance, and the ability to cope with stress.

At primary school children learn about good manners, respecting elders, parents and teachers, and how to write, read and listen to ideas, physical exercises and gymnastics, music, pictures and art, their environment (plants and animals), the Lord Jesus, good deeds, church disciplines, how to pray and in general how to be good children. It is easier to earn off-farm income if one has been to school.

Women believe that people can be born with these qualities, that some are inherited, and some can be taught. They teach them according to the child's age. If they are not behaving as they should for their age there are penalties. They also give them good advice and comments and expect them to learn skills and manners from others in the neighbourhood and community. Undesirable characteristics in women and girls included for wives: adultery, not respecting their husbands, and not doing what he commands, not having good households, not finishing domestic work on time (eg food preparation) and for girls playing or joking with men (which might lead to sexual behaviour) and giving birth before marriage.

A successful farmer's wife respects what her husbands says, is morally brave enough to withstand any life problems with her lovable husband, is satisfied with what they have rather than living a dreaming life, and volunteers to help out and do farm activities when she has time. She should be able to manage and handle the household and furniture, be good at receiving and accommodating guests, be able to make home made furniture such as *sifet* and *fetil*, and be good at home decorating and able to spin. She should be good at home economics and at managing and economizing on consumption goods.

It is useful if women can read, write and do sums since it helps them to send and receive messages which may be secret, to make notes of things to be remembered, and to calculate income and expenses. Being able to read widens and improves the perceptive powers of the readers about the world, life, nature and the like.

Social skills most respected include preparing for the ceremonies of death (including *idir*), weddings, and the different feasts. The housewives responsible are evaluated by the community.

At primary school children learn good manners (respecting elders, punctuality etc), the art of making simple handmade goods, and about their country in general and their environment in particular. At church school they learn about the greatness of the creator, to respect parents and elders, and not to do anything evil.

Learning is useful for farmer's wives since it helps them to manage their lives and produce good families. Weather and soil conditions make the life of farmers difficult which leads them to get older faster. The respondents suggest that any off-farm activities are better. It is easier to enter such activities if you have been to school because you learn about opportunities, you can record income and expenses, and you can get better by reading and learning about the particular activity.

### *Education*

In 1984 20.4% of children attended school in the rural areas of the Shewa region in which Turufe Kecheme is grouped. 22.6% of males and 18.1% of females attended.

There is a primary school teaching grades 1 to 6 and a junior school within 2 kms. Any farmer who can buy stationery, clothes and pay school fees sends all his children. There is a shift system so some can go in the morning and some in the afternoon. The secondary school is 10kms away and some farmers cannot pay the 2 *birr* a day transport cost.

#### *Wetera-Turufe Primary School*

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	<i>grade 1</i>	<i>grade 2</i>	<i>grade 3</i>	<i>grade 4</i>	<i>grade 5</i>	<i>grade 6</i>	<i>total</i>
pupils	60	55	35	21	21	14	206
teachers	5	7	7	7	7	7	7
classes	1	1	1	1	1	1	7

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Source: visit to school

Three teachers are paid by the community. There is a shortage of classrooms, tables and chairs, blackboards, books, and chalk, pens and paper. The fee is 10 *birr*: 3 *birr* are paid in September, December and January, and 1 *birr* in May. The average costs is 20 *birr* for pens, stationery, etc, and 1 *birr* for books.

Kuyera Junior High School is 2 kms from Village 1 and 6 kms from Village 2. It has 1111 pupils and works on 2 shifts. Eighteen pupils do not have to pay because they are poor. Shashemene Comprehensive School has 2,869 pupils. The fees are 10 *birr* for the children of teachers and former soldiers, 25 *birr* for former students and 30 *birr* for repeaters and new students. Pupils from the PA have to pay 2 *birr* a day for transport or walk 12 km. Some female students have been kidnapped when walking on foot.

A group of men claimed that 87.5% of boys in the community go to primary school and 12.5% to high school. A group of women said about 75% of girls go to primary school and 25% to secondary school.

Parents discuss and decide which children should go to school and which should stay at home and work on the farm or in the house. Older boys and girls in the household are preferred by the parents to help their fathers on the farm and their mothers in the house. It is usually junior sons and daughters in

the household who are relatively free who attend school.

There are about 60 unemployed school leavers in the PA. Some of these help their parents in the household and others are wandering here and there in the villages and towns remaining dependent on their families.

There has been one person who has attended university and about 6 who have been to colleges. The one who has been to university (Mulatu Gebre) completed his BA in history from Addis Ababa University in 1983 and now is a teacher in Shashemene High School in Shashemene town. Two have graduated with diplomas: Alemu Bichamo from Jimma Agricultural Institute in 1983 and Mulugeta Fitam from Alemaya Agricultural College (now University) in 1986. The former left a government job and is assisting his father who has a public pharmacy. The latter is working in the Agriculture Bureau of Arssi Zone in Oromiya Region. Both are Kembatas by ethnic origin and their parents were expelled from the PA. The remaining four graduates from colleges are graduates of Nazaret Teachers' Training Institute in 1986 (Negeso Tubulo, Edris Usman, Marta Jibo, and Tseganesh Chamie'so) and all of them are government employees working in different places in the country.

### *Training*

There are people in the PA who have been on training programmes. In 1979/80 one Health Assistant (Guye Anguse) was trained under the MoH but he is not using the knowledge now. In 1980 five Agriculture and Community Assistants were trained by the MoA but they have stopped giving service to the PA. In 1983 seven members of the PA were trained in handicrafts by the Crafts Training Centre under the Ministry of Education (MoE). Equipment was bought and given to them. Earlier they produced chairs and tables from bamboo but they are not working at present. In 1980 five Traditional Birth Attendants were trained with the assistance of UNICEF; only two of them are assisting the community using the knowledge they gained. In the first training at Agarfa (1976) for Agriculture and Community Development, one person was trained for six months but he has since died. In 1984 one person (Hirpo Bitimo) was trained for eight days at Ziway in forestry and animal health; he is using the knowledge for himself and the community. Finally, one person (Desta Wachalo) was trained in 1988 at Bako for a month in forestry and animal health and he is also assisting the people using the knowledge he gained.

A respondent reported that there are farmers who were trained at the Adult Training Centre before 1989. Among other things they learned:

- how improved seeds are important and how to use them
- modern methods of cattle breeding and preparation of fodder
- about the side effects of deforestation and the importance of afforestation
- how to use modern ploughs and how terracing is useful
- how to give first aid to women during childbirth (for women)
- how to save fuel by preparing modern cooking places (for women)

However, since 1989 they have not used their training because there has been no-one responsible for organizing and inciting them to use their knowledge.

### *Health*

There was a leprosy clinic in Village 2 which was established by the Germans. The clinic was closed in 1992 when most of the patients left the PA. Most of the patients were Kembatas, who were expelled from the PA. Kuyera hospital, now called Shashemene General Hospital is about 2.5 Kms from the PA. The hospital provides general health services and there is a Leprosy Centre and a clinic for eye patients connected to it. The initial consulting fee is 1 *birr*. To be an inpatient costs 150 *birr* (surgical) and 80 *birr* (medical). There is an Adventist health clinic 6km from the site. It costs 1 *birr* to travel to it and the initial consulting fee is 1 *birr*. A full course of anti-biotic treatment costs 23 *birr*, while malaria treatment costs 1.50 *birr*. There is a doctor 2km away whose initial consulting fee is 1 *birr*. There is a

traditional healer 10km away; it costs 1 *birr* to travel there. He does not charge an initial consulting fee but does charge for medicine. The cost depends on the type of illness, and varies between 150 - 200 *birr* for adults and 60 - 120 *birr* for children.

The most common diseases in the area include yellow fever and diarrhoea among children. Traditional drugs exist for *mich*, *ebach*, *nekersa*, *gamtoke*, and *tenecha*.

*Mich* is a disease believed to be caused by a sudden change of the weather, and particularly by strong sun. Its symptoms are cold, headache, loss of appetite, wounds, and swellings on the skin. Traditional medicines are a herb known as *damakasse* and the leaves of the white eucalyptus tree. *Damakasse* is drunk squeezed in water, and can be rubbed over the affected skin. The white eucalyptus tree is boiled in water and the patient inhales the evaporation that comes out of the boiled leaf by bowing down and putting his face over it. Both these traditional treatments and modern medicine can cure *mich*.

*Ebach* and *nekersa* are wounds on the skin. *Ebach* appears on either side of the ribs, around the testicles, and on the buttocks, while *nekersa* appears all over the body. Both exist in hot areas and the cause might be the heat, but the people do not know.

*Gamtoke* is a disease that occurs on the soft parts of human body. It results in swellings which burst and create wounds on the joints of hands and legs as well as on the stomach. There is a leaf which cures *gamtoke* but informants could not remember its name. The community also burn the wound with the heated handle of an umbrella. Modern medical treatment can also cure *gamtoke*.

*Tanacha* is a swelling over the gland around a neck, stomach, and also other soft parts of human body. Traditional cures for this disease is to burn the innermost part of the swelling using heated iron material. There is also a herb that can cure *tanacha* but informants could not mention its name. Modern medicine can also cure it.

The traditional treatment for gynaecological problems is hand massage. The modern health assistants suggested that this does not have effective results except that it makes the placenta flow.

Persistent itching is scabies and is caused by poor hygiene.

*Kwashiorkor* swells the body (face and legs) and is caused by insufficient protein. It attacks poor children; and also sometimes their parents.

Informants mentioned that diseases that increase in December and January when the peasants drink alcohol and increase sexual intercourse are probably gonorrhoea and syphilis. The wives get these disease after sexual intercourse with their infected husbands.

People try to treat their illnesses themselves. They bleed the joints of their arm by slightly pricking the blood vessel with a blade. The bleeding temporarily cures the disease. But repeated practice of this method can cause the loss of a great deal of blood from their body and can bring about more serious diseases. People also try to prevent illnesses by cleaning their bodies, compounds, clothes, food and the water they drink.

The people experienced epidemics in 1984 during the country-wide drought but informants said that people did not die as a result. The drought brought about diarrhoea first in Bute Malka Oda PA from where it was transmitted to all the PAs in Shashemene *Woreda* in which Turufe Kecheme is found and to the neighbouring *woreda* of Arssi Negelle and Ajje.

The major summer (*bega*) diseases are TB, eye diseases, and kidney problems. The major winter diseases are malaria and draught colds. The chronic diseases which affect old people are TB, eye diseases and draught colds. The most common epidemic diseases are cholera, leprosy, and TB.

A group of men ranked diseases in terms of the problems they cause as follows:

1. Liver disease (*infectious hepatitis*): They don't know what causes this or how to prevent it. If they get it they use traditional medicine or go to hospital (about 10% of the time)
2. TB: They think this is caused by dust, bad smells, smoking and drinking. They can prevent it by cleaning their surroundings and not smoking or drinking. If they get it they go to the hospital for modern medical treatment.
3. Kidney disease: This is caused by hard work and carrying heavy things. Prevention involves not working too hard and they seek treatment at the hospital.

