



ADMINISTRATIVE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC HISTORY OF GEDEB HASASA WOREDA,
WEST ARSI ZONE FROM 1941-1991

MADDA WALABU UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

BY

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JAN. 2025

BALE-ROBE

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BALE- ROBE

Declaration

I, Mohammed Haji, hereby declare that this MA thesis entitled “Administrative and Socio-Economic History of Gedeb Hasasa Woreda from 1941-991” is my original work and has not been submitted to the award of any degree in any other university, and all source of material used for this thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Student Name: _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Certification

This is to certify that the candidate known as Mohammed Haji has produced an MA thesis entitled “Administrative and Socio-Economic History of Gedeb Hasasa Woreda from 1941-991” submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of master of art in History and Heritage Studies. Therefore, I certify that the student has fulfilled the requirements and hence, the thesis submitted is correct.

Advisor Name: Bijiga Gerba (Asst. Prof.)

Signature: _____ Date _____

Approval Sheet

As members of the board of examiners and thesis research advisor, of the final open defense by Mohammed Haji have read and evaluated his thesis entitled “**Administrative and Socio-Economic History of Gedeb Hasasa Woreda from 1941-991**” and examined the candidate. This is; therefore, to certify that the thesis has been accepted as fulfilling the thesis requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in History and Heritage Studies.

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Name of External Examiner	Signature	Date
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Abstract

This study aims to reconstruct the administrative and socio-economic history of reconstructing Gedeb Hasasa Woreda from 1941-991. The study used a qualitative research method and a purposive sampling technique. Interview, FGD, and archival document reviews were used as data collection tools. The study begins with a review of the history of Gada Hasasa, focusing on different historical developments that occurred after the end of the Italian occupation in 1941. The administrative history and territorial extension of Gedeb Hasasa were changed through time due to the political development and nature of the expanding powers. Agriculture is the most common economic activity of the rural population of the woreda. The farming system in the woreda is mixed farming of animal rearing and crop production. Trade also contributed to the economy of the study area. The factors that affected the study area were both natural and artificial factors, including the lack of infrastructure, lack of transportation system, and farming techniques that significantly affect the people and their production, including the expansion of road networks and modern residential houses, expansion of social services like the official recognition of muuda ceremony, expansion of literacy and the economic and social life of the people in Gedeb Hasasa woreda was negatively affected as insecurity of land tenure and heavy taxation system during the reign of Haile Sillassie. After Derg took power, several measures were taken, such as nationalizing land in rural areas, ending landlordism, and distributing land to landless peasants. Gedeb Woreda has made some improvements in the socio-economic administration, followed by the conflicts and maladministration under the EPRDF regime. The study concludes that though the woreda was naturally endowed with fertile land, the impacts of the political system during the different periods became the major obstacle to their economy. Though there were relatively some changes in 1941-1991 in the Gedeb Hasasa woreda, the development of infrastructure that provides public and private services for the community was not as promising during the periods under discussion.

Abbreviations

FGD- Focus Group Discussion

GHW – Gedeb Hasasa *Woreda*

Lists of Acronyms

Aadde/Wäyizaro - a title equivalent to ‘Mrs’

Ato/obbo - a title equivalent to ‘Mr’

Woreda - an administrative unit below the province/zone

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Preface

In this study, an attempt has been made to reconstruct the administrative and socio-economic history of Gedeb Hasasa *Woreda* from 1941-991. In dealing with this subject, both primary and secondary sources were used. From the primary sources, the archival materials which are found in the *woreda* culture and tourism archives of different public institutions and information from interview with knowledgeable informants have become very useful. In the category of secondary sources, the works of different scholars such as historians and others are very important. Topic related documents such as information from audio media such as information from Television were utilized. However, there was scarcity of sources/information/ in the area of study in the public libraries and archives. I visited different government offices in the Gedeb Hasasa *woreda*. The office of culture and tourism, the office of Agriculture, Health, Trade and others were visited. But there were no well-organized works and documents. They only assisted me in providing oral information and most of the sources for writing up the history of the *woreda* have become oral sources. This research attempts to analyze the administrative and socio-economic history of Gedeb Hasasa *Woreda* from 1941-991. The thesis has four chapters. Chapter one deals with geographical and historical background of the study area. Chapter two focus on the foundation of Gedeb Hasasa *Woreda* and its administrative history (1941-1991). Chapter three deal with socio-economic history of Gedeb Hasasa *Woreda* (1941-1973). Chapter four concern about socio-economic development in Gedeb Hasasa *Woreda* (1974-1991).

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Chapter One: Introduction

1. Geographical and Historical Background

1.1. Geographical Setting

After 2004, for the sake administrative purposes, the Oromia regional government had separated the Arsi into two in which East Arsi was located up to Bekoji with Asella as its administrative zone seat whereas the area from Hasasa to Dodola and Adaba became West Arsi using Shashamane as its administrative seat. This zone is named after a subgroup of the Oromo, who inhabit it. It covers an area of 11,776.72 km², divided into 12 districts (*weredas*). The population was officially estimated at 2,929,894 in mid-2022. The administrative center of this zone is Shashamane, with an estimated 208,368 inhabitants in mid-2022; other towns in this zone (with estimated populations in mid-2022) include Arsi Negele (98,114) in Arsi Negele District, Dodola (43,186) in Dodola District, Asassa (42,867) in Gedeb Asasa District, Kofele (27,948) in Kofele District, and Adaba (25,098) in Adaba District¹.

Gedeb Hasasa woreda, the focus of this study, is located in the West Arsi zone, Oromia Regional State. It was formerly among the 26 woredas of East Arsi zone whereas currently, it is one of the West Arsi zone woredas. It shares the name from one of the river found in Hasasa Town, named as “Hasasa-Sound” in Afan Oromo. Concerning the geographical setting, Gedeb Hasasa woreda is bordered in the North West by Kore woreda, in the Northeast by Honkolo Wabe woreda; in the west by Kofale woreda, in the south by Dodola and Southwest by Kofale woredas. Currently, there are 25 rural kebeles and one administration. Gedeb is a woreda and its capital city is Hasasa².

Since socio-economic interactions and activities are practiced in specific geographical settings, the preliminary geographical information about the area of study is very important for the reason that geography can be considered as the major factor for the productivity, types of crops, animal husbandry and related social lives.

¹ West Arsi zone Environmental Protection Office, 2023

² *ibid*

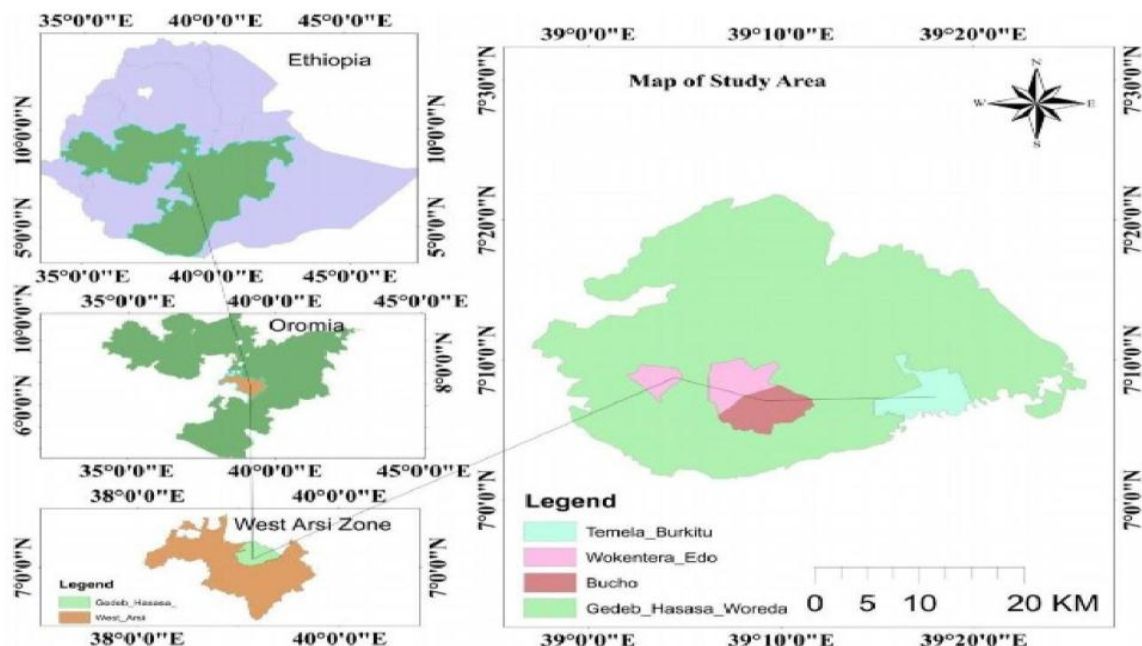


Fig. 1.1 Map of the Study Area

1.2. Socio-Economic Development Activities

1.2.1. Agriculture

Agriculture is the most common economic activity of rural population of Gedeb Hasasa *woreda*. Farming system in the *woreda* is mixed farming both animal rearing and crop production³.

