

A Socio-Economic History of Wombarma District from 1974 to 1991

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Abstract

The main goal of this paper to reconstructing the Administrative and Socio-Economic History of Wombärma district during the Darg regime of Ethiopia. That means the study courses the period from 1974 till the downfall of military government in 1991, in which the people of Wombärma district, similar to other Gojjam peoples, experienced significant, political and socio-economic development. It starts its historical analysis for the Wäräda by exposing the different developments that Wäräda had experienced after the restored imperial administration introduced changes of the 1960s especially in relation to administration and land relations and the subsequent reactions of the peasants of the Wäräda to the introduced changes are the main themes of analysis for the period between 1974 and 1991.

Thus, the focus of this study is tried to see developments that the Wäräda had experienced during the Därg regime (the new regime's attempt to place its power on a better footing by introducing several measures at a national had its own negative and its challenges and positive effects in the socio-economic and political lives of the peoples of the Wäräda) are the major areas of emphasis for the study.

Key Words: Wanabara; District; Warada, Darg; qabales; Cooperatives; Socio-Economic; Gojjam, Ethiopia

Acronym:

Ato – A Civil title given to ordinary people

Abba – Father, title particularly to a priest or a monk

Abun – Bishop

Aläqa- Head of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church

Aser-aläqa – A Military title equal to commander of tem.

Atbiya – dañña – local Judge

Awraja – Administrative sub-province.

Balabat – Individual with the hereditary owner of rest lord.

Çeqa- sum – Village chief

Däjjazmaç – A military title of step below Ras

Däga – Zone with cold climatic condition

Fitawrari – a military title below Däjjazmaç.

Gašha – Unit to measure land, which is equivalent to 40 lectures.

Geber – Tribute

Grazmaç – Commander of the left, military title

Gult – Non-hereditary right to collect tribute from rest landowners.

Gult-gäzh – Gult governor

Hamsa-aläqa – a military title equivalent to commander of fifty

Mamher – head of Monastery

Märgéta – a religious title given to the clergy who educate the liturgy

Mäto-aläqa – A military equivalent to lieutenant

Meketel-Wäräda –An administrative unit next to Mesläné.

Mesläné – an administrative unit under Wäräda

Naç – Läbaš – local militia

Qäbäle – lowest administrative unit

Qäñazmaçh – Commander of the right, a politico-military title above Gerazmaçh

Qolla – Hot climatic zone

Ras – The highest traditional title

Rest-Usufruct rights oner land



Rest-gult – hereditary gult
 Sämon – church land
 Šäläqa – local representative of a higher authority entrusted with the collection of tribute.
 Šeikh – a religious title given to Muslims.
 Täqlay – Gezat – province
 Wäräda – administrative unit below Awraja
 Wäyna – däga – Moderate climate zone
 Wäyzäro – a civil title given to married women
 Yägobäz- aläqa – village chief
 Zämaçh – Chapaigner
 Zämäça --- Campaign

1. Introduction:

Physical Setting and Historical Background of Wombärma Wäräda:

1.1 Physical Setting:

The administrative history and territorial extension of West Gojjam changed through time due to the political development and nature of the expanding powers. As far as the earliest geographical limit of Gojjam is concerned, particularly on the territorial limit its western boundary there is a general agreement among different scholars. During the medieval period, the territory of Gojjam was considered to be the area almost enclosed by the Blue Nile River, which is broad geographical sweep stretching from Lake Tana in the north, to the great eastern and southeastern bends of the same river. [1] Despite these, Gojjam is located in North Western Ethiopia. As most of the region is encircled by the Blue Nile River, it looks like a river island sometimes it is referred to as “Ethiopia’s Blue Nile province” [2]. According to scholars, the name Gojjam is used to refer to different geographical areas in different periods. In the medieval period, it referred to the area stretching south of Lake Tana, bounded by the Blue Nile in the Northeast and south as well as in the northwest by the river Dinder and Sudan [3].

Hence, it has become difficult to understand clearly the territorial limit of Gojjam during this period.[4] From the seventeenth through to the twentieth century, however, the name Gojjam came to refer to the much restricted geographical area within the Blue Nile bend inhabited dominantly by the Amhara people. [5] In the early years of the eighteenth century, according to some writers, Gojjam’s western neighbors were Agäw Meder in the southwest and Quara in the North West. Agäw Meder, which was unorganized political entity, was considered as the neighbor of Gojjam but gradually become absorbed by Gojjam itself. In this regard, Juan Maria Schaver, noted the incorporation of the Agäw

as “... the Abyssinians considerably advanced their frontier towards the west, effacing what was left, of the independent regions.”[6] Gojjam’s western neighbors was considered to be Agäw Meder in the southwest and Quara in the Northwest. Agäw Meder never an organized political entity was gradually ascribed by Gojjam until it reached west to the sultanate of Gobba. [7]

Following the death of Nigus Täklä- Haymanot in 1901, Menelik II had partitioned Gojjam in to three parts; namely, Gojjam Proper, Agäw Meder and west Gojjam territorial administration of each region had passed several stages. [8] On the other hand, various sources indicate about the history of Ethiopia, the name “Gojjam” referred to different geographical areas at different times. Most of the historical writing consulted for the study attest that reference on the region were made as “Gojjam Proper” and “Damot”. [9] Before the middle of the nineteenth century, most of the history of Gojjam was characterized by regional power struggle for political supremacy among the descendents of Ras Hailu (r. 1775-1795).[10] It was during this time that the geographical area that is historically known as Gojjam began to be referred to as Gojjam proper and Damot.[11]

Gojjam proper referred to eastern parts of Gojjam consisting of the districts around contemporary Bičana, Mota and Däbrä-Markos that extend to the Blue Nile, Damot referred to western parts of Gojjam, which had two sub-districts, Däga Damot and Qola Damot.[12]

During the time of the Därg, Gojjam was divided into east and west. The western most part form what is to day Mätäkäl zone of the Benishangul-Gumuz region, and the rest becoming the Awi. West Gojjam is a zone in the Amhara region of Ethiopia. [13] West Gojjam is named after the former province of Gojjam. West Gojjam is bordered on the south by the Abay River which separates it from the Oromia region and Benishangul – Gumuz region, on the west by Agäw Awi, on the northwest by Sämien Gondar, on the north by Lake Tana, and the Abay river which separates it from the South Gondar, and on the east by east Gojjam. [14]

According to the post – 1991 arrangements of the Federal Democratic Government of Ethiopia, Wombärma is one of the fifteen Wäräda in western Gojjam Administrative zone of the Amhara region. Wombärma Wäräda is located 417km northwest of Addis Ababa and 167km southwest of Bahir Dar (the regional capital city). [15] As far as the current administrative structure of the Wäräda is concerned, Wombärma was brought under west Gojjam zonal administrative unit. [16]

It has an elevation of 2,125m above sea level and 5,800m below sea level. Shindi is the center for the Wäräda s administration and it is the major area of emphasis for this study. [17]The territorial



extension of Wombärma Wäräda, according to the 2005 figures published by the central statistical agency of Ethiopia is 438.69 square kilometers. Wombärma Wäräda found out of the main road (Addis Ababa – Bahir Dar). [18]

Wombärma Wäräda is bordered in the south by the Oromia regional state, in the north by Awi zone, in east by Burie Wäräda and in the west bordered by Benishangul Gumuz Region. The center of the Wäräda, Shindi, was established in October 16, 1962 by Grazmačh Tässäma Fänta. [19]

Based on the 2007 national census conducted by the central statistical agency of Ethiopia (CSA), Wombärma Wäräda has a total population of 100,570. From this, 89.45% (89,963) of them lives in rural areas in the rest 10.55% (10,607) are urban residents. [20] In terms of economy, agriculture has been the mainstay of the people of Wombärma Wäräda. [21] Wombärma Wäräda has the home of different groups. Amhara the most dominant group in the region; Agäws, Gumuz, Oromo and Shinasha are found in the region. Especially, Amhara, Agäw and romo can easily interact and intermingling each other but Shinasha and Gumuz interact and intermingling with other groups in the Wäräda. Accordingly, to informants the Gumuz people originally inhabited most of the territories of Wombärma specifically Alzäb, Gomär qäbäle peasant association. In terms of religion orthodox followers accounts 92.8% from the total population, protestant 1%, catholic 0.02%, Islam 3% and pagan 3%.