4. Gastric illness: This is caused by drinking a lot of coffee, being angry, and drinking and not eating balanced food. It can be prevented by avoiding the causes. Home treatment (a bit less than a quarter of the time) involves eating enough food like milk, butter etc. Otherwise they go to the hospital.
5. Leprosy: They do not know how leprosy is caused or prevented; it should be treated in hospital with modern methods.
6. Eye problems
7. Malaria
8. Colds
9. Headaches
10. Gonorrhoea

A group of women ranked diseases in order of the problem they cause as follows:

1. Gastric illness: The group believes this is caused by eating sour foods and drinking a lot of coffee. It can be prevented by eating soft food and reducing the amount of coffee drunk. Home treatment involves drinking milk and eating butter (about a quarter of the time) and they follow this up if necessary with modern medicine ordered by physicians at the hospital.
2. Kidney disease: This is caused by too much work. It can be prevented by drinking a lot of water. Treatment involves reducing the workload and then going to hospital.
3. Leprosy: They don't know the cause or prevention of leprosy and treatment requires modern medicine.
4. Asthma (bronchial): This is caused by bad smells, like dung, and dust at harvest time. It can be prevented by keeping the compound clean and it can be treated by drinking water obtained around or at the church (about a quarter of the time), or taking modern medicines.
5. Gynaecological problems: These are caused by birth and infection. Prevention involves not doing intensive work and eating a balanced diet. A quarter of the time they go to the home of people who traditionally know the treatment otherwise they use modern medicine ordered by physicians.
6. TB
7. Colds
8. Malaria
9. Headaches
10. Eye problems

The women's group ranked children's diseases as follows:

1. Measles are caused by hot weather and wind. The illness can be prevented by vaccination and treated by traditional care - ie not allowing other people to see the patient (a quarter of the time), or modern medicine.
2. Throat infections are caused by sanitation problems and can be prevented by keeping children clean. Traditional treatment (50% of time) involves an operation to remove part of the dangly bit at the back of the mouth, otherwise modern medical treatment.
3. Coughing is caused by bad smells and sanitation problems. Prevention involves keeping the compound and house clean. Treatment involves eating hot foods (about a third of the time), traditional medicine (about a third) and going to the hospital.
4. Diarrhoea results from eating bad food and can be avoided by eating good food. Modern medical treatment is required.
5. Persistent itching is caused by a sanitation problem and eating unbalanced food. Prevention involves keeping clothes, body etc clean and eating enough quality food. It can be cured by traditional medicine (rather more than half the time), washing in the water at the church (*tsebel*) (about 12% of the time), or going to the hospital for modern treatment.
6. swells the body
7. fever
8. bronchitis/pneumonia

9. meningitis
10. dry cough
11. eye problems

Some other information we have:

TB increases during the harvest because of the dust (November, December, January) and stays high up to June which is ploughing time. It decreases from July to September because it rains and there is mud instead of dust.

Kidney diseases increase especially at weeding time in *belg* and *meher*. They plant *tef* and potato at both seasons and this involves really hard work. It is also high in December and January because the farmers sell their harvest and drink a lot of *areqi*.

Gastric illnesses are common between October to January because of intensive work and then up to June because they cannot get food like milk, butter etc. But in summer there is enough fodder (grass) so the cows can give milk which the farmers use to treat the disease.

From September to November it is cold and most of the patients are uncomfortable.

Eye problems increase at harvest time because of the dust and at ploughing time because the land is dry.

Malaria occurs between September and November because it is marshy and the flies increase in number. Most people are affected by the disease. The time is also cold which makes people who have had malaria before, sick.

## 6. Consumption

### *Food and Other Day-to-Day Goods*

There is a type of *tef* called *buniyu* with a red and white colour, that can be harvested within shorter periods than other crops. Red *tef* can be harvested two and a half months after planting and white *tef* three months. These varieties of *tef* and potatoes which can be harvested two and a half months after planting are emergency crops in the area.

The people eat wild food such as *badessa* (*Syzygium guineense*), *gora* (*Rubus apetalus*), *agamssa* (*Carissa edulis*), *olati* (*Mimusops kummel*), and *k'ammon* (*Tracyspermun copiticum*). These are usually eaten by cattle herders and hunters as supplementary food to their usual diet but people at home also eat them when brought by the herders and hunters.

The only famines which people remember are the big *Rukisa* and *Rukisa Qalo'o* (little *rukisa*) which took place about one hundred and fifty and forty years ago respectively. Particularly during the first *Rukisa* it was remembered by the group of informants that people ate horses and donkeys as a result of the famine. They say that the *Chawa* group of people (*Faqi* - tanners and *Fuga* - potters) within Arssi Oromo refused to eat horse and donkey meat during this famine.

Almost every one in the community eats the same kind of food. But they can choose between maize, *tef*, wheat, barley, potatoes, and sorghum according to availability. During meals, if every member of the household is present at home, everyone eats at the same time. But usually the grown up children eat food from the same plate with the parents while small children are offered food separately on another plate. During school time, however, students in the household are given priority in eating food and go to school as soon as possible. There are not separate plates for each member of the household.

### *Saving and Investment*

There are peasants in the PA who have saving accounts in government banks but the majority of them hoard their money in their home. Investment of money is practised by a few rich peasants who lend their money for profit to those who need money to practise agriculture, particularly during the rainy

seasons. There are a few peasants who also invest money in trade in cattle, potatoes and anything else they think will be profitable.

### *Housing*

The largest houses in the community have three rooms: the main room, bed room and store room. The houses in the PA are similar in size but there is a difference in type of roof. Most of the wealthy people have tin roof houses. About 39 houses in the PA have tin roofs but it does not mean that all the owners are wealthy. Some of them became poorer because the household head died and the wife became head of household, or because they grew too old for farmwork and have not enough labour, or developed health problems and spent all their wealth on medical treatment. The houses of wealthy people are not bigger, but some of them have more than two houses which is not usual in the PA.

To build a new house costs more than 5,000 *birr* with a tin roof but between 1000-2000 *birr* with a straw roof. A house can last for about 15-20 years if the roof is straw and 30-40 years if the roof is tin.

### *Household Assets*

Assets in a wealthy home might include wooden beds, a cupboard, table, chairs, bench, mattresses, sheets, carpets, glasses, plates, cups, a tray, all types of kitchen equipment, a tape recorder with radio cassette, and a lantern. In a poor home the assets you can find are prepared skins used as a mattress, home-made stools, cooking materials like a coffee pot and cups, and *wat* and *injera* preparing materials and maybe a *kuraz* (kerosene lamp).

### *Local Services*

There are four shops in the PA. These shops normally stock items such as coffee, sugar, edible oil, kerosene, soap, salt, matches, blades, pens, pencils, exercise books, and cigarettes.

The nearest drug shop is found in Kuyara town, 4 kms from the first village and 8 kms from the second village and is privately owned. The government drug shop is at Shashemene town: there is also a shop at the hospital ((2kms).

During the *Derg* the agricultural extension agents used to visit the PA frequently and one agent lived in the PA but they seldom visit at present. During the *Derg* the agent had an office in the PA so he could have closer contact with the PA members. He appointed 20 peasants as models whom he always visited but he also visited other peasants frequently. Anyone with a problem could approach him.

There is no *Kaleecha* (ritual agent) or equivalent in the PA; but informants mentioned that the closest *Kaleecha* around Turufe Kechemema is in Hamulo PA which is about two hours walk away. There are three traditional doctors for bone-setting and herbs in the PA: Awano Bateso, Legiso Tesiso, and Zer'ay Haile Selassie. There are two Traditional Birth Attendants in the PA: Dehab Gebremariam and Asres Haile. There are three others who are not trained but assist using their traditional knowledge: Asres Wondemagegn, Rade Bech, and Anote Shanqute. There are also Traditional Birth Attendants for cattle and livestock: *Sheik* Mohammed Lugo (currently elected chairman of the PA) and Hadha Kashamo (mother of Kashamo). Another person with similar training but who is not providing service to the PA is Bushura Lafam.

## 7. Local Institutions and Organizations

### *Households*

A household is a group of people living under one roof, eating and working together, sharing income and governed under the authority of a head. In Turufe Kechemema, as in PAs all over Ethiopia, control over the operation of agricultural holdings and major decisions regarding the use of resources, is predominantly the right of the household head, usually the husband. Women participate in weeding,

harvesting, *enset* scraping, cooking and going to the market to buy food items and cloth. Men are responsible for the remainder of the agricultural productive activities and buy cattle, donkeys and clothes. Men sell grain and cattle and women food items. Children help the father (if males) or mother (if females) in the field and around the homestead or herding cattle in the pasture areas.

The husband is responsible for providing food for the household, building the house, school fees, clothing, investment in goods, such as farm equipment, health expenditure, furniture, fuel etc and he also controls the income from the household. Fetching water, collecting wood and buying necessary food materials to be cooked for the household is the woman's responsibility.

Arssi Oromo practise adoption (from distant relatives or war captives). Adoption of war captives was practised in the past when the *gada* system was operational. People practice adoption now, but only of relatives.

There is an obligation to help and respect each other in every aspect of life among members of a household.

### *Marriage*

Among the Arssi Oromo of Turufe Kecheme, as among the surrounding Oromo of Arssi, marriage is always exogamous - between lineages and not within. *Weyrera* is not an ethnic group by itself. It is a clan within the numerous clans of Arssi Oromo in the area. It has its own group of *balbala* (lineages) which are listed by informants as: *Togona, Algalo, Alfare, Sira, Bari, Molole, Wallashe, Umana, Meshera, Hasano, Dalle, Oditu, Boritu, Dandolle, Rulitu, Darimu, and Jatane*. Each *balbala* is named by its own founders who are the patrilineal heads of the clans.

Regarding marriage, there are different beliefs and practices between the native Oromo and the settler Amharas and Tigrayans. Bridewealth (*musteyas* or *metaya*) among the Amhara and Tigrayans in the PA is less than 100-200 *birr* while the *gabara* (bridewealth) of the Oromo reaches up to 3,000 *birr*. The Oromo place a stronger emphasis on bridewealth (*gabara*) than the non-Oromo people in the PA. The payment of the *gabara* is the guarantee for the couple to achieve a peaceful and successful marriage. It is only after paying bridewealth that the husband claims *murti* (decision) from the parents of his wife after which there is less probability of divorce. If she divorces and marries another husband, her children by the second husband are believed to be children of the first husband because he obtained *murti* over her. The wife that a husband married according to *murti* has to be buried close to his house when she dies even if she divorced him and married another husband. A husband cannot be forced to pay blood compensation (*guma*) if he kills his wife for whom he has paid all the necessary forms of bridewealth to her family. On the other hand, he may be accused of murder and be forced to pay the blood compensation if he kills her without the payment of the bridewealth, whether the marriage was conducted with the permission and willingness of the wife or not. After her death due to any reason, her family can also forbid her burial until the *shanacha* meet and decide upon the matter. It is only if the husband completes the payment of the bridewealth that she can be buried.

The Muslim Oromo may be polygamous depending on their economic capacity. They may have up to 4 wives at a time. The current maximum, minimum and average marriage payments for Oromo girls is 3,000, 100, and 1,000 *birr* respectively. For the non-Oromo girls, the maximum amount of payment for the marriage is 300, and the minimum and the average payments are 50 and 100 *birr* respectively. The payments are made by the groom or his parents to the bride's family. If the marriage is *welgara* (exchange of girls between lineages) the bridewealth payment may be between lineages of the groom and the bride.