1.2.2. Livestock production

Livestock production plays a significant role in Ethiopia's economy. Estimates for 1987 indicated that livestock production contributed one-third of agriculture's share of GDP, or nearly 15% of total GDP. Hides and skins constituted the second largest export earner, average about 15 percent of the total export value during the period 1984/85 to 1988/89; live animals averaged around 3 percent of the total values of exports during the same period⁴.

For Arsi Oromo cattle were the main source of income and economic back bone of the society. As a result, they would move from place to another place in search of good grazing land, since they had priority for their cattle. Arsi Oromo, like all other Oromo groups are cattle breeders, in which they had their own indigenous system of livestock rearing. This is because Arsi land is favorable for livestock

³ Gedeb Hasasa Rural and Agricultural development office, 2024

⁴ Tākalign Wāldā Mariam. "A City and its Hinterlands: The Political Economy of Land Tenure, Agriculture and Food Supply for Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 1887-1974." PhD. Dissertation: Boston University, 1995.

rising and considered as their original economy. The Arsi Oromo had developed high economic and cultural value for their cattle and they depended up mostly on animal and their product for survival. For the Arsi, the cattle represented dignity, a source of pride, prestige, and most loved domestic animal in Arsi culture. Therefore, they had well known by possess of many livestock⁵.

Gedeb Hasasa is one of the districts with large number of livestock from Arsi zone. The high prevalence of disease, traditional method of rearing, shortage of the feeds and the like are the major constraints in livestock production in the district. The most common types of domestic animals like cattle, sheep, horse donkey etc... The gap between rich and poor existed on the basis of the number of cattle the individuals' owned⁶.

1.2.3. Farming

In ancient time, the economic activity of Oromo in general and Arsi Oromo in particular was dominated by herding of animals. But, gradually they started farming. The development of ox powered agriculture in Arsi area can be traced back to the late 19th century particularly plowing by oxen more expanded after the imperial incorporation. But now in Gedeb Hasasa woreda, most farming activities are carried out by tractors. The land cultivated during the *Bona (winter) season* accounts the largest area of the total cultivated land in the district. The major crops growing in the district are cereals such as Barley, *teff*, Wheat and maize are the most widely grown inthe district⁷.

1.2.4. Trade

The striking thing about trade as aspect of economic activity is their insignificant role in the national economy. In the 1960s, trade constituted a mere 7% of the gross domestic product and there was low circulation of goods in Ethiopia and a low volume of export commodities. The trade pattern, too, reflected the predominantly agricultural character of the country. Agricultural products constituted the bulk of the country's export. Coffee accounts 65% of export commodities followed by hides and skins; next came Pulses and oil seeds were exported on a very small scale. With regard to the nature of the country's trade partnership, it reflected its international alignment. Forty percent of the country's trade was with the United States, which absorbed about 70% of the total coffee export. On the import side, however, the United States came third after Italy and Japan. The balance of trade was generally unfavorable to Ethiopia, a situation aggravated by the steadily declining price of export and the rising price of imports. With respect to internal trade, the commercial centrality of Addis Ababa, began in the late nineteenth century, was further consolidated.

⁵ ibid

⁶ Gedeb Hasasa Rural and Agricultural development office, 2024

⁷ Informants:- Churiso Fata and. Gammeda Dafo

According to the Oromia Finance and Economic Development Bureau, trade activity in Gedeb Hasasa and its Hasasa Town are very limited because of the absence of industrial activities as well as the people were not much participated in trade activity because of lack of enough capital.

Every market days, on Saturday and Tuesday peoples of the surrounding areas brought their agricultural products and sold them and brought different commodities such as salt, oil, sugar, kerosene and soap. While other goods that is not available in the surrounding area brought from different regions, such as from Dodolla, Walayta, and Bale. Hasasa market was attended by many merchants and farmers from different surrounding and distance areas. Tuesday and Saturday are the main weekly market day. The main important trade items which entered on this market day included all kinds of commodities including livestock.

According to information supplied by the Gedeb *woreda* Tourism and cultural office, the first abattoir was located along Asasa River. Later it was transferred to the present area of. Gobate . There was no slaughter house in Gedeb *woreda*. This resulted the negative effect for the source of hides and skins production. But in Hasasa and its surrounding areas there was a large number of hides and skins were existed during the holidays. Such as in Easter, New Year, Meskal, Id alfter, Ramadan and during the months (January and April) which marriage tend to be frequently took place.

1.2.5. Industry

The industrial development of the district is at its infant stage. All of them are small-scale industries, which are privately owned. Most of them are food-processing industries. In the district, there were about 51 (94.12% are grain mills) permanently licensed small-scale industries, with 1, 236, 226 birr capital providing a job opportunity for 122 labor forces. Other commercial activity consists of 1160 registered business of which 32.8 percent are whole sellers, 42.2 percent retailers and 19 percent service providers⁸.

1.2.6. Tourism

Due to lack of promotion and tourist amenities like standard hotels, roads and other social infrastructures, tourism economy is not yet developed in the Arsi Zone in general and Gedeb Hasasa district in particular. Similarly, meaningful survey and study are not conducted to assess tourist attraction sites potential of the area. However, there are beautiful environmental sceneries like Wabe Shabale Gorge in the district that can be tourist attraction sites⁹.

⁸ Gedeb Hasasa *woreda* Trade and Industry Office Report, 2024

⁹ Gedeb Hasasa *woreda* Culture and Tourism Office Report, 2024

1.3. Administrative History of Gedeb Hasasa Woreda

1.3.1. Gada system and its decline in Gedeb Hasasa Woreda

Gadaa system is essentially a home-grown (indigenous) democratic socio-political organization of the Oromoo people, the largest identity group among the Cushitic-speaking peoples who have inhabited Northeastern Africa in general and modern Ethiopia and Kenya in particular as long as recorded history indicates. Historically, gadaa has been considered as a democratic and just system than other forms of governance in the region. A number of scholars who have studied Oromoo gadaa system positioned gadaa as an African democracy that could inform constitutional thinkers. Asmarom (2000:262)¹⁰, one of the scholars who have meticulously studied the gadaa system, described this uniquely democratic system of the Oromoo people as:

One of those remarkable creations of the human mind that evolved into a full-fledged system of government. It contains genuinely African solution for some of the problems that democracies everywhere have had to face.

The Oromoo polity has been organized as three principal institutions: a) generational organization (gadaa), b) the religious institution (qallu), which is tied to dual organization, or the moiety and c) the general assembly (gumi), the highest law making body Asmarom (1973)¹¹. A full understanding of the gadaa system requires the comprehension of these interrelated and interacting institutions. Picking one aspect of the system for separate treatment may lead to erroneous conclusion. Gadaa system as an institution stands for systematically interrelated ideas that refer to various concepts ranging from ritual performances, law-making and adjudication, conflict resolution to political leadership.