Ethiopia divides their country topographically into three major zones: this is däga (the rather cool highlands where the annual average temperature is about 16oc), wäyna däga (the intermediate zone where most of the settled population lives) and qolla (the hot valleys) and plains attaining their hottest and lowest levels. [22] The altitude of the Amhara region in general is between 1,800m and 3,500m and above, which include the three local altitudinal zones, namely wurch the coldest highlands and, däga the cool highlands and wäyna däga the warm lands. The whole plateau of Amhara region experiences almost uniformly on average an annual temperature of between 15oc and 18oc. The warm months March through May; come before the big rainy season which starts from June to continue through the end of September. There is actually one long rainy season which starts from June to continue through the end of September. [23]

Agro ecological Wombärma is classified into wäyna däga (68%), Climatic conditions and dry climatic condition (32%). The highest temperature of the Wäräda has 33oc and the lowest covers 20oc. The average temperature of the Wäräda covers 27oc.24

Temperature variations spatially and seasonally depend on latitude, attitude, humidity and wind regime. In Ethiopia the mean maximum and minimum temperature vary significantly by season and area; the annual variations range from 2 to 6oc. [25] Wombärma Wäräda receives relatively high amount of rainfall

with balanced distribution pattern. Accordingly, to available digital data the mean annual rainfall ranges from 1430ml in the highest level and 1100ml in the minimum level. The western and northern parts of the Wäräda receive relatively higher annual rainfall compared to other parts of the Wäräda. It has mono-modal rainfall distribution and extends from May to September, like most parts of Gojjam shortage of rainfall is not a constraint for crop and livestock production rather agricultural extension experts reported that long rainy season sometimes result in sprouting of a widely growing bread, wheat variety. [26] In agreements to this, farmer grows long maturing and high yielding maize hybrid variety. [27] Since the rainy season in the area is relatively extended. Therefore, Wombärma is different from the other parts of Amhara National Regional State in terms of amount and distribution of annual rainfall. Farmers practice irrigation to grow crops in the Wäräda. However, majority of the annual grain is produced during the rainy season (Mämer) under rain fed condition. [28]

According to the available digital data, three soil types found in Wombärma Wäräda: 29 these are namely red soil, black soil and blue soil. From the total land of the area, red soil accounts 59,578.35 (65%), black soil accounts 2,749.77 (3%) and blue soil accounts 29,330.88 (32%). Therefore, these different soils are important to produce maize, millet, pepper, teff, sorghum crops. [29] Most of the areas with west däga agro-ecology have humid mitoses and Eutric vertisols. On the other hand, the wet and moist lowlands have Eutric Camisoles. Areas in the wet däga agro ecology receive torrential rainfall, has relatively undulating topography and easily erodible soil type. As a result, soil erosion is a challenge in the area. In addition to soil erosion, soil acidity is a problem in the west däga part of Wombärma Wäräda. [30]

In contrast, Eutric Vertisol type of soil has water logging problem. As a result, farmers and experts are forced to use such lands for crop production when the rainy season ends. [31] Extensive training has been giving to farmers in order to efficiently utilize the vertisol. In preserving and keeping the fertility of the soil most, if not all farmers in the areas are well aware of the importance of crop rotation. They have used organic fertilizer like compost (dung and crop residues) to improve soil fertility. The climate and soil types of the Wäräda have made it suitable for cultivating various crops and growing vegetations. Apart from this, as to scientific explanations and farmers' experience, the types of soils in Wombärma Wäräda are suitable for growing their crops and various vegetations. [32]

The existing favorable climatic condition and fertile soil types have made the inhabitants cultivate a variety food and cash crops. Maize, teff, barley, finger millet and wheat are the major cereals produced in the Wäräda. Chickpea, haricot bean, and field pea are pulses, pepper, potato, tomato, carrot, cabbage, garlic, lettuce,



onion, beetroot, and switchyard are vegetables, and coffee sugar cane, hops, mango, chat, lemon, peach, citron, papaya and banana are the cash crops widely growing up in the Wärdä noug, talba and salit (sesame) are the major oil crops available in the Wärdä. [33] The total territorial coverage of the Wärdä as a whole is made up of twenty qābāles. From this territorial coverage, nineteenth rural qābāles and one urban qābāle are found.

Today, the rural qābāles in Wombärma are: Alezāb, Jambi, Gomār Donde, Yāregen Qāntāfen, kolemabel, Woynema Asās, Marwolāde, Wogādād Yayshal, Hārāte Agama, Čerare Galedābie Dende Bālīma, Arbagāl Atimar Burafār, Markuma, Koki, Wazengze Wogārāb, Lāgāsāma Wobo, Dinde Shindi Bolādān, Sābadar Abana kalo, Datine Shamebla. [34] In the dāga (cold or high attitude) climatic zone, wheat, potato, pea, bean, and barley are commonly grown teff, maize, wheat, and sorghum are also grown in abundance in the wāyna – dāga climatic areas pepper, sesame, and chickpea are more of qolla crops. Based on annual production, wheat, maize and teff are the four leading crops in the Wärdä under study. [34]

In the production years of 1996 of the total 121,070 hectares of the Wärdä, 43,869 hectares farmland covered by under crops, 614 hectares of land used for grazing. Among the total area of the Wärdä, 371 hectares is covered by manmade forests and shrubs, 75 hectares from the total area is covered by water and 25,877 hectares covered by natural forests. [35]

Wombärma Wärdä has 25,877 hectares of natural forest and 371 hectares plantation forest. Major indigenous and introduced tree species growing in the Wärdä include Besana (Croton Macro Stacy's), Wanza (cordial Africana), yabāšha tid (Junipers' procera), Sāsa (Al Ibiza gummifera), Berbera (millettia ferruginea), Zegeba (podocarpus falcate), Šholla (fichus sure), Warka (fichus vista), yādāga Abalo (Teminalia brownie), kārāro (Aningeria adol (fifriederici), yāfārānji tid (cupressus Lusitania), kāy Bahirzaf (Eucalyptus Camaldulesis), korčh Erythrina bruci), Gātām and yātan Zaf (Boisovelloc papifera) ,Grar (Acaciasp), koba (Auguries saiiicifocia), Anfar (polystacha), Homa (retying to mentosola), kāga (Rosaabyssinica). However, most of the indigenous tree species are annually harvested to expand croplands, and for fuel wood, charcoal making, timber production and construction purposes. [36] In Wombāma Wärdä incense and resin were produced natural forest in the lowland areas of the Wärdä but currently such forest products are becoming extinct due to deforestation. Awareness creation for the society and investors is required to conserve not only the indigenous tree species but also the diminishing bio-diversity resources in the remaining undisturbed forest areas. [37]

The major wild animals in the Wärdä include rabbit, hyena, Anubis Baboon, Velvet Monkey, Jackal, Duiker, Tiger, Ape. There is no, a well-organized mechanism to preserve wildlife and it is hardly surprising that there is no reserved area for wild animals in the Wärdä. Regarding livestock and poultry, there were 103,204 cattle, 30,062 sheep, 6161 goat, 183 horses, 690 mules 11,802 donkeys, and 63085 poultry in 2004. Livestock is

considered as an important component in the farming system of the district. Hence farmers in the study area hold livestock species such as cattle, equines (horses, asses, & mules), small ruminants, poultry and bee colonies, which serve the household as source of draft powers, meat, milk, honey and beeswax, income, manure and means of transportation. Beekeeping is an integral part of the animal husbandry in Wombärma Wärdä. [38] There were also 4354 traditional beehives, 125 transitional and 1800 modern in the Wärdä in the same year. Black quarter (Abba Gorbba), pasteurellosis, Anthrax (Abba Sāngga), Render pest, internal and external parasites and coccidiosis are animal disease that affects the health balance of animals in the area. [39] Agriculture has been the main economic activity of the peoples of the Wärdä. The people used traditional farming system, ox-drawn farming. Besides, trade is one of the most important economic activities that occupy a central place in the history of the people of Wombärma Wärdä. The different crops and animal products from the Wärdä are usually sold at local markets. Most farmers produce is consumed at home and the surplus products of the area are usually sold to markets. [40]

Backward technology, traditional agricultural practices, low level productivity and poor management characterized Wombärma farmers. The contribution of small holder's agricultures to the overall economic development of the Wärdä remained minimal in spite of considerable potentials.