The Arssi can trace their genealogy going back up to 16 generations and reject marriage with relatives at a distance of less than 7 generations.

There are 6 types of marriage, all of which are still practised in the PA:

(1) *gebara* - the bridegroom used to pay from 50 to 120 cattle to the parents of the bride or provide labour service, honey, butter etc if he was poor; this kind of marriage still exists in Turufe Kecheme. Now the bridegroom has to buy clothes for the father, mother and paternal uncles of the bride in

addition to bridewealth that can reach up to 3,000 *birr* and more than 10 cattle. The groom also has to buy cloth and gold rings for the bride. His relatives contribute cattle and send them to the parents of the wife (*gebera*). The bride's relatives also contribute cattle to send to the parents of the groom. The groom's relatives send the cattle when the couple tie the ring and the bride's relatives send them on the wedding day. After the groom's parents receive the cattle they take some for themselves and give the rest to their son (*kerta*). The groom's relatives receive nothing but the bride's relatives who contribute cattle receive clothes (*bulluko*) from the groom. The parents of the bride decides who is to receive *bulluko* and tell the son to send it. This is indirectly an indication to those who receive it that they have been chosen to help the bride. It is only these relatives who must contribute cattle. The parents should provide their son with a machine gun and, before the revolution, land, a horse, spear and clothes, in addition to cattle. Some informants mentioned that the parent of the bride may give the bridegroom a gun if they like him. However this is not an obligation. The groom uses it as a means of protection from enemies. The provision of a machine gun used to be practical but has not been in the last 3 - 4 years. Until the reformation (1991) anyone could buy and sell machine guns but since then guns have come under the government's control and it is difficult to get hold of them. Most of the farmers have also became poor and could not afford one anyway. When a daughter gets married parents should provide her with clothes, furniture, one or 2 big pots, butter, flour and cows (*gegayo*). The *gabara* type of marriage is arranged by parents and elders. If there are disputes the *shanach* (elders among lineages) are expected to negotiate a compromise so that the marriage will continue.

After the groom has paid all these, the father of the bride can also demand for him to bring two big jars of honey to give him the bride with a ceremonial feast. During the feast, the father of the bride kills an ox or a cow which the companions of the groom eat. Her mother prepares *chuko* (grain mixed with much butter) which is sufficient to feed about 20 persons who will come accompanying the groom. *Injera* and *marqa* (porridge) will also be prepared by the bride's parent to be eaten during the feast. According to the older tradition, the groom, the bride, the father and the best man will be seated on a hide and one big jar of melted butter and half the jar of *dadhi* will be poured over their heads during the feast at the bride's parents house. However this is no longer practised in the PA. After the feast is finished, the groom and his bride may be given two big jars of butter, complete house furniture, and more than eight cattle (*gegayo*), as a dowry from the parents of the bride.

(2) *wolgera* - exchange of girls between different lineages. (3) *buta* (kidnapping). (4) *hewata* (marriage agreed on by the couple). (5) *dalla* - inheritance of a widow. (6) *benbeto* (marriage to dead wife's sister). For subsequent marriages there are no contributions from parents and relatives. The couple bring together the wealth they have acquired during earlier marriages. When a daughter is kidnapped for the first time and if her parents are not willing for such a marriage the man must return her to them with 5 cattle. Then she can marry again as the culture allows and these 5 cattle are used as a payment to the 2nd husband to consider her as a girl. When a woman becomes a widow her husband's brother becomes her second husband. She has no right to marry anyone else unless he allows it. If he marries her he keeps the brother's property and children in the family. He is then an uncle to some of her children and father to the rest.

For one or 2 years after marriage the couple live in the compound of the groom's family. After that they build a new house anywhere they like but not far from the groom's family. The bride does not live near her family because marriage is always between lineages and not within. In the PA apart from Tigrayans, Amharas, Kembatas, and Wolayittas the Oromo people all belong to the Weyrara clan group and they marry people from outside the area where this group is living.

### *Divorce*

Divorce is rare and households are stable. In the event of divorce among the Arssi Oromo, children who still suckle the breast of the mother go with her while older ones stay with the father. If she is pregnant and/or breastfeeding the husband has an obligation to give something in cash or kind at a fixed time as decided by the elders. The babies go back to the father from the divorced wife once breastfeeding has stopped.

The divorce in which a wife gets half the assets including land applies only to marriages among the

Tigrayans and the Amharas in the PA. In cases where the husband and the wife are going to take a different number of children, the amount of land each gets depends on the size of the family they are going to have. Among the Arssi Oromo in the PA a divorced wife do not obtain any assets. She has no right to divide and take any property which she and her husband get after marriage. She can only take her clothes and the things she received as gifts from her parents during the marriage which may include furniture and cows.

### *Inheritance*

During the pre-Islamic period only elder children inherited their father's wealth among the Arssi Oromo in the PA. After conversion to Islam the rule of inheritance was influenced by Islamic *shari'a* law which allows every child to inherit a portion of their parents' wealth. However the traditional rule of inheritance is still predominant. The community believe that an unmarried male son is a legitimate heir. Daughters can inherit only when there is no son. The son who inherited can provide a portion of the property to his patrilineal sister even if she is married. The property is not shared with already-married sons because the society believes they have already taken their share from the father while he was alive.

The eldest son can inherit everything if both father and mother have died. The other children's portion depends on the eldest's will. There was no inheritance of land after the revolution and the PA officials could redistribute either to the family itself or to other households. There has been no land redistribution in the PA since 1991 but now the family can use the land after the death of the head of household.

Inheritance of land was legally prohibited during the *Derg* but people used to practice it according to local tradition. After the coming to power of the *Derg*, it was and still is, the youngest son who remains at home with his mother, without being married, that could/can inherit his father's land. Elder brothers who are already married and provided land by the PA cannot inherit their fathers' land. But according to the customary Arssi Oromo practice in the area only the eldest son inherits his father's horse, spear, shield, and *korma* (bull).

A younger brother can inherit the wife and property of a deceased older brother and bring up the latter's children if the wife has not reached the menopause. This is to prevent the transfer of property to a non-kin group and bad treatment of the children by another husband. If the first younger brother of the dead husband is not willing to inherit the wife he goes to the *shanacha*, tells his problem, and the next younger brother can inherit the wife and property of the elder brother. If the dead husband has no brothers one of the sons of the dead husband's paternal uncle can inherit.

### *Kinship*

Kinship ties involve economic and social obligations both to mother's and father's kin. Kin groups have to help each other and cooperate for example during marriage, quarrels with other ethnic or kin groups, mourning, and have to practice the same religious beliefs (Islam). Members of kinship groups are also responsible for contributing and paying blood compensation for murder (*gumma*), which is usually a hundred or more cattle, for any member of the group. If a member of a kin group is not willing to contribute cattle for the payment of *gumma* for a kin member, the other members of the group forcefully take his cattle to add to their contribution. This traditional law is applicable to every member of the kin group irrespective of differences in status, sex, or wealth. Kin members are also expected to make contributions of money when their members are punished by a court or are unable to pay the money borrowed from another person.

### *Lineages*

As in all Oromo societies lineage is important among the Arssi Oromo in the PA. The Oromo groups in Turufe Kecheme are members of the *Weyrera*, *Se'emana*, and *Gomora* clans which are patrilineal. The

land belongs to the *Weyrera* group. Members of the *Se'emana* and *Gomora* groups live in the PA mixed with the *Weyrera* without having territorial claims.

The members of the *Weyrera* clan are divided into the different *balbala* which are described below. Each *balbala* has its respective leaders. The senior *balbala* within the group is *Bariso* and it is the leader of this *balbala* who is also the respected head of the *Weyrera* clan.

There are Arssi Oromo tribes in Arssi Negele *Woreda* and other PAs in Shashemene *Woreda* who have lineage relations with the three Arssi Oromo tribes in Turufe Kechemma. These are: *Hebanu*, *Eka*, *Siye*, *Kanshe*, *Woyo*, *Seko*, *Qomma*, *Hambetu*, *Wajji*, *Ajamo*, *Farachu*, *Alujana*, *Fajji* and *Madarch*. Among these the first nine are known as the *Liba-Shan* and they have a common ancestor. Elders claimed that it is heads of these nine clans who could/can be chosen as *Aba Gada* for eight years in turn within the five *gada* periods (*Birmaji*, *Bultuma*, *Horatta*, *Bahara*, and *Robele*). However, the last five clans and the *Weyrera*, the *Se'emana*, and the *Gomora* in Turufe Kechemma PA are not eligible to be elected as *Aba Gada* in the five years cycle of *gada* system. The senior of all these clans is the *Hebanu*, which exist around Arssi Negele and Siraro, and it is the head of this clan who is also the leader of all the group of clans in the area.

Economic obligations associated with lineages include contributing money or cattle during blood compensation for murder, payment of bridewealth, and debt. The obligations are to the corporate group. Marriage among lineages is exogamous and they practice levirate. The *gada* system is not practised today as it used to be before the conquest of Emperor Menelik; and ritual obligations attached to it are not prevalent at present in the PA.

### *Clans*

Lineages are linked together in clans which act as corporate groups. Each clan has its respective *balbala* (lineages). For example, the *balbala* of *Woyo* clan are *Gonshe*, *Dida*, *Jaro*, *Bocho*, and *Ukulashe*. The *balbala* of *Madarccho* are *Habibo*, *Lemantu*, *Bushasha*, *Bora*, *Tamama*, *Dagache*, *Daye*, *Abafu*, *Hurbega*, and *Gamamo*. The *balbala* of *Wajji* are *Jarso*, *Kura*, *Hasano*, *Bushaminu*, *Fanjaju*, *Chaka*, and *Mekona*. The *balbala* of *Kanshe* are *Kabir*, *Digalu*, *Buko*, *Waqo*, *Belaka*, *Boreche*, *Bamado*, *Birbo'a*, *Arabo* and *Kibo'a*. The *balbala* of each clan have their respective elders who are recognized by the society as heads of the clans. For example, the elder within the *balbala* of *Wajji* is *Mekona* whose members are predominantly found in the Arssi Zone of Oromiya in *Chilalo Woreda*.

### *Age Grading, Life Cycle Changes and Rites of Passage*

Informants said that the *gada* leaders elected by the society in the area in 1983 are still in power. However, this traditional Oromo organization is not officially legalized at the local level. The fact that the *gada* leaders have remained in power until now (more than 10 years) is against the traditional rule which allows *Aba Gada* to be in office only for 8 years. Nevertheless, one can say, from this information, that it appears as if *gada* system is politically important today in the area. However, the really important political organization in the community today is the PA. *Gada* is not important in the PA except for *Atete* which is practised by women who gather near a river, a tree, or on a plain area to pray to God when the community is affected by drought, famine, disease, and other calamities which are out of their control. Other traditional important rites for men and women are no longer functioning within the PA.

### *Friendship Contracts*

*Sarab* is a local name for friendship contracts among the Arssi Oromo in the area. *Sarab* is a group of individuals who come together as friends on the basis of their closeness in character and work tendencies. Members of a *sarab* create an unwritten contract according to which they help each other with money, goods, and cattle or livestock during difficult situations such as marriage and mourning.