The place of Africa in the history of democracy is often overlooked. The conceptualization of the postcolonial state in Africa is highly influenced by the present predicaments (i.e., civil wars, famine, corruption and others) of the continent.

In Gedeb Hasasa worda, the Gadaa system has been an egalitarian socio-economic, political and cultural system which had been practiced by the Gedeb-Hasasa society for a long time. It had been guiding and regulating the life of the people in relation to other peoples and their environment. The

¹⁰ Asmarom (2000:262): Oromo Democracy: An Indigenous African Political System. The Red Sea Press, Inc Bassi, Marco. Decisions in the Shade: Political and Juridical Processes among the Oromo-Borana. Translated by Cynthia Salvadori. The Red Sea Press Inc

¹¹ Asmarom, Legesse (1973) Gada: Three Approaches to the Study of African Society. New York: Free Press

respondents¹² in the study area also confirmed that Gadaa system has a great role in resolving conflicts that occur in a society by employing customary laws.

In the woreda, the roles of women in conflict resolution within Gadaa system, the constraints faced Gadaa system's institutions while resolving conflicts in the area were there. The study also came up with the historical roles of Gadaa system, procedures of conflict resolving and social structures of society. Though most of the key informants¹³ viewed conflict as inevitable and natural which could prevail in any society on the contrary, few of them viewed conflict as bad and destructive thereby showing the communal culture of practicing Gadaa system for Gedeb-Hasasa people in particular as well as for Oromo community in general.

1.4. The Italian Period (1936-1941)

1.4.1. Arsi and Gedeb Hasasa during the Italian Rule

Italy invaded Ethiopia on 3 October 1935 and their rule in the country continued until 1941 and the Italian told the Arsi Oromo that they came to “liberate” them from Amhara domination of Hailesilassie rule. The Arsi Oromo like the Italians because they ended the subjugation of the Amhara for them. In order to get acceptance from the local people, the Italians made laws to abolish the *gabbar* system; this gave relief for the peasants. The Italians thus had broken the power of local Amhara rulers and abolished the *gabbar* system. The Italians terminated payment of *asrat* and corvee labor. The Arsi peasants became free to cultivate their own land and harvest for their own benefits.

The Italians assigned traditional rulers as *cappo* (Italian representatives). Gameeda Bame, Turi Saddo, Abdela Gammeda, Fato Dheko, Elemo Jarra, and Haji Galgalu were the known *cappo*. Some well-known *cappo* in Gedeb were Galgalu Buta Dawud, *fitwurari* Goshime Galatu, Birmaji Elmi, Tuke Ayino, and *Zawde* Dame Biru. Dagafa Sime acted as a bridge between the Italian administration and the local people and he was one of the supporters of the Italians. He was remembered as *turjumana* (translator). Islam was fully recognized in Arsi region during the Italian period. The process of Islamic expansion and consolidation were taken place.

That was due to the fact that the people of Arsi and Gedeb in particular accepted that the Italians introduced several reforms and changes for the Arsi Oromo. The *muuda* ceremony gained official recognition during this period; many students began to go for higher education as far as Jimma, Harar, and Dire Dawa. Furthermore, the Italians gave official recognition to the pilgrimage to holy places in

¹² Informants: Aba Woyo and Gutama Bulala, abba gadas of the woreda interviewed on Aug. 2024

¹³ *ibid*

Saudi Arabia and even facilitated conditions for the pilgrims to go safely to Mecca and Medina. During this period the concept of *Arsumma* (Arsi brotherhood) revived. But before this period, the Arsi Oromo did not have contact with one another. These helped the Italians to get the trust and friendship of the Arsi Oromo.

In order to secure their colonial conquest of the country and securing the exploitation of its economic activity, and communicate to each other the fascist Italians were highly concentrated and emphasized on the installation of telephone line. The Italians also were remembered in the construction of roads. Above all, one of the negative impacts of the Italian occupation was the development of prostitution. It was considerably expanded in rural areas during the Italian period. Such kind of activity was started by the Italian soldiers and workers. They were strongly focused their sexual intercourse with unmarried daughters in order to take their hymen. This situation forced the people of the study area to marry their daughters in their early age. Later on, some of the people of the town after taking drugs and by violating the breakdown of the social values, they participated in these immoral activities.

Chapter Two

2. Foundation of Gedeb Hasasa Woreda and its Administrative History (1941-1991)

2.1. The Foundation of Gedeb Hasasa as woreda

Gedeb Hasasa woreda, which is the focus of this study, is one of the 12 woredas in West Arsi zone. It shares the name from one of the river found in Hasasa Town, named as “Hasasa-Sagalee Bishaanii-Water Sound” in Afan Oromo. Geographically, the woreda is bordered in the north West by Kore woreda, in the eastern by Honkolo Wabe; in the South west by Kofale, and in the south by Dodola woreda. Currently there are 25 rural kebeles and one administration. Gedeb became a woreda in 1941. The five largest ethnic groups of Gedeb Hasasa are the Oromo (97.87%), the Amhara (1.47%), and the others such as Guraghe and Silte (0.94%); all other ethnic groups made up 1.43% of the population. Afan Oromo is the dominant language whose speakers estimated to be 97.03%, followed by Amharic language which is 1.6%, and the remaining 1.52% spoke all other primary languages reported. The Muslims cover with 95.57% of the population having reported they practiced that belief while 4.11% of the population professes Christianity.

2.2. Administrative History of Gedeb Hasasa Woreda (1941-1974)

The year of 1941 was a turning point in the history of modern Ethiopia. Because, Ethiopia was liberated from the Italian occupation and Emperor Haile Sillassie was restored to his power after five years in exile. This brought the revival of centralization attempts in the country. To achieve this plan, the Emperor introduced a series of proclamations and decrees starting from 1942 onwards all over the country. The imperial government established similar local administration system throughout the country. All governors were centrally appointed. Generally, the period from 1941 to 1974 was marked by the announcement of successive policies that were targeted to ensure central administration in the country and consolidate the absolute power of Emperor Haile Sillassie.

The post-1941 period saw structural transformation in the Ethiopian state. Immediately at the beginning of 1942, the imperial government announced a decree that rearranged the empire into a new administrative system. According to the new administration structure, the country was sub-grouped into twelve (12) Governorate-General or Teqilay Gizat.

The governorate Generals were again reformed in 1946, after Hararge general governorate was divided into Hararge and Bale provinces. In this reform, the country was sub-grouped into thirteen (13) provinces.¹²⁷ Following the federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia, the country was re-structured its

administrative unit; under fourteen (14) Teklay Gizat, one hundred and three/103/awrajja (sub-provinces), five hundred and five /505/ woredas (districts) and nine hundred and forty nine /949/meketel woredas (sub-districts).

Gedeb Woreda was one of the members of the awrajja and it was newly formed as a woreda immediately after liberation. In the pre-1941 period, the Gedeb sub-districts had their own Balabbats and they governed themselves separately.

The administrative history of Gedeb Hasasa was changed through time due to the political development and nature of the expanding powers. Administratively, it was made of 25 kebeles of the rural area and one city (Gedeb Hasasa) since 2009. Gedeb Hasasa woreda, like many of the rural woredas passed through different ruling periods from the imperial to derg and from derg to the EPRDF (Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front) ruling periods (1941-1991).

These areas were directly paying tribute to the central government from 1880 to 1941. Following the withdrawal of fascist Italy, the Gedeb area attracted the imperial government for its geographical and strategic importance and proximity to the political center of the country.

Gedeb Woreda was established in 1941 and Hasasa Town was preferred as its administrative center. Five of the Semi-autonomous sub-districts were placed under Gedeb Woreda in the post-liberation period

The 1942 national decree (on land tax) was not fully implemented in that fiscal year in the woreda. The national decree was gradually practiced in the woreda from the beginning of the 2nd month of 1943. The woreda governors were appointed by the Emperor himself, up on the recommendation of Ministry of Interior. Since the woreda is much closer to the center of the country, the Emperor used to appoint his relatives to manage the area properly

The awrajja governor also had the right to recommend the potential of the woreda governor to the governor-general who had the right to submit such recommendations to the Ministry of Interior.