2. Wombärma Wärdä under the Darg, 1974-1991: 2.1 Rural Transformation and Land Reform:

It has commonly been assumed that land reform is a political, economic and social phenomenon. Consequently, while a wide historical and social science literature exists on the topic, thematic studies by geographers with the exception of a few regional studies of the development process, particularly those relating to land reform, have been conspicuously of recent time, however, the realization that land reform is also very much a spatial process has helped the geography of development to emerge as an important aspect of the current movement of the discipline towards greater social relevance's. The present study is an attempt to add to the growing body of geographic literature on a topic that has so far been looked at only cursorily by geography. [41]

The land tenure system was practiced until the 1974 social revolution. The old land tenure system was radically changed by the land reform proclamation of 1975, which is according to Dässalāgñ the first and central legislation which set off the process of land distribution and the organization of peasants in peasant associations. [42] McCann's States:

Ended landlord tenant relations, restricted private land holdings to ten hectares and for bade the hiring of agricultural labor within the private sector. Large private concessionary farms became state farms, and the marketing of grain by private traders was curtailed in favor of a national marketing. Land distribution and judiciary powers below the sub districts level devolved to peasant



associations, which elected their own leadership and took on many of the duties previously held by local *čhiqšums* and *balabats*. [43]

Land policy in Ethiopia has been controversial since the fall of Hailä-Selassie government. Land is the primary means of generating a livelihood for most of the poor in rural areas and a key asset and resource for those who engage in agricultural activities. [44] As an important asset, it contributes a main vehicle for investment, wealth accumulation and transfer between generations. In many areas of the world appreciation of land with increased population density is also a source of corruption, land conflicts that means conflicts for and lack of transparency. For these reasons, the distribution of land and other productive assets will affect not only productive outcomes in rural areas but also the ability of the poor to access credit, market investments and benefits from the rule of law in general. In line with this the land administration system that we are aspiring to be a remedy to boundary conflicts and insecurity of land tenure has decisive role. [45]

The land reform proclamation during this period by the government was one of the most important measures that coincided with the campaign and in fact it attained acceptance from the large number of the people of the *Wäräda*. [46] This was affected by public demonstration held in *Wombärma Wäräda* by those who supported the new land reform proclamation, which was declared on 4 March 1975. [47] By this proclamation, *Därg* made it clear that “all rural land to be the collective property of the Ethiopian people.” The proclamation also states that “all privately owned rural land was to be distributed to people who were willing to cultivate their holdings personally.” [48] In other words, the proclamation made land to be the property of the Ethiopian people and as a result, people cannot transfer to another person in any circumstance. [49]

Regarding the proclamation, a considerable number of individuals were in fact incredulous about the implementation of the new land reform proclamation. [50] They thought that the proclamation could not be realized and would remain ideal. Despite this, the government did not hesitate to implement the statement of the proclamation effectively. To this end, the teaching of the campaigners and the establishment of peasant associations and the empowering of the responsibility on them to redistribute land in *Wombärma Wäräda* was instrumental for enforcement of the proclamation. [51]

The 1975 land reform which was applied based on the march 4, 1975 proclamation was also one event to change the environmental and demographic history of the *Wäräda*. Based on this proclamation, which brought about an end to the existing land tenure system, a settlement authority had been established in 1976. Before the 1974 revolution of the country, the *Wäräda* land was owned by the descendants of the previous *balabats*. However, the proclamation number 31 of March 1975 which allowed the

nationalization of rural land gave a chance for the government to transport the *Wällo* peasantry to the *Wäräda* to attain its political and environmental related objectives. [52]

When it assumed power in 1974, the *Därg* only slightly reordered the imperial regimes patterns of administrative organization at the national level. By contrast the new regime saw existing local administration as anathema to the objective of socialist construction and its reform efforts were initially more evident on the local level than in the central bureaucracy. [53] Immediately, after assuming power, the *Därg* reorganized Ethiopians fourteen provincial administration (*Täqalay Gizat*) were relabeled regions (*Kifälhagärs*) and were divided into 102 sub regions (*Awrajas*) and 556 districts (*Wärädas*). By 1981, the number of administrative divisions has increased to sixteen with the addition of Addis Ababa and Assäb. The restructuring was a major step toward dismantling feudal privilege. Moreover, all new appointees were either military manor university educated individuals who were considered progressives. [54]

In 1975, the *Därg* that had overthrown the imperial regime of Hailä -Selassie, profoundly altered the Agrarian structure and the mechanisms of access to land. The public ownership of rural land proclamation nationalized all rural land and set out to redistribute it to its fillers and to organize farmers in cooperatives there by abolishing exploitative landlord – tenant relations so pertinent under the imperial regime. [55] The 1975 land reform policy and subsequent land redistribution have opened an avenue for the landless and tenants to have access to land. These changes have a direct impact in the abolishing of feudal – tenant relationship and the creation of opportunity to have access to agricultural land and other renewable natural resources. The 1975 land reform was based on the general principle of the motto of land to the tiller, while the present Amhara region was based on the theoretical thought of correcting the serious imbalances created in land holding among peasants. [56]

On March 1975, the “provisional military administration council” also known as the *Därg* (council) after it had over thrown the imperial regime of Hailä- Selassie announced an agrarian reform program known as proclamation No. 31/1975 “proclamation to provide for the public ownership of rural lands.” This proclamation declared all rural land to be the property of the state without any compensation to previous rights holders and prohibited all tenancy relations. The proclamation provided the legal basis for the distribution of usufruct rights to a large number of rural families who had been working under exploitative tenancy contracts for a small group of landlords. [57]

The reform hence implemented the “Land to the Tiller” approach that was popular in the 1970s. The *Därg* Justified the land reform on two principles historical justice to overcome the exploitative character of imperial agrarian relations and justice as egalitarianism providing each farm family with equal access to cultivation land according to their needs. [58] In *Wombärma*



Wäräda, land was under the control of balabats. But the land reform proclamation of Därg began to abolish the balabats land monopoly in the Wäräda. The proclamations made a number of provisions. Farmers were not allowed to transfer their usufruct rights by sale mortgage or lease and bequeathing of allocated usufruct rights was limited to primary family members like spouse and children upon death of the rights holder.

The plot size per family was restricted to a maximum of ten hectares and the use of hired agricultural labor was prohibited. The reform was the first uniform tenure system applied upon Ethiopia as a whole. Considering the difference in agrarian relations that had existed in the North and south prior to the reform, the changes were more radical for tenant cultivators (and landlords) in the south than for rest rights holders in the North. In the rest system, land distribution had already been relatively egalitarian. The Därg brought major changes in organizational structures and institutions in order to implement “agrarian socialism” including the quest for collectivization of small – scale farms and the establishment of state farms. The state effectively abolished the remains of traditional institutions of rest and gult and took over the control to distribute access to land through peasant association.