### *Citizenship*

The Arssi Oromo in Turufe Kecheme, as in all other Arssi Oromo groups in the country, have the concept of citizenship known as *Arssuma* literally meaning "being Arssi Oromo." *Arssuma* means having a character of independence, purity, and identity. It carries citizenship rights which include the right to marry an Arssi girl, the right to have a piece of land and become prosperous, and a feeling of being a recognized member of the community sharing all the values, customs, and traditions existing within Arssi Oromo. He has a right and capacity, for example, to be chosen as a member of *shanacha* whose role is to arbitrate and resolve disputes. *Arssuma*, in its strict sense prohibits members from marrying slaves, craftsmen (potters, tanners and smiths), and anybody with leprosy even though these rules are not strictly followed today in the area.

### *Markets*

There is no market in the village but there are markets in the surrounding areas. The nearest markets are in Shashemene and Kuyera. The market days at Shashemene are Saturday and Tuesday; and at Kuyera, Sunday and Tuesday.

The PA was a member of a Service Cooperative which is closed now because of budget constraints. At the end of last year (1994) the *woreda* MoA office distributed fertilizer to the farmers through the Service Co-operative. However, the probability that the service to the farmers will continue is low at present because the government organization EDDC (Ethiopian Domestic Distribution Corporation), which supplies materials to the Service Cooperatives throughout the country, cannot cope with the free market system and the government does not provide any assistance as the *Derg* did.

There is a problem of collusion among traders to lower the price of goods sold by the farmers and to raise the prices of those goods the traders sell. Traders also cheat the farmers by using weighing scales that are not correct. There are weights and measures laws around towns. In the Shashemene and Kuyera markets, some traders buy crops and cereals from peasants using weights. There is no one who polices the markets except that, in Shashemene, the government levies taxes on livestock sales. For example, if a person sells a sheep he has to pay 2 *birr* to the government. It is only 1 *birr* for selling a goat.

### *Credit and Social Security*

There are various forms of local voluntary organization which people use for insurance. There are 7 *idir* in the PA, 4 of which are for men and 3 for women. They have *idir* which organize people to help each other during crucial periods such as death and weddings. Women's *idir* collect butter for weddings. *Idir* also make it is easy to cope if there are accidents or other misfortunes. If a house burns down, all *idir* members have an obligation to build a new one; if cattle get sick or have accidents, the members slaughter and divide the meat and then they pay money to the owner at a fixed time. The usual amount for an ox is 200 *birr*, for a cow 180 *birr*, and for a young bull or heifer 80 *birr*. Most people belong to *idir*; membership may range from 45 to 140 and the average contribution is 2 *birr* per month. *Idir* money will be paid when someone dies. If a husband or a wife of a member dies, 300 *birr* will be paid to the widower. On the death of a son or a daughter, the member is paid 150 *birr*. If the member is told of the passing of a close relative (*merdo*) the rate varies between 30 to 50 *birr*. *Merdo* is the sudden information about the death of a close relative who lived far away. *Merdo* information is told by a third person to the responsible relative of the dead person, early in the morning before the sun rises, but not at any other time. At this time relatives and friends gather to comfort the bereaved. Food and drink are prepared. Utensils for the mourning feast are also provided by the *idir*.

The *idir* in the PA mentioned by informants are those which are organized under the names *Mikael*,

*Gebriel, Setoch Baltina, and Mekiya*. Besides these four there are *idir* for each *balbala* of the Arssi Oromo in the PA both for men and women. The *idir* of the Arssi Oromo women is traditionally known as *Wijjo*. Except for the *idir* of the *balbala* of male Arssi Oromo and the *Wijjo*, every member in the PA can join the other *idir*. The four *idir* to which every person in the PA can belong are said to have written rules and regulations which require every member to pay a certain amount of money every month, including labour assistance in turn, for mourning in the house of a member. Every member is given a definite amount from the money contributed, and also materials such as tents and utensils bought with the collected money, during difficult conditions such as marriage and mourning. There are elected members who administer and control the performance of these and other objectives of the association.

The *idir* of each *balbala* of the Arssi Oromo within the PA give services and advantages to lineage members when the members have to pay *guma* (blood compensation), *gabara* (bridewealth) during marriage, and when imprisoned or penalized by a court. The *Wijjo* is organized by the Arssi Oromo women on the same lineage basis for similar objectives.

Beliefs and practices related to death and mourning are regulated and formalized by *idir*. Besides the fixed amount of money paid by the *idir* to the member whose close relative is dead, any interested person can bring *injera* and coffee with two or three *birr* for him or her. The member in mourning records all such donations and reciprocates during similar happenings to the contributors. The formal burial association simplifies all the problems related to death and mourning and the community in the PA highly appreciates it. *Setoch Baltina* is an *idir* for women only. It means the activity of preparing food. Each member of this *idir* has an obligation to prepare food turn in turn when someone in the family of a member dies. The number of women allocated to prepare food in the funeral house depends on the number of members of the *idir* but in Turufe Kechemma it is customary to allocate 4 or 5 women.

*Sadete* is *idir* for Muslims which is used to organise coffee ceremonies and snacks (*kurse*).

There are credit associations (*equb*) which people use for economic security at times of economic and social crisis. Every member pays a fixed amount of money every week. There is a judge to supervise and administer rules and regulations. The sum of money collected each week goes by chance to one member and the opportunity rotates so that once a member has won he or she cannot be selected again until all the members have won once. For example, in an *equb* with a membership of 30 each member receives the money once in 30 weeks. The number of *equb* is not exactly known but respondents estimated about 10. *Equb* are differentiated among each other because most members have different levels of off-farm income (eg shops, grain trade, *tella* or *areki* trade, etc). One of the 4 shopkeepers told the fieldworker that he contributes 30 *birr* a week while the rest contribute 10 *birr* each. The women who sell *tella* contribute 1 *birr* a week. The money paid out is usually used to buy food or clothes, but sometimes it is spent on farm inputs like seeds and implements. Women who get money from *equb* have the right to use it for anything they need. The money is used either for the women's private purposes, such as buying clothes for themselves or as additional income for family necessities in the household. It may be invested in the farm or education if the women want. Their husbands cannot dictate how they use the money. It is their right to use it for anything they need. If the women want, they can discuss with their husbands how to use the *equb* money.

There are religious associations (*mehber*) in which people prepare feasts in rotation. Members also help each other during serious problems such as crop failure and accidents such as fires burning houses and crops, etc. Members of *mehber* are mostly Orthodox Christians. There are an average of about 12 members per *mehber*. St Michael's *mehber* is usually for men; St Mary's *mehber* usually for women; and both men and women can belong to Trinity. Feasts are held on fixed days and eaten by all the members. The *mehber* in the PA mentioned by the informants are the ones which are organized under the names of Saint Mary, Saint Michael, and Saint Kidanemihret. The St. Michael *mehber* meets on the 12th of every month while meetings of the St. Mary and St. Kidanemihret *mehber* are on the 21st and 27th days of each month respectively. On the feast days the person whose turn it is, prepares *injera*, bread, roasted wheat or barley as well as *tella* (local beer) to be consumed together by all members. The responsibility of preparing the feast rotates to every member in turn. The feast starts at midday and can last until to 7pm. A jar filled with *tella* known as (*tsiwa*), which symbolises the Saint for which the *mehber* is organized, and a piece of bread in a *mesob* (a coloured container made from straw), both

covered with a colourful cloth, are presented to the member whose turn it is to prepare the feast for the next month. Besides eating and drinking together every month, the members of the *mehber* also help each other during mourning. The *mehber* associations are organized by Orthodox Christian members who are predominantly Amharas and Tigrayans who came and settled in the PA, though a few from other ethnic groups of the same religion may participate.

People from outside the PA can become members of *idir* and *mehber* but not *equb*. Generally members of *equb* are local people. *Idir* is a crucial association for wedding (marriage) and mourning. As in all other places in Ethiopia, in Turufe Kecheme, any person in the PA, irrespective of age, sex, and ethnic or status difference can be a member of an *idir*. Any member of a certain *equb* or *mehber* can be a member of *idir*. But not any member of *equb* or *idir* can be a member of a *mehber*. One can say that the respective member of *equb*, *idir* and *mehber* share their risks in 3 quite different groups. Each association is distinct from the other with its own discipline and objective.

*Equb* and *mehber* are associations through which the people in the PA practice collective action and reciprocity. *Mehber* particularly can be considered as a form of redistribution. For the Arssi Oromo who are the great majority in the PA, forms of collective action, reciprocity and redistribution, (without formal disciplines and regularity), are practised through feasts that can be prepared during *sadaqa* (a feast prepared by a wealthy person for the poor at any time), *Mowlid* (the birth day of Prophet Mohammed), and *Arefa* (*Id Al Fatir*).

In the PA people borrow from any person who has money to lend. Usually they do not borrow large sums. The average maximum they borrow is about 500 *birr*. A person can borrow money from someone who is wealthy when he needs money for purposes like medical treatment at a hospital or clinic, or buying seeds and new clothes, particularly in August. The lender gives the money after checking that the borrower has cultivated the field to assure the guarantee that he is going to get his money back. Usually the contract to borrow money is signed on a piece of paper according to which the borrower agrees to return the money, either in cash or in kind, after the harvest in December. If he borrowed, for example, 80 *birr* he agrees to return 130 *birr* in cash or in kind.

### *Community Decision-making*

Government institutions include the Peasant Association with its executive committee, court tribunals, and service co-operatives. Elected leaders of Peasant Associations are important for access to land and employment in the local institutions of the association listed above. They are also intermediaries between the state and the society through which government directives, policies and other information are disseminated and implemented. They are also responsible for tax collection. There are two different stories about taxes. According to the first, taxes are decided on the basis of the agricultural wealth of individual peasant households by the local branch of the Ministry of Agriculture in collaboration with the leaders of the PA. The taxes are then collected by the PA leaders. No government institution is involved. However, the Ministry of Finance provides the PA with the technique and receipts.

According to information from some other informants, it used to be the size of the land that a person had that determined the amount of the tax. After the coming to power of the EPRDF, taxation of PA members has been 20 *birr* except for those who are exempted because of disability and extreme poverty certified by the people. Not everybody in the PA feels that it is fair that every able bodied person pays 20 *birr* each, because they know that there is differentiation in wealth. However, it appears that they prefer it to taxation during the *Derg*, because nobody wants to pay more than 20 *birr* annually. During the *Derg*, people used to make futile efforts to convince PA leaders to classify them as poor.

A third informant confirms what the first said and claims that the amount of tax depends on agricultural wealth. This wealth is measured by the size of the land each farmer ploughs, the number of cattle owned, and by estimating style of life. The farmers always feel that the taxation is beyond their ability to pay because they want to pay nothing.

At present, the local political institution is the PA itself. The *shanacha* (elders) are elected by the

people by lineage structure to resolve disputes before they reach legal courts, but they do not have political power. The leaders of the PA or government institutions do not come into conflict with these traditional leaders of the community but they try to cooperate with them.