The government did not take formal education as criteria in the selection of woreda governors in the areas. The formal requirement for appointment of officials, in this period was their faithfulness to the Emperor, their commitment to crush opposing groups and their leadership quality. The governors of the Gedeb woreda were employees of the central government with monthly salary. The salary for a woreda governor was one hundred (100) Ethiopia birr in the 1960s.¹³⁸

Oral testimony claims that, nine (9) individuals were appointed as governors of Gedeb woreda in the post-liberation period, but my informants failed to list their names properly. Only the name of two

individuals is mentioned by my informants. Churiso Fata and Gammeda Dafo are mentioned by informants. The salary of Gedeb governors were extended from twenty-five to fifty (25-50) birr¹⁴. The imperial government used the existing local chiefs as representatives of the inhabitants and involved them in the new Ethiopian political administration in the name of balabbat. In the post- 1941 period, the central government was endorsing the balabba's title to the first-born son of the deceased balabbat¹⁵.

Both the government appointees and the local chiefs were working hard to put in practice, the programs of the central government but, they were not decision makers in the areas of finding and using finance without the permission of the central government.

The balabbats were not getting salary in the form of cash in hand like that of the appointees of the government officials. Even though, there was no cash payment in the form of monthly salary from the central government, the balabbats and main advantages were labor services rendered by the local people individually or in group. Oral testimony and Deches Abebe explained that, the local people were expected to construct houses and fences of the local lord, as well as store houses for the produce that was collected from the locality. They were also responsible to guard stores of the local chief.

The local people also gave great respect to them and to their families in all social all social activities. They also served as a bridge between the government and the people due to their traditional prestige

Under the balabbats (local chiefs) there were other government officials without receiving any formal salary payment from the central government. These administration agents were known as Koro or intimidators between the upper rulers and the people. These officials were appointed by the Balabbats to transmit order and regulations to the ordinary people. They were directly responsible to the balabbats and they adulate the positive sides of the balabbats to the local people.

They could not make decisions and take any measures of their own in any condition.

Their major duties were promoting the people to pay tribute to the worda treasurers on time. The Koros were the right-hand men of the balabbats in the case of providing information about the various civil and criminal issues. On the other hand, these officials were responsible for ensuring peace and security of their locality.¹⁴⁷

Under the Koros, there were the Nechi Lebash or peace keepers who served the people at village levels without any formal salary payment from the government. The Nechi Lebash was selected from local people by the koros by the recommendation of the balabbats. The duties of the Nechi Lebash

¹⁴ ibid

¹⁵ ibid

were maintaining peace and stability in the community at the village level. The Italian period in Ethiopia was the time in which some socio-economic developments were observed in the study area. For instance, Hasasa Town was established and transformed from a village to a town. They also constructed road which crossed the town. Many offices, houses and others building were ready made in the area¹⁶. Immediately following the withdrawal of the Italians, the central government established Gedeb Woreda in 1941.

Oral testimony and Sanford's report claim that, permanently the town was serving as administrative center for sixteen (16) years.

Gradually, many comments were raised from the local governors and communities regarding the way of gaining public services easily in the woreda. Especially, the local balabbats, woreda governors and the inhabitants presented the issue to the Chilalo Awrajja, General Governorate and the Ministry of National Community Development. The Ministry of National Community Development and other concerned bodies accepted their question and formed one team that included the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts, Ministry of Public Health and other government officials¹⁷.

The team directly explained the information obtained from the local balabbats, meketel woreda governors and local communities about the issue of the capital of Gedeb Woreda within 18 months. Lastly, the team accomplished its task and reported its final proposal to the Ministry of National Community Development, about change of the location of the capital from Bucho to Gedeb to gain public services easily¹⁸.

The team proposed the new capital of the woreda, depending on the interests of the observed bodies in all the five kebeles. Accordingly, Hasasa Town was proposed as the capital of Gedeb woreda. The observers' listed different reasons why they proposed Hasasa Town as administrative center of the woreda than the other towns. According to the report of the assigned team, Hasasa Town was a trading center for the whole Gedeb woredas and there were two market days a week. It was the seat of the police station in the woreda¹⁹.

Depending on the report of the appointed committee, the Ministry of National Community Development (MNCD) wrote a letter to Gedeb woreda on January 2/1/1963, about the selection of

¹⁶ ibid

¹⁷ Institutes of Ethiopian Study (IES): Progress Report From Mulo-Community Centre to Ministry of National Community Development, the Imperial Ethiopian Government May, 1962to June 1963 Box No Ms.789 File No.1272

¹⁸ Informants and Ethiopia National Archival and Library Agency (ENALA): A Letter from D.A Sanford of Community to Ministry Public Health, September 1958 G C Box No.789 File No.12.72.

¹⁹ Informant:- Boku Utta and Kimo Wako

Hasasa Town as administrative center of the woreda²⁰. The letter clearly explains the shift of political center to Hasasa Town.

The administrative center of Gedeb Woreda is changed from its former center to Hasasa Town from January 02/01/1963. For the newly selected town one gasha land is allocated from the government land. The governor of the woreda is authorized to implement this decision. The plan of the town was prepared within three to four months by Abu Alula (professional person in urban planning)²¹. Galgalu Agaje was the governor of Gedeb Woreda and he facilitated the issues of the capital of the woreda on behalf of the government²².

2.3. Gedeb Hasasa Woreda during the Derg Regime (1974-1991)

Immediately after the fall of Emperor Haile Silassies regime, the military regime took power over Ethiopia in 1974. The *Derg* took several measures to replace the feudal ideology with socialist ideology. “*Derg*” (a geez word for “committee”) was the shorter name given to the coordinating committee of the Armed forces, the police and the Territorial Army. It was composed of representatives from various units of the military. Officers above the rank of major were excluded because they were believed to be supports of the old regime (Bahru, 2006)²³.

The year 1975 began with a series of proclamations that nationalized the banks and insurance companies. This was followed by the nationalization of over seventy private commercial and industrial companies. Finally, in March 1975, the *Derg* issued a radical land reform proclamation. This abolished all private land ownership. The land proclamation was followed some five months later by another proclamation which nationalized all urban land and extra houses²⁴.

The land marks in the area began to show drastic change during the 1970s following the establishment of the *Derg* regime. According to information that obtained from Hasasa town municipality office, there was a rapid progress and change was seen since the *Derg* came to power²⁵. The main achievements and events that took place during the *Derg* period include the more construction of resident houses in modern ways. As it was already discussed in unit two, during the early period the inhabitants constructed and lived in traditional house of thatched-hay roofs such as *sagala* house (made of wood wall and thatch roofed house) and small huts. Such kinds of traditional houses were

²⁰ MNCD: A letter from Ministry National Community Development to Gedeb *Woreda*, January 1963 Box No. 789 File No.12.62.

²¹ *ibid*

²² *ibid*

²³ Bahru Zewde, 2006

²⁴ *ibid*

²⁵ *ibid*

built by family members and relatives collaborated with other people in the form of *Dabo* or *jigi*. Cooperative working was and still is among the values of Oromo society. This cooperation created long existed ties among families and in the neighborhood.

After the introduction of new modern building type of corrugated iron houses such as ‘*amora kinf*’ and ‘*service bet*’, the traditional way of constructing by only family members has transformed and now is limited to local builders what is known as carpenter. Furthermore, there was introduction of fashionable methods of construction such as cement blocks and stone walls with corrugated iron roof.

Unlike, the imperial regime, the *Derg* period played a significant contribution to the expansion of social services in the town. The provision of water and electricity and the construction of social service institutions such as school, health centers, market centers and others had encouraged many settlers from around the woreda and other parts of the country to come and settle in the area. Furthermore, the woreda showed rapid population growth during this period. Following the 1974 revolution, the woreda shown physical expansion and population growth process²⁶.