2.2 Qäbäle Peasant Associations in Wombärma Wäräda:

Land is the socio-economic foundation for any agrarian country like Ethiopia. Before the fall of the Hailä- Selassie regime, land in the Wärädas, as elsewhere in Gojjam society, had been communally owned. It had been characterized by rest and gulf system. Although there was communal land ownership according to informants, land was not equally shared among the corporate groups. A few individuals possessed the largest portion in a corporate group by virtue of political and economic powers. [59] After the nationalization of land in 1975, land in Wombärma Wäräda has been under the control of peasant associations. The redistribution of land was conducted by qäbäle peasant association leader every year between February to and end of April by using the pretext of redistributing farmland to new householders. [60] The period of land redistribution had of course considered the seasonal agricultural tasks. Nevertheless, at the same time the householders did not perform plough. It is known only after the period of land redistribution was over. [61]

In the post-revolutionary period, peasants in Ethiopia in general and Wombärma Wäräda in particular become the area of emphasis by the authorities of the new regime. As a result, the state began administratively organizing peasants under peasant associations all over the country. According to the proclamations, peasants riving in a maximum of 800 hectares allowed to establish peasant associations. [62] The proclamations, however, banned landowners owning more than ten hectares from joining the association until land had been redistributed. [63] Moreover, some segments of the society, such as, artisans and potters, who constituted a significant portion of the population of the Wäräda

were isolated from their counter parts. [64]

In Wombärma Wäräda there were different qäbäle peasant associations organized. In each qäbäle peasant associations, also different gots are established. Before the establishment of peasant associations in 1975, each got had a čhikasum. Got was the lowest local structure and the čhikašum was the lowest executive body. It had the jurisdiction on the local administration, judiciary activities and tax collection. It has authority both over the gäbars and the näčh läbašh. It also served as representative of absentee näčh läbašhes. [65]

Although most of the čhikašums are males the office is not sex bound. All the čhikašum are accountable for the mislané of Wombärma Wäräda. The mislane is just like present day Wäräda administrator. All taxes that are collected by the čhikašum are passed on to the mislané. The offices of the čhikašum and the meslané existed until the 1974 revolution. They were functional even during the five years Italian occupation. The 1974 revolution abolished all this local level structures and replaced them with the qäbäle peasant association. [66]

Qäbäle peasant associations were established to provide the peasantry an organization that enables them to, “... involve in activities of common concern and benefit”. The task of qäbäle peasant association can be divided into land distribution, tasks related to rural development and tasks involving law and order arbitration and local administration. The qäbäle peasant associations used as a channel through government policies were executed and feedbacks are collected. [67]

Peasant associations were organized at all administrative levels. Peasant associations in Wombärma Wäräda were established at the level of qäbäle. They became organized societal institutions in the post-revolutionary period. [68] According to eyewitness accounts, most of the peasants of the Wäräda were happy to be the members of the association in their respective parishes during the first years of the new regime. [69] Here, it also important to note that during this time there were individuals who detested the association and the trend of the government at large. It should be noticeable that the very objective of this program was to terminate the system of feudalism, which eventually affected some of the advantageous section of the society particularly, the landlords. [70]

The fact shows that the association become popularized and spread into every qäbäles of Wombärma Wäräda. Hence, the majorities of peasants become members of the associations in their respective parishes. Each peasant associations in the Wäräda were led by an elected chairman and a committee after the coming of the trainee person. [71] The elected chairperson and executive committees had the responsibility to accomplish the day to day affairs of the associations. Apart from this, since these associations were vested with the power to deliver administrative services, they also dispended judicial activities in their respective localities. [72]

Regarding the multi-bounded function and responsibilities of peasant association clap ham clearly state that it:



It has its own administrative headquarters, its judicial tribunal, its shop, and its women's and youth organization. It provides the structure through which to run aid projects and literacy campaigns, to get out the crowd for obligatory demonstration. Its armed guard's police the streets at night, enforce the curfew, and help to make Ethiopian cities remarkably free from violent crime. The peasant's association provides a similar range of services with additional responsibilities imposed by the requirement of control under the rural economy. Its most important function is to allocate the basic economic resources, land among its member families. It may also select families in eroded highland areas for resettlement in the south and west and serves as the basic unit for the vilagization programmed. [73]

As far as the contribution of peasant associations in Wombärma Wäräda was concerned, they were instrumental in providing vital contribution for the improvement of the production of peasant's cultivation. [74] They were also important involving in different campaigns for development. In this regard, the association played a pivotal role in leading the society for tree planting, road building and soil conservation programs in Wombärma Wäräda. [75]

The contribution of these associations for the distribution of land in the area under study is the major issue that should be discussed. In fact, distribution of land was the phenomenon of 1979 and 1980 that took place with the collaboration of the ministry of agriculture. [76] In Wombärma, the committee elected from peasant associations in the year 1979. The committee assessed the ownership of land in the Wäräda and based on the possessed extra land possessed by some individuals was redistributed to the landless farmers in the Wäräda. [77] Concerning the amount of land distributed by the committee, it differs from one peasant association to the other. In those areas where land was abundant, peasants relatively gained large amount of land in those areas where the population density was high, there was a scarcity of land and as a result, landless peasants were given very small and infertile plots of lands. [78]

The frequent redistribution of land resulted in reactions from different groups of the society, important in one place, negligible in another. This program was beneficiary for the artisans, potters and the poor who lived in the town and its surroundings areas like Wägädad and Markuma. Nevertheless, it is difficult to say that the distribution of land to this group of people was fair. [79] Moreover, the measure that took place on land consequently leads in eroded the confidence of the people to cultivate the land they owned before until the end of the program. Directly or indirectly, this affected the productivity of farmers and deterioration of the environment of the Wäräda under discussion. [80] Fragmentation of farmland was among the major problems of land distribution in the Wäräda. This is attested by a report made after land distribution that entails the average ownership of farmland by peasants of Wombärma Wäräda between the years 1984-1986 was only 2-5 hectares. [81]

Membership in peasant associations was established as the central

element of the state rural bureaucracy and become obligatory for all farmers. The leadership of the peasant associations was entitled to expropriate land from the land holders and distribute it equally among its members, which made the collectivity of the members of the peasant association proprietors of the land. In Wombärma Wäräda the proclamation ruled out the option of migration because usufruct rights were tied to the membership in the peasant association of origin. Thus, many peasant associations gradually faced scarcity of land to be distributed to new claimants. [82]

In Wombärma Wäräda, peasant associations, therefore, had to redistribute land not only of those who had married out or left but also that which had been assigned to farming families. This redistribution was often insufficient to meet growing demands due to land scarcity. The scale and frequency of redistribution differed in the various places and regions. [83] Redistribution occurred frequently in some densely populated districts in the province but in other localities, the peasant associations leadership allocated the land only once during the initial distribution of 1975-1976.

Towards the end of the 1980s, the Därg intensified the collectivization program with the promotion of agricultural cooperatives and the establishment of large-scale state farms. [84]

2.3 Co-operatives in Wombärma Wäräda:

2.3.1 Producers Co-operatives:

Agricultural producer cooperatives were formed by members of a peasant association by pooling their land, draught animals and farm implements. Head of the cooperative automatically became the head of the peasant association and thereby could exert substantial political control and power over all association members. [85]

Peasants should enter producer cooperatives in Wombärma Wäräda during the Därg period were at their free will, but sometimes forceful implementation occurred. Still in 1984, only two percent of peasant associations members were engaged in agricultural producer's cooperatives and the productivity of cooperatives remained significantly lower than that of small-scale producers. [86]

Regardless of the weak economic performance of collectivization, "the single most important feature of the revolution" was the mass organization in the rural areas and the capture of the peasantry into a system of state control. Members of producer cooperatives held access rights but more indirect withdrawal rights in that they received payments from the cooperative even though often in kind. While the peasant association held collective choice rights of the land. The producer cooperatives committee also had collective choice rights of exclusion and management other the resources of the producer cooperatives. [87]

Gojjam in general and Wombärma Wäräda in particular had been considered among few areas with high potential of agricultural production. [88] To increase the way, they cultivate and



development agricultural production, the state was dedicated a render support the peasants. It is evident that, throughout the first decade of its rule, the government involved in introducing development programs by giving enormous concern on associations and collectivization as solution to promote production. Producers co-operatives were established as agricultural institutions as a means to scale up productivity by the state. [89]