### *Local Organizations*

The PA has two divisions. The first is administrative: it has the responsibility for implementing government regulations, for example tax collection, implementation of political decisions, and organization of farmers for group work like terracing, afforestation, etc. The second division is *shengo* which implements laws. The members are elected by the farmers in the PA and are not more than 3 in number. They are responsible for dealing with crimes and can arrest a criminal for up to 3 months and decide penalties up to 300 *birr*. People bring disputes to the executive committee of the PA. The PA directs the disputes to the *shanacha*. If the *shanacha* cannot resolve the dispute it is directed to the *Shengo*. The PA *shengo* is under a higher body which is the *Woreda Shengo* (now called the *Woreda Court*) under the present government. If a person does not agree with the decisions of the *Kebele* (PA) *Shengo* he can take the case to the *Woreda Court* where the decision is final.

A group in the community ranked local organizations which they listed in order of usefulness as follows:

1. *Shengo*
2. Peasant Association
3. *Idir* and *Setoch Baltina*
4. Service co-operative
5. *Senbete*
6. *Mehber*
7. *Debo, jigi*
8. *Equb*
9. Women's association
10. Youth association

### *Redistributive Mechanisms*

There are no frequent feasts involving sacrifices in the PA. *Gada* religious ceremonies are not practised today because the people have been converted to Islam. There are feasts today in the PA in the form of *Sadaqa* (alms for the poor) and during the celebration of *Arafa* (*Id Al Fatir*) and *Mowlid* (the birthday of the Prophet Mohammed) by some wealthy Muslim persons in the community, but these do not involve sacrifice. The informants claimed that even these Islamic religious feasts, particularly those involving beating drums, are being abandoned in the PA owing to the influence of the *Wahabi* Movement which claims modernity in Islam as opposed to *Sufism* which was being practised in the area. Some wealthy Christian members of the PA also make feasts during their holy days such as Christmas (*Tahsas* 29th), Epiphany (*Tir* 11th), and the Ethiopian Easter, but without sacrifices.

According to informants, however, there is a condition which forces a person to sacrifice an animal. This is related to beliefs associated with a disease called *golfa* (*megagna* in Amharic). People believe this disease is caused when they touch a burnt barley stalk which has been hung in a maize field by a person from *Alujana* clan. They believe that a person who touches the barley stalk is attacked by a devil and as a result catches *golfa*. The burnt barley is hung in the maize field by the owner to prevent people from stealing. If a person touches the burnt barley and catches *golfa*, the *Alujana* orders him or her to sacrifice a sheep of a definite colour (red, black, or *bule* - white and black). The sheep is killed by the sick person in his home and the *Alujana* has to mix barley with the blood of the sacrificed sheep and throw the mixture through the back door. Then the *Alujana* massages the whole body of the sick person with a thick porridge made from barley and he is cured immediately. The sacrificed sheep can be eaten by anyone but its lungs have to be taken by the *Alujana* to his home.

Informants said that the sacrifice for *golfa* is still practised in the area. But it does not involve

redistribution from rich to poor. Such redistribution does take place at the feasts provided by rich people during the religious holidays mentioned above. However, there are no traditional rituals practised during these feasts except prayer and thanksgiving to Allah or God.

## 8. Beliefs and Values

### *Land*

Land rights among the Arssi Oromo were communal and everybody, except caste groups, had full rights to use the land freely within his tribe. Each tribe and sub-tribe was organized independently and occupied a certain area which was recognised by neighbouring tribes. It was also possible to use land outside one's tribal area - a man could take his cattle from one area to another to find grazing and water, though he had to get special permission.

Informants said that when the Oromo practised pastoralism an old man was buried in the kraal of his cattle. A *korma* (bull) was killed as a ritual sacrifice during his burial. This was not eaten by the dead man's relatives but by another person, who slaughtered the *korma* and took all the meat to his own house. After the death, every eighth day after a cow calves, his widow and oldest son took the cow's milk and poured it on the corners of his burial, taking grass (*serdo*) with it and offering a prayer to God in his name. The informants said this practice no longer exists in the area. Muslims used to bury people on their farmland. If they liked them they buried them near their residence. Those they do not like they buried further away. However this form of burial has not been practised since the revolution (1974) because land distribution and population increase led to a shortage of farmland. Since then people have buried their dead in specific places allocated by the elders and officials of the PA. In the past burial sites were specifically localized at family level but nowadays sites are allocated to each *balbala*. At present, for example, the burial sites of *Oditu* and *Darimu balbala* are at places known as *Edo Lencha* and *Chaffa* respectively. These are believed to be the burial sites of the ancestors of the *balbala*. Even though respect for ancestors' burial sites is weaker than it was informants said that it is still there. Both men and women go to the burial sites of their ancestors to pray to God, particularly during calamities such as drought and disease. During the rituals, people sacrifice an old cattle (*dulacha*) or a white and black sheep (*bule*) and eat together.

Protestants and Orthodox Christians have separate burial grounds.

People do not regard land as sacred. However, they do not like the idea of private ownership of land. They claim that it would result in the accumulation of large farming lands in the hands of a few wealthy people inside or outside the PA. They believe that freedom to buy and sell lands would bring back the old servitude of large numbers of poor peasants under a few wealthy people, which would be a return to the "feudo-capitalist" system. Their worry is that peasants may sell their lands as a result of problems and become landless and deprived of any source of income, since they believe that land is the indispensable source of their livelihood.

### *Religion*

Muslim, Orthodox Christian, Kalehiwot, and other Protestant are the main religions followed by the residents of the PA. Kalehiwot and Protestants have almost similar rules. They have no fixed fasting dates but Sunday is the main day on which followers pray more than they do on other days. The Kalehiwot and Protestant followers are, by and large, young and middle-aged people. Most of the youths are students, jobless, and ex-soldiers. The rest have health problems or are poor. Compared to other religious people most of the followers are hopeful that God will give them all they need. Such hope, however, makes them lazy and does not encourage them to be hardworking.

Muslims have 1 month fasting in a year (*Ramadan*). It is forbidden to work on Fridays. Muslims are very weak during *Ramadan* and cannot perform any work because they eat nothing all day. They

change their consumption habits and eat special food like biscuits, soup, meat, tea, and milk, and they chew *chat*. In consequence they need more money and sometimes they are forced to sell their cattle or stored grain or to borrow money from others.

Most other religious people and Muslims themselves believe that during *Ramadan* there is no rainfall and people always expect rain when the fasting is over.

Muslims in the PA go on pilgrimages. They prefer going to Mecca if they have money. Some also make pilgrimages to *Sheik* Hussein in Bale Zone of Oromiya. They say that it requires at least 500 *birr* to go to *Sheik* Hussein and more than 3000 *birr* to go to Mecca.

Orthodox Christians have the following fasting days: 1. *Nenewie* (3 days) - on the 15th day before *Hudadie*; 2. *Hudadie* (55 days) - in February, March or April; 3. *Hawaria* (35 days) - starting in June; 4. *Filseta* (16 days) - in August; 5. *Tsize* (40 days) - from 26 September to 5 November in Ethiopian calendar; 6. *Gena* (Christmas) (45 days) - from the end of November to December 29 EC. About 15% (Orthodox Christians) of the community keep to the mentioned fasting days. During the fasting days dairy products, meat and the like are not eaten but only vegetables and pulses for relish. This may allow the rich farmers who can afford to eat dairy products and meat to reduce their expenses.

In the PA rather than Saturday and Sunday the 5th, 7th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 16th, 19th, 21st, 23rd, 27th, 28th and 29th days of a month are holy days (like St George, St Mary etc) and nobody works on the farm. Other annual holy days such as Easter, Christmas, etc are many in number.

### *Explanations of Misfortune and Illness*

All illness and accidents are assumed as God's punishment. When someone is sick or has an accident everybody says it is given by God and only God can make the patient better. Of course people believe physicians can treat patients but they will only succeed if God allows it.

Most of the members of the community believe that witches and sorcerers have the ability to cause fortune and misfortune to humans. Some of them explained that witches and sorcerers can give wealth to people, cause disease to them, and have the ability to identify thieves. They distinguish between magicians who are benevolent and sorcerers who are malevolent. In particular, people who have a grudge or are jealous of others go to the sorcerers to cause harm to their enemies.

Both the Oromo and the Amhara people in the PA practice *atete* which is a belief in spirits accompanied by rituals. It is usually practised during the *Mesqel* holiday on *Meskerem* 17 (Eth.C). They prepare *borde* (a thick local beer made without *gesho*), coffee, and roasted grains, and pray to their *wuqabi* (a spirit) to bring health, peace, happiness and fortune to themselves and their families.

The remembrance of the ghosts of ancestors was practised by the Arssi Oromo people in the past and the practice is kept alive among some of them even at present.

Informants claimed that there is no spirit possession in the PA. However, people believe in the evil eye, *falfaltu*, and *jinni* (spirit) who have the capacity to cause sickness and even death to humans. A person possessed with the evil eye causes diseases to persons and animals he or she is interested in harming. The symptoms of the chief disease believed to be caused by the evil eye, particularly affecting children, are physical weakness, bulging of eyes, and having a tendency to bite. The medicine to cure the disease is a secret type of wood, crushed and drunk by the sick person or animal. It was also mentioned that drinking ash mixed with water can cure individuals and animals who have the disease caused by the evil eye.

*Falfaltu* is also believed to cause disease to humans and animals by looking at them like the evil eye. However, unlike the evil eye that can attack at any time, the *falfaltu* have a special time to attack. When the *falfaltu* feels this special power, he feels as if he is intoxicated and walks quickly like a madman. When these symptoms are observed, people hide their livestock, cattle, and their children and themselves from the *falfaltu*. If a man or animal is seen by the *falfaltu* during this time he or it can die immediately. People believe that during this special period the *falfaltu* may even kill his own horse or donkey if he looked at them. The *falfaltu* is also believed to make a tree dry simply by looking at it during this special time. He can also turn the milk of a cow to blood and cause the death of its calf after a while. Protective measures against *falfaltu* involve wrapping the hair of the *falfaltu* with a cloth and making a *kitab* to be hung round the neck. This method of protection from the *falfaltu* is usually

observed for children. People believe that both *falfaltu* and evil eye characteristics are hereditary.

*Jinni* is also believed to cause sickness, especially to people. This is similar to spirit possession. When a *Sheik* reads Koranic verses while chewing *chat* in front of the sick person he or she shouts and gives the names of the individuals who are responsible for the disease. It is believed that the victim gives the names of individuals when treated by the *Sheik* because the *jinni* possesses him or her with the image of different people. The *jinni* also creates a "mistake" so that people assume the disease has been caused by the evil eye.

In any case, both Muslims and Christians in the PA adhere to their beliefs. They attribute every fortune and misfortune they encounter in their lives to *Rabi* or *Egziabher* which are God respectively in Oromiffa and Amharic. They also understand that germs and bad hygiene can cause diseases and they clean themselves and their compounds regularly. They also have understand that fortunes and misfortunes might happen out of probabilities.

The people of Turufe Kecheme believe that sorcerers are malevolent in their activities and have the power to cause hardship, disease, and poverty to humans. On the other hand, they believe in benevolent spirits that can give wealth, health, etc, to people to whom they are kind. The people believe in spirits known as *atete* (*wuqabi* in Amharic), a belief which is common in other parts of Ethiopia. They believe that they will be sick if they do not follow the special practices which please the *atete*. So on the Ethiopian New Year's Day (*Meskerem* 1st), *Ginbot Lideta* (the 1st of *Ginbot*), and every other religious and ceremonial day they feel convenient, the people wear *dibiqo* (a special coloured cloth), put on necklaces and practice the ceremony to please the *atete*. This involves sprinkling in the house some *imbushbush* (*borde*), bread, roasted barley or wheat, and a crop mixed with butter (*buna qala*) or *qinche* (a crushed wheat mixed with butter). They and their families eat the remaining part.