One of the characteristics of the *Derg* regime was the establishment of public associations and organizations. There were different associations established in Gedeb woreda during the *Derg* regime²⁷. One of the known administrators of Gedeb woreda during the *Derg* regime was *Ato* Kadi Hussein. He played a significant role in the expansion and development of the woreda. For example, he recommended the building of a livestock market in Hasasa town surrounded by fences in the present site that across Hasasa River and located to the western from the town. This creates the chance of collecting tax from livestock entering the town during market days. Before this period, a former livestock market was located in the eastern part of the town along the Dodola town in the present of used cloth market areas²⁸.

²⁶ Markakakis and Nega Ayele, *Class and Revolution in Ethiopia ...*, P. 45.

²⁷ *ibid*

²⁸ Informants:- Qadi Husein, Badasa Abdi and Kadi Bushura

Chapter Three

3. Socio-Economic History of Gedeb Hasasa Woreda (1974-1991)

3.1. Land Tenure and Taxation system: Social and Economic Aspects

This chapter presents land tenure patterns that prevailed in the *woreda*. In doing so, it investigates three main points; land rights (uses, disuses, transfer or administration), obligation that these right entailed and their effects on the life of the local farmers in the district. It discusses the major forms of land ownership in the *woreda* as well as taxes and tributes that peasants were forced to pay in the period under discussion.

3.1.1. Land Tenure and Taxation system (1941-1991)

3.1.1.1. Forms of Land Ownership

As Jabessa Ejeta wrote, land was the collective property of all the community among the Oromo and they had common right over the land they were using. All members of the individual groups or families had the right to land and could keep the benefits of the land for themselves²⁹. This created a communal land tenure system among the Oromo Community in the mid-19th century in the region. Moreover, agriculture had special impacts for the emergence of a group or family tenure and gradually private ownership emerged in the last quarter of the 19th century³⁰.

The Arsi conquest of the area further added fuel to the process of replacement of traditional group right over land by private ones. The socio-political structure of the society was gradually changed. The imperial government used the existing hangafa (clan leaders) of the Oromo as representatives of the inhabitants and empowered them in the Christian government system. The hangafa of the Oromo clan leaders were involved in the newly introduced political administration in the name of *balabat*.³¹ The *balabbat* title was given to the first-born sons of the deceased clan leaders.

For instance, *Raya Kajawa* was one the members of the hangafa of the Kajawa clan in the study area and he received the title *balabbat* by the influence of Emperor Menilek and *Ras Gobana* in the last

²⁹ Jabessa Ejeta, *Ya Oromo Berer Tarik* (Addis Ababa, 1992), P. 9

³⁰ *ibid*

³¹ Gäda Mälba; *Oromia: YütädübäqäwYägef Tarik* (Addis Ababa, 1994), PP.44-48.

quarter of 19th century.³² On behalf of his political calculation in the Oromo lands, Menilek also appropriated all the conquered lands to his favorites and institutions. This enabled him to have supreme power over the Oromo people in the area.³³ The lands were redistributed in accordance with rank and status of the recipients.³⁴

As Mahetama wrote, the land measurement was tested and implemented at a place called Wabe River in the 1880s. According to his investigation, land measurement was begun during the reign of Emperor Menilek II. It was implemented to empower the political and economic base of the imperial government. The unit employed in this measurement was *Gasha* (equivalent to 40 hectares of land) which in practice varied considerably and most probably it was equivalent to 1200 meters heights and 800 meters depth³⁵.

The measurement was carried out with the aid of *Rope or Wadaro* (133cubits in length) which in many areas was known as *qalad* (measured land) and given its name to land measurement. The length of the cubit was fixed by the army of a very tall man called “*Baymot*” taken as the standards. The arm of the tall man was approximately about 661/2 centimeters.³⁶

Moreover, the measurement of land by *qalad* system was carried out through investigation of the fertility of the land. During the period under discussion, the land was graded according to its fertility as follow: first grade was grouped to land which was well cultivated. Land categorized under first grade was seven *qalads* in width and eleven *qalads* in length. The second grade was land of *lem-taf*.³⁷

This was nine *qalads* wide and twelve *qalad* long. The last and the third grade of land were known as *taff* land. It was twelve *qalads* width and fifteen *qalads* length land³⁸. Following the withdrawal of the fascist Italian rule in 1941, Emperor Haile Sillasie introduced a new land policy which enabled the central government to hold political and economic power. As pre- requisit for the process of

³² *Ibid*; Tsegaye Zeleke, PP. 36-43, 56

³³ Abera Zeleke, “Agriculture and Land Tenure in Walmara *Warada* (Western Shoa) 1941-1991”..., P.48.

³⁴ Informants: Mamo Hunde, Moha Gudda, and Sime Tola.

³⁵ Mähetämä Sillasé Wäldä Mäsqäl, *Zekerä Nögär* (Addis Ababa, 1972), PP. 106-108; GäbräWald Engeda Warq, *Yä Itophiya Märetena Geber Sem*(Addis Ababa, 1956),P.9.

³⁶ Mähetämä Sillasé Wäldä Mäsqäl, *Zekerä Nögär*...PP.106-107;R. Pankhurst, *EconomicHistory of Ethiopia*, PP. 151-153.
³⁷ *ibid*

³⁸ Gäbrä Wald Engeda Warq, *Yä Itophiyä Märetena Geber Sem*...PP.9-10

apportionment and redistribution, land measurement was practiced. The institution of land measurement was aimed to control land and facilitate taxation³⁹.

After 1941, the land was appropriated among royal family, church, government officials and *malkegnas* who force the local farmers to be tenant or *gebbar* on their own land. The *gebbar* system reached its height during the reign of Emperor Haile Sillassie. According to Bahru Zewde's justification, the royal families, the government officials and the nobility owned 50% land, 20% belonged to Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the remaining 30% belonged to the mass of the people⁴⁰.

The size of individual units of measured land depended on the importance of the land in terms of its economic value and its access to various facilities. Along with the rank and status of recipients, economic value of the appropriated land served as criteria to determine the physical size of land to be granted for individuals or institutions⁴¹.

If the measured land was fertile enough to produce important crops the size of land tended to be small. Mähetemä Sillasé adds that the measurements during the period under study were not very exact, because of the variations in the length of the rope, the level of the land, or because of the fact that the sides of the plot were not always at right-angles⁴².

In the post-1941 period, the process of apportionment and redistribution of land resulted in two basic and interlinked developments. One was the introduction of a new form of land tenure system in the period under discussion. The other was the introduction of new economic structure in the region.

The appropriate land was sub-divided and granted out to the local chief; the government itself and religious institutions⁴³. The excess land was then confiscated by the government and reallocated to landowners (*Abbaa lafaa*), *Melkegnas* and *Qoros*. The government itself received three *gashas* of land in the *woreda*⁴⁴.

Land measurement was started in 1900 in Sululta and its surrounding areas. The imperial government preferred the area for grazing mules and horses on the palace rather than use it for crop cultivation.

³⁹ Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia 1855-1991* (London: James Cuny Ltd, 2002), PP. 166-167.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* P. 89; Informants: Abu Kimo and Gemmeda Hundesa

⁴¹ *ibid*

⁴² Mähetämä Sillasé *Wäldä Mäsqäl*, P.108

⁴³ Abera Zeleke, "Agriculture and Land Tenure in Walmara *Warada* (Western Shoa)1941- 1991" ..., P.49; B. Henze, *Layers of Time: A History of Ethiopia* (Palgrave: New York, 2000), P.129.

⁴⁴ Informants: Guta Game and Ayub Dasa; Mähetämä Sillasé *Wäldä Mäsqäl*, P.105-106.

Most of the land of the *woreda* is categorized under semi-cultivated soil type and still now only 25% of the land is valid for cultivation⁴⁵.

Since the *woreda* was much closer to the political center of the country, the land of the area was confiscated by the government and reallocated to landowners, *melkegnas* and *qoros* without any compensation and replacement⁴⁶.