This program was introduced on the 1979 declaration that stipulated “the establishment of agricultural producer’s cooperatives” with the intention of promoting group farming among peasants. [90] In Wombärma Wārāda, it was established by the amalgamation of a minimum of three different peasant associations in the adjacent areas. Based on this, in Wombärma nine producer’s cooperatives were established and from these, it was only one association that was acknowledged by the state. [91] Moreover, the establishments of producer cooperatives controlled the most fertile and large plots of land in the respective qābāle. Some of my informants who were not members of the producer cooperatives express the establishment of the producer cooperatives as “ruthless eviction of most of the farmers who did not want to join the producer cooperative agrees with the idea of the above ideas. [92]

They testify their ideas by mentioning different small holders who were forced to migrate to qola zone in search of farmland. As pointed out, encouraging collective farming was the major function of producer’s cooperatives. However, establishing producer cooperatives and making large number of peasants under the umbrella of this association by the state in Wombärma Wārāda was hardly successful. [93] The majority of peasants preferred to abandon the association and favored to farm in isolation. In significant number of peasants however, joined and established only one-producer cooperatives in the Wārāda. To influence and increase peasant membership of producer cooperatives, Wārāda officials used different techniques to persuade and attract those who refused to join the association. [94] For instance, in the Wārāda peasants, who were members of producer’s cooperatives, were given priorities in the support they wanted to have from the Wārāda officials. This approach was in fact encouraged by the central government. It was more pronounced by the 1978 proclamation of “Rural land use fee and agricultural activities income tax Amendment” issued on Nāgarit Gazēta. The proclamation clearly stated that “a farmer who is a member of cooperatives shall pay birr 5 and a farmer who is not a member shall pay birr 10. This was an intended to make those private peasants join producer cooperatives. [95] The stance of the regime towards producer cooperatives can be described as they were taken as “... spearheads for the collectivization of peasant agriculture ... given maximum official support for producer cooperatives. To criticize the actual performance of producer cooperatives was considered a counter revolutionary act”. [96] When the producer cooperatives were dissolved just before the fall of the Dārg regime, the producer cooperatives land was

redistributed of only its members on the family basis. Therefore, members of the producer received more land by virtue of membership. This trend had created discontent among smallholders who were not members of the producer cooperatives. [97]

To the country the establishment of farmer’s producer cooperatives resulted in the departure of a considerable number of peasants from peasant associations. This was because peasants of Wombärma Wārāda were suspicious towards the newly introduced cooperative.

Local informants in elucidating their suspicion, told me that We are here because we are deprived of our identity because our white barn is about to take over. If we join peasant association the nāč läbašh begin to control our produce and it is obvious that we will lose our economic freedom totally). Briefly, the attempt by the state to implement this program in wombarma warada was discouraging, as peasants refused to join because of this and other factors. [98]

The agriculture sector of Ethiopia was organized by the so called ‘social unions’ which was directly copied from Soviet Union and implemented throughout the agrarian areas. The producer cooperatives in the Wārāda had the following facts. Firstly, the producer cooperatives were not established with the concordance of farmers. Secondly, even though, the member farmers and their family worked day and night, they were not earning appropriate benefit. Thirdly, the leaders of the unions were not elected with the participation of the producer cooperatives members. Rather; they were proposed and nominated by the higher leader of the Dārg. Because of this, the nominated union leaders were collecting the yield and gave it like a gift for the one who nominated them in the position. [99] In addition, peasant’s union, were used as instrument for the political party and its members. In the Wārāda, there were 51 producer cooperatives which were famous throughout Ethiopia for its productivity. For instance, Wogādad and Markuma producer cooperatives were famous even after the abolishment of the military government and replaced by other administrative system. [100]

2.3.2 Service Co-operatives:

The service co-operatives were also established in Wombärma Wārāda by the combination of four to six peasant associations. In other wards fifty – one peasant associations in Wombärma Wārāda established six service cooperatives. [101] Providing necessary services to members was the major function of the service cooperatives. Another function of the service cooperatives was the purchase of grain from peasants in the member peasant association. [102]

In Wombärma Wārāda, there were eight service cooperatives and two of them were registered by the state. Here, it is important to note that the registration of associations meant acquiring accreditation from the government. Between the years 1984 and 1986, this cooperative had the capital of 410,600 birr. The service



cooperatives bought grain such as wheat, teff, barely, oil seeds, peas, chickpeas and sold them to Agricultural Marketing Co-operation (AMC). [103]

For instance, in Wombärma Wäräda wheat, was bought at a price of birr 35 per quintal and sold at a price of birr 40. Hence, the service cooperatives earned birr 5 as a profit from each quintal. The other and the most important service provided by these cooperatives was the unending of household goods through membership card such as sugar, salt and coffee. [104]

Household commodities and different supplies like soap, match, bed spread, nail, dry cell batteries, exercises books with pens and pencil and others were distributed to their members at lower prices in their respective shops. The shops of the cooperatives were well organized and administered by salaried workers. As a result, they were efficient in providing good service to their members as and they were profitable. [105] Besides, the payment for membership that ranged from 5-15, according to the size of the household, served as other source of income for the service cooperatives. The accumulated money in Wombärma Wäräda by the service cooperative was hence the largest amount as compared to all of the Wärädas in Qola Däga Damot provinces. To this end, the largest amount of money registered as the capital of cooperatives next to Wombärma was the cooperatives in Däga Damot. [106]

According to the report this Wäräda had the capital of birr 323,760 with thirteen cooperatives which were more than the number of cooperatives in Wombärma Wäräda. Here, it is worth nothing that relatively small number of service cooperatives in the Wäräda accumulated the largest amount of money for their association. [107]

The number of service cooperatives was reduced from time to time because of continuous reorganization. Two or more neighboring parishes of manageable size merged together to form one service cooperatives. The present service cooperatives reorganization continued and today there are four service cooperatives, which have been established since 1980. Wagädad Service Co-operatives which has been established by the union of Gomär and Lägässäma peasant association. [108] It still functions in supplying of inputs distributing of commodities and buying of from the discussion with the farmer Wärädas peasant association chairman and the present Wäräda council chairman about the number of qäbäle administration and service cooperatives in the Wäräda. [109]

By the end of the 1980s, however, the profitability and reputation of these institutions from the public deteriorated. Some of them failed even to open their shops in their fixed working days. The rest failed to deliver all the necessary commodities and satisfy its members as expected. The amount and variety of commodities which was available in, strokes of this association radically diminished and apparently, the prices were increased. [110] Finally, customers lost confidence in their associations and began to return to the shops in the town. The order by the government to peasants to sell at least one quintal from their produce to service

cooperatives relatively with a minimum price exacerbated these institutions played pivotal role for their failure of the service cooperatives in Wombärma Wäräda. [111]

In general, during the Därg period the Wäräda went through several changes, which were sometimes marked by the introduction of new socio-economic and political programmers. [112] With the adoption of Zämča and the subsequent activities in many areas of the Wäräda government proclamation like the land reform, the establishment of peasant associations, producers and service cooperatives were put in place.

The initial years of the new regime in the Wäräda were met by confusion of the local populace, which was used by the political elites of the old order to destabilize the Wäräda. As a result, the first two or three years of the Därg rule, peasant fervor was common. Moreover, the peasants of the Wäräda did not welcome the introduction of producers and service COOPERATIVES. [113]

3. Socio-Economic Developments of Wombärma Wäräda:

Although relatively significant changes were witnessed after the revolution in terms of `infrastructure, Qola Däga Damot Awraja was sluggish generally and Wombärma Wäräda particularly. The first reason for the low-level development of public institutions was that though the annual budget allocated by the imperial government was greater than the annual tax collected from the region, it was not significant enough to construct institutions to serve the society. Moreover, the budget allocated for the Wäräda was allowed mainly to pay government employees and for pre-Diem and transportation purposes.

Secondly, the low level of income of the inhabitants of the region was also responsible for the existence of weak infrastructural and social service development. Neither individually nor in-group was capable enough to build social institutions which could provide social service for the people.