There are also some elements of ancestor worship in the community. Once in six months or a year or two years, some members of the community prepare a small amount of food (bread or a roasted food crop) and go to the burial sites of their ancestors and pray for their wellbeing by addressing the "God of their father."

### *Community Values*

People think it is important to "invest in tradition" because this will lead to reciprocity in times of social crisis. In such matters kin obligations are strong.

*Gada* political, legal, and social practices are almost extinct in the PA. However, the community still practice some remnants of them such as cooperation through lineage structure and conflict resolution through the *shanacha*. The ritual which is still important in the PA is the belief in *atete*. During the time when women are practising the *atete* ceremony near a river, a big tree, or on a plain and praying to God for mercy and salvation, it is unethical in the community for men to pass them without uttering the word "*altadina*" which has no meaning but represents a formal greeting specially for this situation. Any man who passes the women on *atete* days without uttering this formalized greeting must make compensation by sacrificing cattle or a sheep. The women go together to his house carrying a plant called *sinqe* to force him to make the sacrifice. If he does not the curse of the women will cause harm to himself or his family in the future.

There is competition in the community between modern and traditional beliefs. In particular the *sheiks* among the Oromo and the Orthodox Christian priests are not in favour of some modern beliefs. However, it appears that the community practises modern and traditional beliefs side by side.

People are willing to answer questions such as those in the economic survey. They are, on the whole, giving accurate responses. The fieldworker expects them to answer questions well in this survey except for questions related to the size of their land and their living standards. They think that the economic survey is for redistribution of land, relief aid, or some assistance from the government or somewhere else for development.

### *Political Beliefs and Attitudes*

A group was asked what type of state institutions and government they would like to have. They said that the state should be democratic, supported by the people, and should be elected and removed by them. They were asked how they thought the problems raised by population growth (resource depletion and unemployment) should be resolved. They replied that the state and the masses should set up job opportunities in projects, factories, etc. The people should be taught contraceptive measures and their uses and technology to improve production should be introduced. This group believed that the literacy campaign should be stopped as it has contributed to the unstable and immature politics of yesterday and today.

It was difficult to get any other information on political beliefs and attitudes because the subject is sensitive and controversial.

## 9. The Community

### *Community Organization*

The community is tightly-knit and orderly. There is a lot of social interaction in the form of *idir*, *equb*, *mehber*, and also in *gessa* and *debo* as well as other forms of labour contracts. However, the community is not wide; rather people mix in small circles.

### *Politics*

Under the *gada* system every able-bodied member of society participated in the election of *gada* representatives. The decisions of the council of representatives (*Abba Bokus*) were accepted. There were traditional rules and punishments covering offences such as murder, theft, etc. The Arssi Oromo created a sense of community and solidarity which has survived in ritual beliefs and practices, historical legends and genealogical connections. The extent to which the Ethiopian national political and legal system has replaced the traditional needs investigation; it seems there is the remnant of the local traditional legal system whereby the council of elders known as *Shanacha* are involved when someone from one lineage kills someone in another. If this council does not intervene all the members of the lineage of the killer have to leave the village to escape revenge killing by members of the offended lineage.

Most of the decisions on community affairs are made by elders then the PA officials or government institutions.

No-one can get married unless the elders are involved in the process. For example, a man cannot get a wife by directly contacting the parents himself. The amount of dowry is fixed by the elders. If a man takes a girl by force and the parents are not willing for marriage it is the elders who decide whether the parents should change their minds or the daughter should be given back with 5 cattle. Elders decide whether a couple can divorce and they negotiate between people and groups who have quarrelled with each other. Everything which involves the possibility of disputes involves the elders.

The PA officials make decisions based on law when people do not want the elders involved in their affairs. It is only PA officials and the government police who make decisions about lawbreaking since the elders do not want to interfere in these affairs.

Apparently the Tigrayans and the Oromo in the PA are more receptive to the regionalization policy of the Transitional Government. The Oromos believe that the regionalization policy is bringing local political, legal, social, and cultural values into conformity with the national policy. More than any thing else, the Oromo community feel that the new policy in the country will make them the administrators of their own localities. On the other hand, the Amharas, Wolayittas, and Hadiyas in the PA feel that the reorganization policy has encouraged ethnic differences at national and local level. Other ethnic groups apart from Oromos have been at risk since 1991. The Oromos want them to leave the PA since they believe that all the farmland owned by these ethnic groups is their property.

### *Social Conflict*

Apparently, there are no conflicts in the community even though ethnic and religious differences exist. The ruling and the legal party in the PA is the OPDO. No factions of other political groups or any rivalry between them is apparent. Gender conflict is also not in evidence. Some people in the PA said that the people in power seem to feel that any Oromo who opposes them must be a member or sympathizer of the OLF.

### *Poverty and Wealth*

The basis of accumulating wealth in Turufe Kecheme PA is predominantly agriculture, although there are a few individuals who have accumulated wealth through trade. In the past pastoralism was the main source of wealth but today it is not of great importance.

The main constraints on the poor are lack of oxen and agricultural implements. If a farmer has an ox or oxen and implements he can cultivate another household's land. Poor people are those who cannot work on the farm because of health problems, old age and the like. Sometimes it is bad luck which causes poverty. For instance their cattle may die so they are not able to plough or to get milk or butter which are the main sources of income. It is very difficult for their children to become rich.

Some people are wealthy not because others are poor or vice versa. The community believe that the only way to wealth is land and work. Success in agriculture and trade are believed to be as the vital means to wealth.

### *Social Mobility*

Before the 1974 revolution it was not easy for most Ethiopians to become wealthy, but if a person did it was easy to stay wealthy and to pass wealth on to his children. But the majority of the poor could not easily work their way out of poverty. This pattern of life did not change much after 1974 except that at the beginning of the revolution some wealthy people were deprived of their property. During the revolution private property was ideologically denounced and individuals were forbidden to own vast areas of land in rural areas or to have more than 1 residential house in towns.

Nowadays there is almost no-one in the PA who can be considered "wealthy" like the previous landlords. Parents do not have sufficient land, cattle or money to be shared among their children. Now wealthy farmers do not tend to be children of wealthy farmers and poverty also is not hereditary. There is a considerable change between generations. A child of a poor farmer can be upwardly mobile through success in farming, husbandry or trade if he is lucky. Parents also try to help children who are becoming poor. A person can become poor due to repeated crop failures, loss of cattle due to unexpected calamities, a crisis in trade or as a result of theft.

Unexpected rises in the price of agricultural produce can bring about changes in the distribution of wealth in the PA. For example in January 1994 the price of 100 kgs of wheat was 120 *birr*. In August 1994 the price rose to 280 *birr*. There were also increases in the prices of potatoes and maize. People who can wait and take advantage of changes in market prices can benefit a lot.

Two members of the community did a wealth-ranking of households in the survey and were asked for the reasons for upward and downward mobility. Both respondents agreed it could take less than 2 years for a wealthy farmer to become a medium or poor farmer. Typical reasons include increasing family size, the death of the male household head, death of oxen, ceremonial expenses especially weddings when most farmers are forced to sell or give away their oxen, and lack of knowledge about how to use income economically. It is harder for a poor farmer to move to higher categories and takes at least 3 years of hard work. Typical reasons for upward mobility include becoming a hard working

farmer, especially by renting in farmland, using the output economically, and making a marriage with a wealthier family. There is a lot of movement between the middle categories: people who are good managers (eg don't drink too much) and keep the family size normal can move up while people move down due to natural calamities such as death of oxen or illness of a household member involving medical expenses, and shortage of farmland. People become wealthier by good farm management which includes timely use of inputs such as seed and fertiliser and production of crops for food consumption. People become poorer by using farm income on unnecessary things, renting out land for cash, by marrying more than 1 wife, selling or losing oxen, having no interest in being hardworking and lack of male labour in the household.

### *Status*

In the past when *gada* practices were observed status was based on age-grade, gender, military prowess, political position and lineage on the one hand and disrespect to craftsmanship and trade on the other. But today there is officially no status based on these factors except for the leaders of the PA because of their political position. It was declared officially after the 1974 revolution that all men are equal but there is still marked inequality based on sex and wealth. Around Turufe Kechemba females are expected to respect males and every junior is expected to respect his senior. There is a joking and respectful relationship between intermarried groups which is common all over Ethiopia. Political position in the Peasant Association may be a good source of wealth and privilege as was the case in most peasant associations during 1974 - 91 when the leaders were involved in corruption. The main reliable route to wealth is good farming and husbandry.

Koranic education, formal modern education and knowledge concerning Arssi Oromo traditions, customs and history are the other factors that attract status in the PA. Elders who can solve community problems and rich people who lend to those who want to borrow are the most respected people. Other bases of status are honesty, openness, hard work, religious piety, occupation, serving the society as arbitrators, and having enough consumer goods at home.

Apparently, there are no native caste groups in the community as members of the PA; but the profession of tanning and making pottery and the people (*chewa*, *faqi*, or *fuga*) involved in these activities are particularly despised. The Arssi Oromo claim that these professions are introduced into Arssi society from outside. Caste groups (tanners and smiths) cannot marry other Arssi people.

There are urban status symbols which include having a house with a tin roof, tape recorders and radio cassettes, a bicycle, and photographs. However, these are not more important than traditional symbols such as land and cattle.

People do not behave in a deferential manner to those they consider their superiors. They do not consider any one their superior except *Rabi* (God).

### *Social Stratification*

There used to be a threefold division among the Arssi Oromo: the original Oromo (*borana*); assimilated people known as *mogasa* (adopted); and assimilated people known as *garba* (conquered). This division was of cultural and political significance up to the middle of this century but is no longer significant among the Arssi Oromo in the PA. What is still significant is the fact that the Arssi Oromo feel *Arssuma* which signifies their peculiar identity within the larger Oromo society.

The relation between wealth, prestige and power was suppressed in Ethiopia during the initial period of the revolution even though it appeared to revive later. Now inequality seems to be decreasing as all seem to be poorer due to land shortages as a result of increased population. Ex-soldiers, unemployed youths who have completed school, and peasants without land are underprivileged groups on the one hand, and farm wage labourers and traders on the other are evidence of incipient class formation in the PA.

In order to wield power in the PA one has to be liked and respected within the clan lineage. Being a member of a respected lineage, for example *Amannu* which is the dominant *balbala* (lineage) within the *Weyrera* clan is an important factor in gaining power in the PA. The Oromo community in the PA is

firmly knitted as a corporate group through the lineage structure. Within the lineage it is advantageous to gain the support or friendship of important individuals in order to win the support of others. With the support of a strong lineage one can accomplish any objective in the PA.

The community believes that education can affect status and wealth but not power. According to informants weapons cannot guarantee status, wealth or power. Religious position can lead to respect and religious leaders are expected to deal in matters of arbitration of disputes but not wealth or power.