The majority of the government officials and *melkegnas* received plots of land from the district in the post-liberation period. *Ras Haji Baffa, Ras Birmaji Ayino, Ras Gurmu Kenna, Dejach Gurmu Buta* and *General Abaso Tuna* were some of the government officials who received a plots of land in Gedeb *Woreda*⁴⁷. Following the process of land measurement, the *woreda's* land fell into categories of *balabat*, state and church domains for taxation. Apportion of land theoretically 1/3 was left to the local *balabats* as their share. But, on the ground, the size of the land which was allocated to the local *balabats* was reduced from one third to one sixth (3rd to 6th).⁴⁸

In the hierarchy of power, the *balabats* were given responsibility for maintenance of the local peace and order. The main duty of the local *balabats* was linking the people and the state. The *balabats* were also responsible for collecting and forwarding taxes to the state⁴⁹. When they accomplished their duty, the local chiefs enjoyed exemption or reduction of taxes in return for such services rendered to the state⁵⁰.

The second claimant of certain share of land in the *woreda* was the church. It has already been a customary practice for the state to grant land to the church. The government provided some sort of land to the religious institution i.e the church for its maintenance. The Emperor and other local elites were also generous enough to grant land to churches⁵¹.

The land that the church received was labeled as *Samon*. *Samon* land was parceled and shared out among individual bound that had to church services. The land was permanent tenure and the holders could then bequeath it so long as heirs kept on offering the obligation to church. The obligation rested

⁴⁵ *ibid*

⁴⁶ *ibid*

⁴⁷ *ibid*

⁴⁸ John Markakis, *Ethiopia Anatomy of a Traditional Polity* (Addis Ababa: Oxford University Press, 1974), PP.115-118; Abera Zeleke, PP. 60-61; Informant: Abebe Tesema.

⁴⁹ Mähetämä Sillasé Wäldä Mäsqäl, P.145; R. Pankhurst..., PP. 151-153.

⁵⁰ R. Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia: 1800-1935* (Addis Ababa: Oxford University Press, 1966), P.152; Informants: Zenay Gezete and Asrat Hirko

⁵¹ Dechasa Abebe, "Socio- Economic History of North Shawa Ethiopia: 1800-1935"..., P.78; Informant: Hayile Beyene; Gäbrä Wald Engeda Warq, *Yä Itophiya Märetena Geber Sem...* P. 24.

on land not on persons. Depending on the status of religious men and their services, the land was allocated for them⁵².

The *qesenna* or priestly services were attached to *qesenna* land and *dequnna* (church-men under priest) services were attached to *dequnna* land⁵³. Additionally, the local inhabitants had duty to pay *asrats* or one-tenth of their products to church per year. According to the profiles of the Raguel Church and Dachassa Abebe's investigation, about 504.75 *Gashas* of land or 20190 hectares of land was occupied by the church in seven *woredas* in the study area⁵⁴.

The study area was also venerable to this measure during the period under discussion. As Dachassa clarifies in his investigation, around 33.5 *gashas* of land or 1340 hectares of land was allocated as church land in the *woreda*. Moreover, the church received huge lands freely⁵⁵.

The remaining portion of the land was land in the state domain. The state had exclusive right to appropriate land. The land under the state domain was mainly used for two purposes. One was for temporary grants to individuals or institutions and the other was for direct state control.

State grants to individuals in the study area went under different names; *maderia*, *resta-gultwaganu* (grazing lands) and *hudad* land fell into the category of land left under direct state control for palace food requirements⁵⁶.

Maderia land (temporarily granted land) was state land given to officials for temporary possession as compensation for their services and they only used them during the time when they serve in office or work in fields. According to oral informants, *Ato Baffa Guraro*, *Ato Haji Baffa*, *Dejach Goshime Gatu* and *Ras Dabale Gammachu* had received more than 15 *gashas* of land in the area for their services⁵⁷. The officials had only right over *maderia* lands⁵⁸. The state also kept its reversionary rights over it and transferred to others officials when the need arises. Generally, *maderia* was not inheritable neither could be disposed of by sale, but its holders enjoyed exemption right from land tax²¹³

⁵² Gäbrä Wald Engeda Warq, *Yä Itophiya Märetena Geber Sem...*, PP.15, 29.

⁵³ *ibid*

⁵⁴ Informants: Alamu Fulasa, Gadisa Habebe and Zenay Gezete; Shifaraw Bäkälä, ed...P.95.

⁵⁵ Dechasa Abebe, "Socio- Economic History of North Ethiopia: 1800-1935"...P.81

⁵⁶ John Markakis, *Ethiopia Anatomy of a Traditional Polity*...P.110

⁵⁷ Informants: Ayub Musaa, *Ato Ailma Dhera*, *Dejach Gutama Hawas* and *Ras Habtu Hawas*

⁵⁸ *ibid*

Rest-gult land was a reward granted out by the Emperor to the members of the royal family and other important personalities for different services. *Rest-gult* right was inheritable to individuals. For instance, Ato Baffa Curator Ato Haji Baffa, Goshime Galatu, *Dejach Dabale Gemmachu* and *Ras. Alamu Derrassa a* and other individuals had received more than sixteen (16) *gashas* of lands in gedeb, Aware and Bucho as *rest-Gult* land in area⁵⁹.

Waganu and *hudade* lands were other portions of land that the state had retained. *Waganu* and *hudade* lands were allocated for palace consumption or *madbet*. The amount of state land in the form of *waganu* or *hudade* was too small. Three *gashas* of land was only allocated for the purposes of *waganu* in Gedeb *woreda*. *Waganu* lands were set aside as pasture to fatten cattle belonging to the palace. *Gebar* farmers looked after the pasture and fed the cattle with grass cut and piled to the way⁶⁰.

The traditional *gada* social and political structure of the Oromo community was eventually replaced by the Gedeb Administration. *Abba Boku* (*head of the Chaffee*) and *Abba Burqa* (*father of Sprit*) were changed by a new title called *balabats*⁶¹. The *balabats* were appointed by the state to fill the office of the *melkenga*⁶². The office of the *balabats* was associated with certain duties and responsibilities ranging from collection of taxes and tributes to maintenance of peace and order.

This is due to the fact that their titles as '*balabats*' provides them with lawfulness and acceptance from communities to act and make public decisions. It is their primary position and source of legitimacy that enables them to play the role of development and endows them further with a chance to be creative and shape responses to the local communities in which they took up flexible roles within changing development and political contexts.

The *balabats* were responsible for linking the people and the government, settling public disputes and providing other services⁶³. The local leaders exercised preponderant influence in several ways over the population and this made them important elements of the administration⁶⁴. Below the *balabats*, the lowest level in the hierarch of the local administration was the *Qoro* who were responsible for detailed administration matters in the villages. The *Qoros* were responsible for the

⁵⁹ *ibid*

⁶⁰ *ibid*

⁶¹ Lewis, PP.164-166

⁶² Täkalign Wäldä Mariam, "A City and Its Hinterlands: The Political Economy of Land Tenure, Agriculture and Food Supply for Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 1887-1974." (PhD. Dissertation: Boston University, 1995), P.84; John Markakis, *Ethiopia Anatomy of a Traditional Polity*...PP.309-311

⁶³ Patrick Gilks, *the Drying Lions Feudalism and Modernization in Ethiopia* (London: Julian Freidman Publishers Ltd, 1975), P.111; John Markakis, *Ethiopia Anatomy of a Traditional Polity*...P.16

⁶⁴ *ibid*

balabbats. They were assigned over limited villages and they were the right hand of the *balabbats*⁶⁵. The local judges had similar status with the *Qoros* in settling peace and stability at local level.

The local judges were particularly concerned with settlement of local disputes. Both *Qoro* and local judges were the most immediate authorities over the local people⁶⁶. Oral testimony claims that, both the *balabbats* and the *Qoros* received 46 *gashas* of land in the study area during the period under discussion⁶⁷.

Finally, peasants or the most dominant peoples had occupied the social strata. They were generally comprised of two major social groups (landless and small land holders) and both groups were engaged in tenancy⁶⁸.