3.1 Educational Service:

Prior to the introduction of modern education in Wombärma Wäräda, traditional education was dominant. The two prominent institutions that provided traditional education were churches and Mosques. According to informants, in Šhindi Bisrat Gäbriel there were four main church education teachers, and many students. [114] Education is the basic component of human resource and development which is a means of raising political and social consciousness, increasing the number of skilled workers, raising the level of trained manpower, there by facilitating creativity and innovation and increasing opportunities to individuals for better lives. [115]

The economic and social development of any country depends on the scope and level of the people's education. [116] Education in



Ethiopia goes back to the fourth century. [117] For about, 1,500 years the church controlled most of the traditional educational institutions. [118] However, education in Ethiopia has undergone tremendous changes since the nineteenth century as a result of government policies that have attempted to improve basic education. [119]

Historically, secular modern education was a recent phenomenon of the early twentieth century. The need for modern skilled manpower made it imperative in the last years of Menelik II's reign. [120]

One means of combating backward traditional outlooks and to spread modernization in the introduction of modern education. It was during the post-Adwa period that modern education was introduced and groups of modern intellectual started to appear in Ethiopia. [121] At first, modern schools were established by European missionaries in Ethiopia at the end of the nineteenth century. [122] The foundation of such schools continued in the period after European missionaries in Ethiopia sent to Europe some Ethiopian students for farther education. The Ethiopian state, too, was interested in establishing modern schools in the country. [123] That was because the expanding bureaucracy needed not only educated officials for service in the diplomatic field but also various types of clerks, accountants etc. [124] Therefore, schools were established by the state, which were to serve as means to produce educated civil servants. [125]

According to the world book encyclopedia, education in its broad senses refers to the ways in which people learn skills and gain knowledge and understandings about the world and themselves. [126] As it is also defined in the oxford advanced learners dictionary of current English fifth edition, it is a systematic training and instruction, knowledge and abilities, development of character and mental powers resulting from such training. [127]

Education is the base for the development of human society. It provides strength and resilience to people to respond to changing situations and enables them to cause and contribute to societal development through development of their attitudes, capabilities both of knowledge and skills. [128] A healthy and educated population is crucial for economic and social advancement. Education is therefore an essential investment in people and as such a pre-requisite for equitable and sustainable development. [129] It is obvious that literate people are more productive than illiterate ones. An educated family has access to broad range of opportunities, educated farmers are more receptive to new ideas and technology, educated children and they are also open to the

general friends in education. Therefore, there is no doubt that the socio-economy of the society would be more meaningful if everybody gets access to primary education. [130]

All these boosted Wombärma to have a special place in the course of traditional education. Indeed, Crummey stated that "the Lake Tana region was perhaps the most urbanized region in the country partly because it was a center of learning." [131] The idea of Crummey seems also true to Wombärma. In the first place, its location as part of Lake Tana region and secondly, a center of learning its urban growth and fame might have been attributed to traditional education. [132]

Modern education in Wombärma Wäräda was begun in 1964. [133] By then, the teaching learning process was carried out in a thatched roof house that was constructed by community participation. The name of the then teachers was Tädela Kassa and Bälay Simachäw. In 1966, the school was transferred from Wobo Bär to Arbagäl bar. [134] The new site of the school was in front of the present-day market site. The main reasons for the shift of the school to its new site were the growing number of students and the inappropriate location of the former school site. [135] As the school couldn't accommodate the large number of student's it became necessary to have additional classrooms. Classroom made of stone walls also built beside the town of Arbagäl Bär. [136] Here, parallel to the steady growth of number of students, the number of teachers was increased from two to six. [137]

The imperial government initiated a comprehensive study of the education system. The Education Sector Review (ESR) recommended attaining universal primary education, realizing the curricula through the inclusion of informal training, equalizing educational opportunities and relating the entire system to the national development process. [138] However, the educational sector review was not published until February 1974. By contrast, the Därg invested relatively highly in education, in particular through the expansion of schools in rural areas and by launching an adult education program called the literacy campaign. [139] Different sources attested that in the early hours of this program, the majority of students and teachers involved in the campaign were happy. For instance, in their travel the campaign had expressed their support and devotion for the successful execution of the program in different ways. The following couplet was changed by the groups of people during their travel to the rural area was the case in point.

It's a campaign, it's a campaign

From the land of Ethiopia to spread ignorance



I am to leave for campaign; I am leaving for the countryside:

To wipe illiteracy out from the land of Ethiopia:

Wombärma Wārāda also beneficiaries from this literacy campaign from 1975-1976, students who were completed from grade ten and those who came from the Federal government can unite together and teach those who were not the ability to read and write. Abba Wubalä Mängstie gave his house for this voluntarily purposes. [140] It has grades from one up to six. And the opening of the school created a good educational opportunity to the children of the town in habitants as well as the surrounding areas. [141]

However, serious problem began to appear after the students had completed grade six. In order to continue their further education, they should go to other towns like Buré, Finotä- sälam, Däbrä-Markos and the like, where Junior and secondary schools were found. [142] Because of this fact, many of them were unable to continue further grades. Only a few of them who had either relatives or a wealthy family background was able to proceed further education. [143]

To alleviate the problem parents organized a committee and appealed to the governor of the town. [144] After identifying the problem the governor and parents collaborate of the community, opened grade seven in 1981. [145]

Expansion of educational institutions and services in the Wārāda remained in significant particularly after the 1974 Ethiopian revolution. According to informants, in the history of Wombärma Wārāda the construction of different modern educational institutions was begun in 1974 in different qäbäle association. One primary school in Šhindi town was established in 1964 and another two primary schools were established in Gomär and Ačhigie. The school was built by Elementary School Building Unit [ESBU] a Swedish non - governmental organization. The school had eight rooms; one for staff, one office and six classrooms. It had grades from one up to six and the opening of the school created a good educational opportunity to the children of the area inhabitants as well as the surrounding areas. As administrators of the schools, the Wārāda governors were responsible to the kola Däga Damot provincial government. The Orthodox Church had also played a big role in interfering in the internal and external affairs of the schools.

In post 1974, the military government dismantled the feudal socio-economic structure through a series of reforms that also affected the educational sector. By the early 1975, the government closed Hailä- Selassie University and all senior secondary schools and had deployed some 60,000 students and teachers to rural areas

to participate in the government's development through cooperation campaign Program. The military government also worked towards a more even distribution of schools by concentrating its efforts on small towns and rural areas that had been neglected during the imperial regime. [146]

In 1998 the Wārāda had 18 primaries, 8 junior secondary and 1 senior secondary school with 27,075 students of which 11,372 were females and 15,703 were males. In this year, the number of teachers with degree and diploma were 5 and 90 respectively. In 2002, it had 29 primaries, 5 junior and 1 senior secondary school with 36,546 students of which 19,050 were females and 17,490 were males. In this year, the number of teachers with diploma was 120 and there were 10 with degree. [147]

3.2 Health:

With respect to health, the main concerns were the need to address issues of adequate supply and staffing of health services including to improve drug supply and to retain health personnel and equipping newly constructed facilities. [148] The government's health strategy has targeted the most common poverty related diseases: malaria, TB childhood illnesses, HIV/AIDS and measures to improve the health of mothers and children. [149] In 2002, Wombärma Wārāda had three health centers and 16 health posts with no doctors, one health officers, twenty nurses, one health assistants and Six Midwifery. Similarly, there are six animal health clinics and there are seven officers. [150]

As far as development of health institutions for both human and animals in the Wārāda are concerned, there was relatively better improvement and expansion after the 1974 revolution than during the imperial government that more health centers were established in the town as well as in the rural areas of the Wārāda. [151] The newly established health centers were also not proportional to the number and distribution of the population. During the imperial government only a single health center in the town of Wombärma was established in the 1950s clinics were constructed in different farmer villages. Similar to educational facilities health centers to the Wārāda were limited to the town. [152]

Throughout the Imperial and the Därg period the peoples of the Wārāda remained far from modern health services though their inhabitant was known for malaria and yellow fever which claimed the lives of the natives, the central government did not pay attention to solve this social problem. [153] In addition to human disease, trypanosomiasis which forced the natives to remain without livestock did not get the attention of the central government. In fact, Malaria eradicating center and veterinary center were established in the 1950's and 1960's respectively. [154]

However, due to lack of trained professionals and equipments



these institutions could not solve the problems. Health centers found in the town and rural areas was the imbalance between the number of patients and the capacity of these health institutions. [155] Due to the remoteness of the area, health professionals were not happy to serve the community for a long period. Internal parasites, diarrhea, rheumatic, gastritis, eye diseases, malaria, skin diseases, sexual transmitted disease and Goiter are found in Wombärma Wäräda.