There are various views of the local elites. One reported that they are unpopular, not rich and do not command respect from the community. The only reason they were elected is because of their position as spies for the government and they support the government. The only reason for conflict among them is lack of trust between themselves and they report each other in order to get a better position. A totally opposing view is that the leaders are people trusted and known to the community elders and hard working. They are neutral and give unbiased judgments. There is no conflict among them. A third view is that the local elected are dictators: they brainwash members, recruit, arm, and detain people who oppose them. In 1991 many Kembatas left the area because of ethnic conflicts. People accused of them of cooperating with the Mengistu regime and being involved in murders. The leaders kept some of their plots of land for themselves and sold some more. Another respondent said that the elites are those who are better educated and can speak in public. They are Oromos, relatively wealthier, and respected by the community. There are some conflicts caused by politics. Another view - the local elites are people who understand the problems of the community, are far-sighted, capable, active and willing to serve. They are respected by the community and were elected because they could listen to both the poor and the rich. They are relatively wealthier than the majority. There are conflicts of interest between the leaders in terms of some serving the people and others serving their own interests. In addition there are ethnic conflicts: for example when an Oromo is elected the other nationalities demand why an Amhara has not been elected. Another respondent said that the local leaders are mostly wealthier than the community at large. They are Oromo. They are getting wealthier as they chase people from other ethnic groups (Kembata) away from the PA, using different means such as burning their houses, burning their crops, etc. They divide the land left behind amongst the leaders.

Here are some different views on the relationship of local elites to broader economic and political structures. The local elites do not have any relation to broader economic and political structures. Another view is that they try to arrange for the farmers to get fertilizers, improved seeds, herbicide etc. In addition they also respond to some requests from above. Some leaders are self-centred. When there is a need they get backup from above. They relate to the broader structures through the regulations. They collect money for fertilizer and land tax and pass it up. They have meetings and exchange letters with higher up. Their concern is how they can stay longer in power by reporting people who object to the government and detaining people. They do not do anything for the community and are supported from above when they need to oppress the people.

### *Dissent*

After the historic conquest by Menelik due to superior machine guns the Arssi Oromo, like almost all other Ethiopians in rural Ethiopia, tended to recognize that the state has the power to impose its will and so they are afraid to oppose government policy lest it be seen as seditious.

Informants asserted that there have not been any signs of political dissent in the PA in the last 10 years.

## 10. Relationships with Other Communities and the Wider Society

### *Clans and Tribes*

It has already been mentioned that *Weyrera*, *Se'emana*, and *Gomora* are the three Arssi Oromo clans within the PA; the first is the dominant group with its seven *balbala*. The existence of various clans and their lineages has impacts on the life of the PA, particularly during elections. People tend to elect their clan members and people from their lineage. The clan or lineage whose members are a majority have the possibility of dominating the PA.

### *Villages and Regions*

Compared to the surrounding villages, the PA's wealth is average.

There are modern state-owned agricultural plantations near Shashemene town which were established after the 1974 Revolution following the takeover of the large commercial farms which were established by wealthy individuals during the pre-revolutionary period. These farms mostly produced wheat, maize, beans, and oil seeds using modern mechanization which entailed the eviction of tenants.

The relations between the Arssi Oromo in the PA with other communities in the area is based on lineage ties. The Arssi Oromo communities in the area with whom those in the PA have lineage ties are the clans of *Hebanu*, *Eka*, *Liye*, *Kanshe*, *Woyo*, *Seko*, *Qoma*, *Hambitu*, *Wajji*, *Madarcho*, *Aymera*, *Fajji*, and *Alujana*. These clans of Arssi Oromo are widely spread in the PAs in Shashemene, Arssi Negele, Siraro, Bilate, and Kofele *Woredas* in the Oromiya region.

### *Effects of Government Policies*

The effects of recent government policies such as devaluation, the end of price-setting, marketing, infrastructure development etc. needs further research. Other PAs in the same zone have claimed that peasants, who used to buy fertilizers using government credit through their service co-operatives cannot afford to buy them in cash. Another reason they complain is that the current government will not give them credit since most were not able to repay the previous loans.

The Transitional Government is encouraging private investment in the country.

Recent government policies, particularly the devaluation and free market, have effects on the economy of the local community. For example, informants say that one meat dish in Muslim hotels for which they previously used to pay 2.50 *birr* now costs 5.50 *birr*; and the price of fried meat in the same hotels rose from 3.00 *birr* to 6.50 *birr*. The cost of farming inputs has also increased by about 100 to 300 percent. The wage of agricultural wage labourers has increased from 2.50 *birr* to 5.00 *birr*. The price of ox-labour for one day has also increased from 3.00 *birr* to 12.00 *birr*. The price of crops has increased by more than 200 percent. A quintal of *tef* was sold for 120 *birr* previously but now its average cost on the market is about 220 *birr*. Similarly, maize, barley, and wheat increased in price from 50, 55, and 85 *birr* for 100 kgs each to 180, 185, and 250 *birr* respectively. The price of half a quintal of fertilizer has increased from 43 *birr* in 1990 to 73 *birr* 1994. The price of one litre of herbicide has increased from 25 *birr* in 1990 to 34.40 *birr* in 1994. One kilogramme of sugar, which used to be bought for 1.60 *birr* is being purchased for 3.50 *birr* in the cooperative shops but for 7.00 *birr* in the private shops.

A number of respondents were asked if the community is better or worse off than in 1991. The answers were mixed. A number of reasons were given. One said that people used to live in harmony and brotherhood and now it is divided by ethnic origins and lack of trust. Misunderstanding and violence erupt here and there preventing people from helping each other and working together. Another agreed that the community is worse off - mainly because of security. Many youths are turning into gangsters and robbers. Certain nationalities are being harassed to go and live in other areas and the cost of living is rising. There is no law-abiding body to look into grievances and many households are forced to leave their land and migrate. A third gave the following reasons why people are worse off: population has grown and the yield per unit has gone down. The price of food has increased. Soldiers

who were made redundant are still unemployed. Some (Kembata) have lost their land and properties because of ethnic clashes. The area was covered with dense forest but as a result of deforestation the rainfall pattern is changing resulting in lower yields.

Reasons given for thinking the community better off included the end of conscription, there was good *belg* rain and yields increased. Increased crop prices (especially for potatoes) have acted as an incentive to produce more, unemployed high school dropouts have started farming with their parents, returned soldiers have been given land, and farmers are no longer required to pay the special tax levy.

Respondents were asked about people's views of current policies. One response was that they do not like one effect of the rights given to nationalities which is leading to pressure on minorities to forcibly migrate. People who intermarried are finding it very difficult. Nobody cares if people kill each other and it is hard to believe there is a government. In the rural areas some people do not understand regionalization; they have disturbed the peace by trying to force others to go to their respective regions. Another said that since the community is composed of different ethnic groups, with differing political views it is not easy to have similar stands and the confusion is often expressed with silence. Another said the question was too sensitive. Another said they agree on the new land policy which says that land cannot be bought and sold. And another said that people are not happy because of increased food prices, problems of security, and some undercover operations. They believe things are getting worse.

People believe democracy is a good thing since it has led to a solution where people promote their own culture, religion and language. However it needs to be practised by leaders. People cannot now be members of the political organization of their choice - if they join they will be hunted, lose their jobs and be detained.

### *Government Activities in the Community*

At the time of Menelik (1889 - 1906) there was extended slave trade; slaves from the southern part were taken to the centre. The *Melkegna* state bodies, under the *balabat* who had direct connections with the mass of people, were responsible for collecting taxes in kind (honey, butter, oxen or money) to imprison or penalize thieves, *shifita* or any non-loyal people. They did not receive a salary but the people supplied them with food, shelter and the like. They typically wore *nech boge* and *netela*. There were no crops in the area but there was cows' milk supplemented with *enset* which was imported from Sidama and sold. Then came the introduction of new food crops from Wolayitta and Sidamo: red millet, corn, and barley. These were cultivated using 2 wooden sticks tapered towards their ends. Those unable to pay tax were obliged to leave the area. Men wore the expected *buluko* varnished with butter and the hide *shirt* which covered the fore parts only. Women also wore the *shirt*.

Lij Iyasu was welcomed because he allowed the open grazing system for cattle. Women sing about him while churning milk in the morning:

*Iyasu kiya gara j'ebesa kiya  
Morke neman bassa biya  
Iyasu gele  
Dedi nasu male*

*My Iyasu, you do whatever my heart desires  
You are saving the area, you are my courage  
Iyasu is here  
So refuse what you like without fear*

This shows he brought them some kind of rights.

Long distance transport was by pack animal. A number of ethnic groups including the Wolayitta, Sidamo, Oromo clashed around the Bilate river. The number was reduced by the Amharas who came to stop the unrest among these groups. Conflicts were ended by the Italian aggression.

During the time of Zewditu (1910s) the system of administration was almost the same as formerly but serious criminal cases were seen in the capital which was a long journey. Less serious cases were

taken to Shashemene *Woreda* or Hosaena (formerly Wachamo).

During the time of Haile Selassie before the Italian aggression towns like Shashemene, Wendo, and Negele started to be taken over by the Amhara. During the Italian administration towns like Shashemene were reconstructed and the road to Addis Ababa was improved with bridges etc. The slave trade was stopped. Schools and health clinics were built. Money, clothes or prepared food items were given to people in exchange for chickens, eggs, honey, butter or labour services. Some farmers' houses and crops were burned and a number of people were killed. The Ethiopian state before the Italian occupation did not give any development service to the region. It exacted taxes and stationed soldiers and appointed and settled *malkagna*, *naftagna*, and ecclesiastics.

After Haile Selassie returned, State bodies were established (police, *nechlebash*) to make sure people were keeping the State law. *Nechlebash* were members of the so called *Biherawi T'ore* (National Army) that was recruited among peasants during the reign of Haile Selassie to defend the country when ever it was necessary. It was representatives of this army which became one group of the *Derg* that toppled the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie I in February 1974. Landlords oppressed the tenants. "Our jewellery was taken from us by paying 1 *birr* irrespective of the size or quality of the item". The road from Wolayitta to Bale was built. People left their homelands in search of a landshare decided by State law as  $\frac{1}{2}$  *gasha* to a person. They went especially to far and inaccessible areas. Land could be bought if you had money. Taxation was heavy. Educational opportunity was only for the children of rich people. Poverty was considered as inherited. Under the afforestation programme if one felled a single tree one was expected to plant about 7 seedlings. We were obliged to wear *taka* in place of hide. *T'aka* (*abujedid*) is a kind of a piece of cloth for men introduced into Ethiopia during the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century from India. The cloth was imported in large quantities into the country by Menelik II and outstripped the demand for locally produced cotton clothes made by weavers. It is still found in big cloth-shops in the country even though the demand for it deteriorated due to the introduction of modern cloth and clothes from different countries in the world.

After the liberation government organizations began to encourage agricultural and commercial activities and provided services in the fields of electricity, water, health etc. Companies and NGOs such as Phillips Company, FAO, and USAID were established in Shashemene and gave important services to the region. There was a foreign private organization known as the Industrial Commercial Organization, owned by Guglielmo de Angeli which was intended to contribute to the agricultural and commercial development of the provinces of Shewa, Sidamo, Bale and Gamu Gofa trading through Moyale to Kenya. Before the 1974 revolution the Government encouraged commercialization and mechanization of agriculture around Shashemene by giving loans to private firms for buying tractors and fertilizers in collaboration with FFHC. This involved mass evictions of peasants and pastoralists from their farms and grazing lands.