Oral testimony stated that, the *gebbars* received a very less portion of land (81.5 *gashas* of land) and this clearly indicates how much the peasants were forced to live in poverty. On the contrary, the government officials, *balabats*, churches and governments were owners' of huge and fertile lands in the district⁶⁹. See the below tables regarding the appropriation of land in the *woreda* during the period under discussion.

Landless tenants were farmers who had neither ownership nor rights to land at all and therefore they were hired by the landowners as labor force. Landlessness largely emanated from population pressure and eviction from their land⁷⁰. *Sem*-tenants rented part of the land to cultivate. However, both categories of peasants rented land on contractual basis: *Irbo* (one-fourth), *Siso* (one-third) and equal (an half of the products).

The contractual arrangements were onerous and they mostly favored the economic domination of the landlords. Of course, to produce adequate food supply, the tenants could arrange contracts with more than one landlord, if he can offer enough labor and has farm oxen for the production process⁷¹.

⁶⁵ John Cohen and Weintraub, *Land and Peasant in the Imperial Ethiopia* (Assen: Yen Coriumand Comp.B.V.1975), P.53.

⁶⁶ *ibid*

⁶⁷ Informants: Ganna Guta and Nagesso Utta

⁶⁸ Dechasa Abebe., P.115; informants: Nigatu Changare, Gezahgn Degefa and Askala Megersa.

⁶⁹ *ibid*

⁷⁰ Gäbrä Wald Engeda Warq, *Yä Itophiya Märetena Geber Sem...*, P.25;R. Pankhurst, *A SocialHistory of Ethiopi* (Addis Ababa, 1990), P.520

⁷¹ *ibid*

Landlords appointed their own agents, to look after their holding including the irrigated areas and eucalyptus trees. These agents represented the landlords and performed similar duties and responsibilities. Most of the time, the landlords were absentees, living in the capital and other towns⁷². Absentee landlords entrusted agents with all matters on their holdings. They only come for occasional supervision of their holding and for weekend vacation and also for resolving problems that occurred with small peasants⁷³. The agents used to severely affect the life of peasants in the *woreda* during the period under discussion.

Share-crops arrangements between landlords and tenants undermined the value of agriculture in the area. Accordingly, the tenants were forced to share their produce to landlords based on exploitive agreements. For instance, *Erbo-arash* $\frac{1}{4}$ tenants had to offer one fourth of their harvest, *siso-arash* tenants had to offer one third ($\frac{1}{3}$) of their harvest and *equal-arash* ($\frac{1}{2}$) tenants.

The variation in share of landlords depended on the fertility of the land and accessibility of the land. The more fertile land the high share to the landlords would be. In addition landlords provided inputs (improved seeds, oxen and agricultural tools) necessary for agricultural production⁷⁴.

According to the oral informants, the tenants and semi-owners formed the core of the peasantry. Those semi-land holders were around 24% out of the population of the *woreda* and they received less than three hectares of the land for each of them. The rest of the mass of the population were forced to make unfair agreement with the land owners to meet their basic needs in the cereal and other crop production⁷⁵.

The second or final social groups in the peasantry were the land owner-cultivators. This group was not engaged in share-cropping or renting land from land holders. Owner-cultivators cultivated their land self-sufficiently. Compared with the tenants, they were less dependent and occupied better status in rural community⁷⁶. Abera Zeleke has clearly illustrated in his M.A thesis about those social groups in the peasantry. In the context of Gedeb *woreda*, the owner-cultivators cover only 1% out of the population of the district⁷⁷.

⁷² ibid

⁷³ ibid

⁷⁴ Mengistu Wube, Problems of Land Reform Implementation in Rural Ethiopia, A Case Study of Dejen and Walmara Districts (Uppsala: Department of Human Geography, 1986), P.135.

⁷⁵ Informants: Buta Irressa, Kimo Muda and Alamu Kenno

⁷⁶ Abera Zeleke, *Agriculture and Land Tenure in Walmara Warada...*, P.59.

⁷⁷ ibid

Generally, the disgraceful activities by the landlords and the central government itself were continuously imposed on very poor peasants who owned tiny plots of land. On the top of this poverty, the unpaid forced free labor which was exacted from peasants aggravated their suffering. They had neither the time nor the courage to produce surplus production. Moreover, the tenants did politically, socially and economically suffer from time to time in the area in the period under discussion⁷⁸.

3.2. Peasants Duties and the Economic Aspects of the Land Tenure

In Gedeb Hasasa Woreda Peasant farmers worked not only to sustain their basic livelihood, but also to fulfill their obligation to the state, clergyman, nobilities and government officials. In addition, they had to render onerous labor services to the landlords. The burden of taxation became more acute with the introduction of land measurement that was pre-eminently instituted for this purpose. Land measurement made determination of taxes possible⁷⁹. Peasant labor and obligation constituted the base for the existing socio-economic system. Burden of taxation would be imposed on lands in accordance with land classification of *lam*, *lam-taf* and *taf*⁸⁰.

The amount varied with quality and size of the land. This did not deny the fact that other factors made differences like accessibility of the land to roads, markets and the others driving forces had its own influences on taxation⁸¹.

Tenant peasants' labor services constituted working on *hudade* (government farms), building and maintaining granaries, house and fences, transportation grains from or to granaries of the house of land lords, grinding grains, fetching water and fire woods. Transporting the shares produce mostly to Addis Ababa was conducted by pack animals. The tenants were responsible to take food and other provision for landlords in the area during the period under the discussion⁸².

Traditional obligation and labor services were windup after 1941. Divergent taxes were unified and eventually made payable in money. State revenues were going on toward centralization, eliminating intermediary groups who appropriate part of the tribute before handing them over to the state⁸³. But, in the study area labor services were informally continued in the post-liberation (1941) period as well.

⁷⁸ Dechasa Abebe...,P. 215

⁷⁹ Dechasa Abebe, "Socio- Economic History of North Shawa Ethiopia:1800-1935"...,P.218

⁸⁰ *ibid*

⁸¹ Informants: Tola Bansa, Biru Bone and Dakaba Kadara

⁸² Gäbrä Wald Engeda Warq, *Yä Itophiya Märetena Geber Sem...*, P.25; Mähetämä SillaséWäldä Mäsqäl, PP.110-111.

⁸³ Tekalign Walda Maraim, P.86.

According to my informants, the local farmers were forced to fulfill their obligation both in labor and finance in the post-liberation period⁸⁴.

Most of the proclamations were basically issued to achieve the needs of the state rather than improving the economic burdens of peasants. *Gebar* peasants were required to meet tax obligation of four kinds: land tax, *Asrat* (tithe) tax, and education and health taxes in the last decades of the monarchy government⁸⁵.

A land tax was a major tax obligation that peasants had to meet. The government passed two decrees to give legal confirmation to this tax requirement. The 1st was the land tax-decree of 1942. It was issued to adjust payment in accordance with land fertility and size. Classification of land into; cultivated, sem-cultivated and uncultivated land were made to establish variations in the rate of taxation⁸⁶.

The other proclamation was formulated and issued in 1944 to make distinctions to various regions in an attempt to rationalize the payment. It was land tax that raised the respective amount of tax, in lieu of tithe for measures lands⁸⁷. *Madaria* lands enjoyed tax exemption⁸⁸.

The other obligation was the *asrat*, a tenth of peasants' products total produce traditionally imposed on land. This practice of requiring tenants and owner-cultivators to pay *asrat* was common and remained unaffected with the land proclamation. But church retained *asrat* on *Samon* land⁸⁹.

Asrat of the produce had to be deducted before tax and rent payments and paid at the threshing floor, the deduction or payment of *asrat* before all the other payment to the states and landlords had a detrimental effect on the peasants.