There is a high and increasing rate of incidence of disease in the Wäräda. Water born such as intestinal parasite amoebas, dyspepsia and the recent phenomenal expansion of malaria epidemic to previously safe areas in the region is also the problem of the Wäräda. [156] Inadequate solid waste collection and disposal system, insufficient health service delivery due to shortage of drugs and inadequate room for services are the major health problems explained. Still, the health situations of many Ethiopians remain very poor and the system is not yet able to meet the demand. [157] These and other diseases frequently attack the community both in rural and urban, but the degree of attack differ from urban to rural and within the rural and urban dwellers.

Wombärma Wäräda has got its health service with the establishment of its first clinic in 1950s. [158] The clinic gives its function to the town inhabitants and neighboring rural areas. However, the health services of the Wäräda did not meet the demands of the inhabitants. Thus, for better and higher treatment most of the time peoples are forced to go Finotä- Sälam and Bahir Dar Hospital. [159] Malaria is an epidemic disease in Wombärma Wäräda, usually reaching a peak in the months of October and November. The principal vector was certainly by far the most abundant species of the malaria mosquito in the Wäräda in September and October. The pools of water accumulating after the rains and the grass of swamps in many parts of the Wäräda served as ideal breeding places of these mosquitoes. The rivers that traversed Wombärma, Fätam, Kotlan, Zingeni added the breeding because stagnant water accumulated in their partially dry beds.

In Šhindi town of Wombärma Wäräda the first health centers established during the time of Fitawrari Birhanu Tayä, the former administrators of Guagsa Wombärma Wäräda. This health centers built near Kotlan River that serves as drinking water and irrigation purposes.

Now days this health centers become replaced and transferred to Wombärma Bär. The main reason for the change of the location of this health centers were its remoteness of the people of the town. In addition to this, the geographical setting of the area is not suitable for transportation service. Clinics also built in Wägädad, Gomär and Ačhigie in 1981. These clinics have not sufficient manpower and drugs. The objectives of the establishment of clinic were in order to reduce mortality by malaria. There is one junior

nurse in both clinics. Before, the establishment of these clinics, patients can be diagnosed from Šhindi health clinics in Wombärma town. Health indicators reveal that the current health situations of the district are no better condition. Population that gets access to health service is below the standard but the situation, is better compared to the near past periods (years). [160]

3.3 Water Supply:

Ethiopia, often referred to as the “Water tower of North East Africa” [161] is one among few African countries with enormous water resources. This enormous natural wealth, however, has had a pronounced effect on the geo-political and socio-economic life of the country and its people and on its relationship with neighboring countries.

By African standards, Ethiopia is a country of a large number of lakes and rivers. These rivers descend from the various highlands to low lying areas. [162] They flow energetically to different directions. Water is an indispensable resource for the survival of life on earth. [163] Every movement of living thing either one place to another or growth in specific area is attached to the availability of water. The value /price/ given for water is not according to its usefulness for its presence everywhere and fully year drain. The available underground water is the great future potential of development. [164] The source of water for home utilization is mainly from river, tap water, well and pond for rural and tap water for urban dwellers of the total population in the district. [165]

In Wombärma Wäräda there are four important rivers, they are Fätam, Zegeni, Kotelan and Barte. [166] The topography of the Wäräda is suitable to exploit the potential of these rivers. [167] Currently, there is not any infrastructure to ensure a systematic conservation of these waters’ bodies even in the context of human domestic consumption. For instance, activities of both government and non-governmental organizations observable in other areas, in constructing deep water wells to improve the quality of drinking water are absent in this area. The Wäräda is endowed with large number of rivers and springs. Farmers use this water resource for irrigated crop production both with traditional and modern river diversion schemes. [168] In addition to the above modern river diversions a number of rivers are traditionally diverted and being used for irrigation. [169] Moreover 300 springs and 120 shallow wells are also used for irrigation. Therefore, the water resource in the Wäräda is widely utilized for irrigation. However, technical support on irrigation methods and selection of appropriate crop types and varieties is crucial to maximize the profitability of irrigation. Farmers use irrigation mainly for the production of horticultural crops using furrow irrigation method. [170]



Before the beginning of modern pipeline, the inhabitants of Wombärma Wäräda used the river of kotlan and the streams of Forächen as the source of water for their daily consumption. [171] The first well was dug in 1975 one kilometer a way north of the town. [172] The well had a depth of 45 meters and it had a good water reserve. The water from the well pumped by submersible 54 H2 pumps and through galvanized pipes goes to the reserve tanker.

The reserve tanker has a capacity of holding 40 thousand Liter cubic water. [173] From this tanker the water distributed to individual and public taps. In the town there are 600 individual and 6 public taps. [174] On the other hand, water well was dug in 1976 at Wägädad. During the Därg regime Wägädad were a strategic place for agricultural products and mechanized farming began in this area. Qäbäle peasant associations also formed during this time. Then, the number of peoples began to increase but there is not sufficient water in the area. Tadässä Minalu began to mobilize the people in order to dug well water from the ground. Finally, the people of Wägädad became beneficiary from well water. Initially, the water reserve of the town was sufficient to its inhabitants. Gradually; however, it became unable to cope up with the increasing water demand of the population. Thus, the people turned back to use rivers and streams as sources of water. [175] And water shortage removed as a serious unsolved problem.

3.4 Transportation and Communication:

3.4.1 Road Transportation:

Without basic economic infrastructure, returns to government and private investment may be too low to spur dynamic growth; while the large, lumpy nature of infrastructure costs makes it hard to make the initial investments to break out of these traps. [176] The road network of the town at the end of 2000 was totals about 67km. [177] This includes 18km gravel and the left 49km dry weather roads as well as other road types that connect the town Šhindi with neighbors that stretches to 18km is also found. [178] In terms of transportation service development, it was only during the Italian period that infrastructures were significantly built generally in Wombärma Wäräda. [179] Throughout the imperial and the Därg regime, transportation using vehicles was possible only during the dry season. The roads were neither asphalted nor graveled. [180]

The common types of vehicles that gave transport service in the town were Land Rovers and Ford. The first person who brought car to the town was Mäkonnän Mäläsä (Shindi). [181] The

community called Mäkonnän father name by the town of Šhindi, due to his contribution to the town. The Ethiopian Road Transport Authority is a public authority responsible for the use of all roads within Ethiopia, vehicles using these roads, and all matters relating to road transport activities. [182] The road transport administration was established in 1967 to administer the control and regulation of road travel and transport 1976, having undergone, restructuring, it was reorganized as the road and transport authority. [183] The Wäräda has 18Km weather gravel road and 49km dry weather road. It is nearby and connected by weather roads to Buré Wäräda. [184]

Therefore, Wombärma has good opportunity to sell its agricultural products in different regional states. The road density in the Wäräda is 32.24km² which is relatively higher than the average road network in Amhara National Regional State which is 36.72km (1000km² (BOFED, 2005). [185] This is good opportunity to easily transport agricultural inputs and products to and from peasant associations and marketplaces. [186]

Transportation is defined as the movement of goods and persons from place to place and the various means by which such movement is accomplished. [187] The growth, the ability and the need to transport large quantities of goods or numbers of people over long distances at high speeds in comfort and safety has been an indicator of civilization and in particular of technological progress. [188]

At the present our world has seen remarkable advancements in transportation by air, sea and land. Trucks and automobiles, ships, trains and jet airplanes made communication over long distances much easier and quicker than ever before. New transportation lines also led to the development of remote areas throughout the world. [189]

Road transportation is the most frequently used forms of transportation. [190] Domestic animals like donkeys, horses, mules and camels are widely used in Ethiopia to transport goods and peoples from place to place. [191] This road transportation had afar amount importance because of they are good to offer door-to-door delivery from the manufacturer to the customer without intermediate unloading and they operate on public high ways that do not require an extensive terminal or right off way as air lines and rail road's do. [192]

In ancient time man used to carry goods on his/her head and her back. This is still common in developing countries like Ethiopian. In Wombärma Wäräda, Animal transportation is the major



transportation means. [193] The trucking industry consists of common contract and private carriers. Trucks can handle freight quickly and economically, and they carry a wide range of shipments. [194]

In Wombärma Wäräda the road (gravel) with in 18km constructed in 1980 and rural road is there is the district that connects qäbäles with the town and or other qäbäles. [195] Due to the absence of public transportation the peoples of the Wäräda were suffered from illegal cars owners. [196] The car owner asks a high amount of money from the passengers. The present, Buré- Shindi rural road were constructed by the Ministry of Agriculture Social Development Agency. [197] But this road becomes damaged due to lack of continuous repair. In order to repair the road, the community become actively participated and pays five birr each household. [198] In addition, government also gives additional support to the construction of this rural road.