Veterinary and mill services began. The power of money to buy goods was very great compared with today. In the 1950s the Addis Ababa - Shashemene - Sodo road was built to gain access to the rich province of Gamu Gofa to the south. This road branched later to Bale, Arssi, Shewa and Sidamo regions going as far as Moyale and making Shashemene a convergence point for the various people of southern Ethiopia and a commercial centre for all types of industrial and agricultural products.

Health services, family planning, education, literacy and veterinary services also existed before 1974 but they increased in magnitude after the revolution. During the time of the *Derg* land was redistributed. Schools and health centres were built. There was a literacy programme. The cultural revolution was meant to get rid of backward practices and beliefs. New farm tools, fertilizers, and farming systems were introduced. There was training in the skills of health, farming systems, handicrafts etc. There were pure water, planting and afforestation programmes. Service and producer co-operatives were formed. The farmers did not want a producer co-operative. A mill house, food aid and food for work programmes were established. There was a supply of certified seeds (*enkoy*). *Enkoy* literally means beautiful in Amharic. It is now the name given to a certified seed for wheat. There was a villagization programme and ethnic decisions in administration were not allowed. There was a *qota* system with different. *Qota* means share. During the *Derg*, and to some extent still, consumer goods from government storage were/are distributed in the *qota* system to the people through the PA for those in the rural areas, and through the Town Dweller's Associations for those in towns. On the other hand,

the *Derg* government obliged peasants to sell their produce to the government agencies according to amounts specified by the *gota* system. This is not being practised under the present government.

Men were called up to fight. Principally the fierce fighting took place in the north and then stopped which has left so many young men (*zemecha*). In practice the effect of war can be seen on our environment. War weapons have been introduced and illegal action was taken to destroy or dismiss any government plants or projects like forests, mills, schools etc. Due to the politicization of ethnicity minor ethnic groups (such as the *Kembata*) have been forced to leave here.

The MoA helped farmers to construct terraces to prevent erosion. Construction of terraces was terminated in 1992 due to the change of government. The people claimed that soil is increasingly being eroded after the terracing system was abandoned. The MoA is also involved in disbursing improved seeds, trees, and fertiliser.. The MoA uses model farmers who are trained to introduce new ways of farming such as the modern plough, selected seeds etc.

### *NGO Activities in the Community*

Between 1928 and 1933 the Italians introduced a number of development projects (road building, house building, bridge building, schools etc) and at that time gave food, clothes, and even money to the labourers they employed. In 1944 African Leprosy Control built houses for people with leprosy that are gathered from different places in the country and this organization supplies them with food, clothes and any necessary services.

In 1946 the Sudan Interior Mission built Kuyera Hospital, Karrara Ido Junior School, a road in the community and the Kalehiwot church. In the 1950s the Catholics set up a forestation programme and built a church in 1985. In 1985 Sasacoa distributed maize seed with loans and low interest. A group ranked the activities in order of usefulness as follows:

1. Hospital
2. School
3. Leprosy House
4. Road and bridges
5. Afforestation
6. Food aid
7. Food for work
8. Seed distribution
9. Religious activities

There are mission organizations, for example the Kuyera Adventist College, which gave formal and modern hospital services to the area including clinics, but often only to adherents of the faith.

Kalehiwot church distributes exercise books and clothes to children and gives 50kg of grain every six months to households with children.

The Catholic Relief Services started activities in the PA since 1985. It used to give school service in Wetara but this was interrupted after the overthrow of the *Derg*. Catholic Relief Service helps the poor, constructs churches and pays the salaries of kindergarten instructors.

The Awassa Development Bank distributed oxen in 1990 and 1993.

### *The Future*

Within the last 30 years individuals have started having a preference for individual advantage over communal feelings. They gave greater importance to education and wealth. They would like a peaceful and secure life both at collective and individual levels. Particularly within the last 20 years, people have developed the feeling that everyone is equal. They have also started to think that nobody should oppress, despise, and exploit others. The proliferation of religious sects particularly within the Christian religion and the conversion of some young people to these new religions particularly from Orthodox Christian families can also be observed in the society within the last 30 years. The Muslim societies in the area are also being influenced by the *Wehaby* Movement within the Islamic religion that appeared in the area probably within the last ten years.

Some elders claim that love and trust between patrons and clients in the community have been drastically altered to suspicion and mistrust. The respect between elders and young people has also

diminished The relation between men and women and parent and child, however, has not changed to the degree that it has affected their social structure. There are good relations between religions. However, relations between ethnic groups have changed. Those ethnic groups who used to be despised and looked down upon have developed the feeling that they are equal. This self identification by the native Arssi Oromo has created fear and embarrassment among the settler ethnic groups in the PA. However, the tensions which were created as a result of such feelings subsided during the time when this field research was being undertaken; now members of all ethnic groups in the PA work together and participate together in *idir*, *equb*, *gessa* (*wonfel*) and *debo*.

The land which was previously monopolized by the native and settled *balabat* (landlords) was equally shared by the landlords and their tenants and other peasants on the basis of the number of the members of their families. Within the last 30 years the practice of employed migrant labour coming from Amhara, Tigray, Kembata, Wolayitta, and Hadiya developed, and most of these became landowners in the PA. The settlement and ownership of land by migrant groups from the Amhara and Tigray areas of northern Ethiopia caused institutional changes in the area which led to the acceleration of the move by the native Arssi Oromo from pastoralism to an agricultural way of life, which started in the area after the conquest of Menelik.

There has been no change in the mobilization of labour among the Arssi Oromo except that alien forms of marriage began to be practised in the area after the settlement of migrants from different parts of the country. Inter-marriage and trade led to structural changes in the relation between the native Oromo community and the outside world. Changing labour opportunities which attracted migrants and the high fertility rate have also increased the size of the population in the area. The native Arssi Oromo have the feeling that this created the shortage of grazing and farm land which is a problem in the PA.

The most serious thing which affected the relationship between the PA and the state during the *Derg* regime was conscription for the protracted wars in eastern and northern Ethiopia during the revolution. People also mention that villagization has placed their houses and their farmlands far apart and has created problems.

There is an all weather road suitable for transportation (because the soil is sandy) which facilitates the communication of the community with Kuyara and Shashemene towns. Cars come to the PA particularly to buy potatoes and maize to be transported to Addis Ababa.

The community regards lack of electricity as their major problem and they suggested that it can be transmitted to the PA from either the Shashemene General Hospital, which is only about 2.5 kms from the PA, or from *Hamus Gebeya* (Thursday Market), which is a little further. Health service activities, a school at Kuyara and the provision of fertilizers, insecticides, and herbicides are the most essential benefits that the people get from the government. The elementary school at Wetara which was established by the Sudan Interior Mission and which was nationalized during the *Derg*, is functioning now, but only up to second grade.

There is an acute shortage of land. Some people believe this could be helped by redistribution, others disagree. If it were evenly distributed, one said, no-one would own more than 0.25 hectares. Another said the problem would be reduced if poor farmers had their own draught power and seed. Some want land to be distributed on the basis of family size; the first distribution favoured those who were related to the distributors and those who had money. Some farmers travel to other *woreda* to look for share-cropping and contract farming. Increasing crop yields through modern methods would help, but the poor cannot afford fertiliser and improved seeds. Taking people's land away who have failed to pay the land tax does not help the poor. Other ideas include the introduction of modern livestock rearing and bee-keeping, and a woman's organization to teach them better ways of raising children, to relieve the burden at home and help them participate in production activities (eg poultry farming and vegetables). Irrigation is a possibility.

The groups said they would like the government to provide an electricity supply, to continue with mass education and different kinds of training, to provide improved seeds for food and cash crops, to introduce new technology with respect to farm activities, and to implement laws and disciplines that are acceptable to the people. In general they need the government to open up and support acceptable and feasible opportunities so they can improve their lives

## GLOSSARY

<i>Awraja:</i>	An administrative boundary before 1991.
<i>Bale rist:</i>	Landowner or landlord.
<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>Chat:</i>	A bushy plant with leaves which contain a mild narcotic.
<i>Dagusa:</i>	Finger millet.
<i>Debo:</i>	A working party. Labour is provided in exchange for food and drink.
<i>Derg:</i>	The name of the military government that ruled Ethiopia from 1974-1991.
<i>Enset:</i>	False banana. The roots and the inside of the trunk and branches are eaten often after being left to ferment in the ground.
<i>Equb:</i>	A rotating credit and savings association.
<i>Gasha:</i>	A land measurement equalling 40 hectares.
<i>Idir:</i>	A burial society.
<i>Kebele:</i>	A local administrative division or an urban dweller's association.
<i>Mehber:</i>	A religious society which meets 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>Melkenya:</i>	A traditional word for an administrator of land.
<i>Neftenya:</i>	Literally means one who carries a gun. Used to describe those who took over land in the Southern regions of Ethiopia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
<i>Qocho:</i>	Emergency food made from <i>enset</i> .
<i>Tef:</i>	A millet-like cereal.
<i>Tsebel:</i>	Holy water.
<i>Wenfel:</i>	A labour sharing arrangement.
<i>Woreda:</i>	An administrative unit in the old administrative divisions until 1991.

## ACRONYMS

EPRDF:	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
FAO:	Food and Agriculture Organization (United Nations)
OPDO:	Oromo People's Democratic Organization
PA:	Peasant Association
PDRE:	People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
USAID:	United States Agency for International Development





### Turufe Kecheme

Womens' activities													
	Mesqerem	T'eqemt	Hedar	Tahsas	T'er	Yakatit	Magabit	Miyazya	Genbot	Sane	Hamle	Nahase	
<b>Women's agriculture</b>													
teff			harvest	processing						harvest	processing	soil prep	
wheat			harvest							soil prep			
			processing										
potato	weeding		harvest			planting				harvest		planting	
							weeding						
maize	harvest						planting		weeding		harvest		
enset						harvest				harvest			
						planting							
vegetables	harvest									soil prep	planting		
	planting											weeding	
												harvest	
onions		harvest								soil preparation	planting		
												weeding	
<b>Credit needs (women)</b>													
<b>Festivals</b>													
<b>Water availability</b>													
<b>Fuel availability</b>													
wood													
dungcakes													
charcoal													
<b>Off-farm activities</b>													
crafts & brewing													
darker shading means more													

### Turufe Kecheme

Labour	Mesqerem	T'eqemt	Hedar	Tahsas	T'er	Yakatit	Magabit	Miyazya	Genbot	Sane	Hamle	Nahase
<b>Men</b>												
a working day												
	planting			proc	planting					soil		soil
	soil	proc	weeding	essing	soil	planting				prep		prep
	preparation	essing			prep	weeding		processing		aration	planting	aration
					processing			planting	soil		proc	planting
	weeding	harvest			processing			ing	prep		essing	
		ing			proc				harvesting			planting
		weeding	harvesting		essing	soil	planting	weeding	weeding	planting		weeding
<b>Women</b>												
	brew			brew		brew			brew			
	crafts											
	farm	crafts				crafts			crafts			
	work		farm work			farm work			farm work			
			childcare			childcare			childcare			
			livestock			livestock			livestock			
			water fetching			water fetching			water fetching			
	housework				housework			housework			housework	







### Turufe Kecheme