The people of the Wäräda are engaged agricultural way of life. The farmers can produce cash or market-oriented crop types. [199] Not only the people but also naturally the Wäräda have fertile soils which are very important in order to produce such kinds of market-oriented crop types. [200] Then, the peoples of the Wäräda need roads and transport activities. This is the reason that the society or the community can voluntarily to give money for the purpose of road construction. [201]

The Därg regime also formulated ten-year indicative rural roads construction program for administration regime of Gojjam. [202] In this ten-year plan project Buré- Šhindi rural road also one of the projects. Finally, this road ended in 1980. [203]

After the construction of the road the government ordered the transport agency in order to give services to Buré –Šhindi passengers the West Gojjam transport agency can be voluntarily and public transportation began in the Wäräda. [204]

In solving this problem, the then Wombärma governor Sämahägn Alämu in collaboration with other Wäräda governors and the Awraja governor actively participated in collecting money in cash from the community. Following the community contribution, the central government gave additional money and the road was rebuilt in 1991. [205]

The road become gives service to the peoples of the Wäräda and other peoples who needs transport service to the road. [206] The Wäräda people became very satisfied at the end of the reparation of the road. The active participation of the people, the road began give service in 1991.

3.4.2 Telecommunication and Postal Service:

Communication is one of the most fundamental elements necessary for the economy social and political development of any country. Communication service includes telecommunication, postal and media services. The history of the communication service in Ethiopia dates back to 1894 when various innovations were introduced in Ethiopia during the time of Emperor Menelik II. [207] Telecommunication plays a major role in the exchange of views and information dissemination among various socio-cultural and economic groups.

Telegram and postal communication services which began during the Italians invasions in the second half of the 1930s remained without significant improvement and expansion in the Wäräda. In both the imperial and the Därg periods a daily telegram service and two days per week postal services were provided only for the people of the town. [208]

During both regimes the rural and the indigenous people of the Wäräda in particular the town was not able to get communication services. In terms of economic activity and infrastructural development distribution in the Wäräda, Šhindi was advantageous than other places. This was because, Šhindi town which was the center of

The introduction of telephone service in Wäräda situated there and the majority of the people were beneficiaries. [209] Ethiopia dated back to the reign of Menelik II. Telephone service in Wombärma started in 1975. The type of the telephone it had was a manual that served with the help of an operator. [210] The first operator was Ato Dägäfaw Abäbä the telecommunication service which includes telephone, fax and postal services are provided and operated by both telecommunication and postal services branches of Wombärma Wäräda respectively. According to the recent time in 2002, the Wäräda got electric light day and night, before the mentioned year, the Wäräda got light only from generators. The maximum time the generator gives light to the people only four hours. [211]

Electricity is essential both as an input into the growth of the modern sector, which is needed to provide jobs and export earnings, but also an essential ingredient of the rural transformation agenda to provide the basis for businesses and production in small to medium – sized towns. According to the Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation, Wombärma Wäräda, there are 22,100 customers (residential) and 43,570 lines distributed for different services which totals 14,750 customers in the town supplied with light and power. [212] The electric power available at present according to EEPCO is 40 MW, while the actual demand is still minimal. The town got phone service at the end of 1995. [213]



The rural peoples of the Wārāda got light from generators four hours per day. Wägādād, Markuma, Gomār and Ačhigie rural qābāle peasant associations' beneficiaries from this generator light. Especially Wägādād was the most beneficiary from electric power due to the presence of different cooperatives from the area.

Like the telephone service, the beginning of modern postal service dated back to the reign of Menelik II. In 1894 the first postal stamp was issued in the country.

A decade later Ethiopia joined the international postal union. The first postal agent in the town was established 1965. [214] He served as an agent from 1965 to 1976. [215] After he ceased his service his son replaced him. [216] And he took his father's post from 1976 to 1991. At last, from 1991 onwards Šhmačhash kindie took the contract from Däbrä- Markos branch postal office to serve as an agent. [217]

The postal service of the town gave its function throughout the period in an individual house. [218] It did not give a service of renting boxes. The people of Wombärma Wārāda used only a single public box. The post office did not have their buildings. Still now the post office does their functions by renting house. The postal service of the Wārāda was still is at its infant stage. [219]

Conclusion:

The study focused on elaborating and analyzing the history of Wombärma Wārāda to the twentieth century. It tried to reconstruct the history of the Wārāda mainly focusing on local developments based on oral information and archival materials. As a result, the study, conceding that developing a comprehensive history of the Wārāda for the period under discussion is difficult has attempted to look in to some of the major local developments that had shaped the historical developments of the Wārāda in a local context. Using the major national contours of historical development for this period, the study has analyzed the history of the Wārāda taking into consideration local developments.

The first chapter deals about the general description of the Wārāda, location, population number the interaction and integration of this people to other neighboring Wārāda peoples. The strategic importance for economic activity due to the fertility of the soil also discussed. The restoration of the imperial regime was accompanied by many changes in the administration and as well as the economic lives of the people and elites of the Wārāda. Emperor Haliä- Selassie and his imperial government started to work on what they had left in 1935. In the effort of establishing a more consolidated centralized political power and expanding the government's economic base the regime pursued actively the task of introducing several administrative and land related reforms. In terms of administration, the government put in place successive administrative restructuring which were aimed at controlling the administrative apparatus of the country in a centralized way. This was also done to facilitate to implementation of the prevailing taxation system in a more organized and simple manner. Hand in hand, with this administrative structuring, the regime also concentrated on introducing one land related taxation policy after

the other in the years between 1942 and 1967.

The Wārāda had seen changes in relation to the attempt of the government to introduce such administrative and taxation restructuring. The study found out that the Pleasants of the Wārāda had opposed introduction of the land – related taxes in different ways. The level of reaction was the most aggressive and violent as it had been in some districts of Gojjam and peasants had resisted the implementation of the different land related taxes of the period. Nevertheless, peasants were not the only social groups who had voiced out their dissatisfaction on the measure the central government took. Members of the nobility and the aristocrats were also challenged the regime in different ways. Thus, the study concludes that one of the reasons for the downfall of the imperial regime was the measures it had successively taken had gradually alienated it from the people of the country.

The study has also found out the downfall of emperor Hailä-Selassie and the majority of the people of the Wārāda relieved the subsequent installation of the Därg regime in 1974 in astonishment. The military Junta began to establish its power base by introducing several socialist oriented policies that it through, where relevant to deal with the socio-economic and political problems of the country. In this regard, one of the programs of Därg that was launched in the Wārāda against illiteracy was somewhat successful. It was one of the biggest successes of the Därg regime in the country in general and in the Wārāda in particular. In contrast, the people of the Wārāda did not welcome the programs the regime had introduced like producer cooperatives and service cooperatives. As a result, the implementation in most cases was fraught with strong resistance from the people which eventually led to the demise of the regime.

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