Following the 1944 proclamation, landowners in Arsi paid tax in lieu of tithe to the state of 35, 30 and 10 *birr gasha* of cultivated sem-cultivated and uncultivated lands respectively⁹⁰. The *asrat* was higher

⁸⁴ Ibid, informant: Guta Bulcha

⁸⁵ Abera Zeleke..., P.63; Informants: Zaru Balda and Tsamma Asafa

⁸⁶ *Negaret Gazet*: Land Proclamation No.8 of 1942(On Land Tax)

⁸⁷ *Negaret Gazet*: Land Proclamation No.70 of 1944 (Tax in Lieu of Tithe)

⁸⁸ Informants: Qoricho Bariso, Bulcha Buta and Kadi Kimo

⁸⁹ *ibid*

⁹⁰ *Negaret Gazeta*: Land Proclamation No.70 of 1944

in amount than land tax and this made it harder and damaging to the viability and security of peasant household than the land tax proper⁹¹.

Finally, introduction of education and health taxes on land in 1949 and 1959 respectively, was related with the desire of the state to increase revenue from the peasantry. Both of them payable at the rate of 15, 12 and 4.5 *birr* per *gasha* of the three categories of land: cultivated, semi- cultivated and uncultivated lands respectively⁹². The tax was handed over to the state and the remainder used for facilitating local education and health. More of the taxes were used for the construction of schools and health services⁹³. In the 1950s and the early 1960s; five primary schools were established in the *woreda*.

Tenant peasants had to carry heavier tax burdens than all other tax- paying groups⁹⁴. As one can understand from the table, averagely the peasants paid 56% of their products of the land lords; the church and the government. Judges on grounds of social equity and income generating capacity of the taxes on the land seem to have been defective.

Economic necessity made the state to change tax in lieu of tithe in favor of income tax, which was the first considerable attempts equability. Income tax proclamation was promulgated in 1967⁹⁵. According to this proclamation, the old asrat system was abolished and all land holders were made to pay income tax directly to the government treasury. But, this proclamation did not include the church land. It was levied on agriculture produce. The quality and size of land was not taken into consideration. The proclamation envisaged to raise state revenue by making tax- paying peasants pay on the basis of their income, which at the same time would bring about social equity at least theoretically⁹⁶.

On the other hand, the process of tax assessment had its own impacts on the life of peasants. Tax-assessors and tax- collectors were organized in to a committee consisting of local *Qoro*, government officials and local representatives or elders. But, on the side of the tax assessor, there was a tendency to impose unreliable tax on the land owners. Such measures might directly or indirectly affect the life of

⁹¹ Tekaling Walda Maraim, P.28; Abera Zeleke..., P.60

⁹² *Negaret Gazeta*: Education Tax Proclamation No.94 of 1949 and Health Tax Proclamation No.39 of 1959

⁹³ *Ibid*; Abera Zeleke...,P.64

⁹⁴ Taye Gulelat, "The Tax in Lieu of Tithe and the New Agricultural Tax, *Prelimina Evaluation*''*Dialogue*, Vol. II, No.1 (Addis Ababa, 1968), PP.17-25.

⁹⁵ *Negaret Gazeta*: Income Tax (Amendment) Proclamation No. 255 of 1967.

⁹⁶ Abera Zeleke...;P.65

the peasants in the *woreda*. More importantly, the techniques of fiscal administration made the situation even worse for the peasantry. Taxes had solitary effect on peasant subsistence because of the heavy-landed and self-serving of tax administration⁹⁷.

The peasants were encumbered with all kinds of heavy obligations and this was particularly true for tenants. They had to cultivate land under unsuitable conditions and portions of their produce went to the state and landlords. But, the payments of these entire obligations did not make tenants feel secure in their holdings and they were prevented at any time by the land lords. According to local tradition, the tenants could not build their house on the lands of landlords and plant trees⁹⁸.

3.3. Land Tenure and Taxation system (1974-1991)

Following the restoration of the Imperial regime in 1942, the Ethiopian government introduced a new taxation decrees to enforce peasants to pay taxes⁹⁹. This decree brought two basic changes in the history of the area. The traditional tax collection system in kind was replaced by new taxation style in cash. Each family head holding land was registered and land assessment was implemented. Secondly, the 1942 land tax decree also included all the cultivated and uncultivated lands occupied by the inhabitants of the *woreda*¹⁰⁰. The amount of tax paid varied depending on the size and fertility of the land possessed by the peasants. The main aim was to increase the government revenue. The government gave due attention to the tax collection and introducing administrative reforms that could enable it to fulfill the state economic objectives¹⁰¹.

Concerning taxation and financial system of the study area, the local governors had no power to generate and utilize their own budget. The local chiefs were used as initiators of income collection from the inhabitants and to send it to the central government. The *woreda* administrators were responsible to collect the pre-determined amount of tax from their respective areas.

⁹⁷ Informants: Dabale Yami, Deju Teki and Tasama Wale; Abera Zeleke, *Agriculture and Land Tenure in Walmara Warada* (Western Shoa) 1941-1991...,P.76

⁹⁸ Täkalign Wäldä Mariam, "A *City and its Hinterlands: The Political Economy of Land Tenure, Agriculture and Food Supply for Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 1887-1974*."..., PP. 237-238;Täshalä Tebäbu, *the Making of Modern Ethiopia: 1896-1974* (Lawrenceville, 1995), PP. 71-72.

⁹⁹ Informants:- Galata Woya, Kadir Woyo and Qufa Dasa

¹⁰⁰ *ibid*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, MOE, *Education Sector Development Program III, Action Plan* (Addis Ababa, 1994), P.31

Standard land tax was proclaimed by the imperial government in 1942 and it was a major tax obligation that peasants had to meet¹⁰². The woreda treasure, whose office was stationed in Hasasa Town, was responsible for initiating ways of collecting. It was also responsible to prepare balance sheet for the income and expenditure of the woreda. Both the woreda and its Town of Hasasa governors were responsible for the collection of taxes in the area¹⁰³.

The governor of the woreda was responsible for passing orders and enforcing the Gedeb woreda governors to collect income for the central government relatively equal to the expected amount. Annual income expectation from taxation in the district was done based on land and property assessment techniques. The Gedeb woreda governors were charged with the duty of selecting tax-assessors in each area. The selected tax assessors were also expected to be recommended by the balabbats of their area and to make an oath to be free from bias¹⁰⁴.

The government promulgated two proclamations to give legal confirmation to this tax requirement. The 1st was the land tax-decree of 1942. It was issued to adjust payment in accordance with land fertility and size of the land possessed. As Nagaret Gazeta asserted, the tax was imposed on peasant farmers depended on categories of lands: lam, lam-taff and taff lands respectively¹⁰⁵. According to the decree, the amount of money collected was 15, 10 and 5 birr for cultivated, semi-cultivated and uncultivated lands respectively¹⁰⁶.

The subsequent tax decree of 1944 also increased the amount of tax payment from each family land holders. The taxpayers were classified under five categories based on the number of cattle and the amount of land they owned. From the first to the fifth classes, taxpayers were expected to pay 10, 8, 6, 4 and 2 birr respectively.

Although the tax levied in lieu of tithe, was imposed for measured lands¹⁰⁷. In this decree, the woreda people were forced to pay 35, 30 and 10 birr for cultivated, semi- cultivated and uncultivated lands

¹⁰² Getnet Tesfaye, “an Assessment of Adult Learners’ Perception on Social and Economic Benefits of the Integrated Functional Adult Literacy Program: The Case of Akaki Kality Sub- City Woreda One”(M.A Thesis; Department of Curriculum and Instruction Program: Addis Ababa University, 2016), P. 9.

¹⁰³ *ibid*

¹⁰⁴ Täshalä Tebäbu, *the Making of Modern Ethiopia: 1896-1974* (1995)..., P.74.

¹⁰⁵ *Negaret Gazeta*: Land Proclamation No.8 of 1942; J.C.D. Lawrence, *Land Taxation in Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa, 1964), PP. 1-2.

¹⁰⁶ *ibid*

¹⁰⁷ *Negaret Gazeta*: Land Proclamation No.70 of 1944.

respectively. Madaria lands enjoyed tax exemption¹⁰⁸. Finally, the introduction of education and health taxes on land in 1949 and 1959 respectively, was connected with persistent desire of the state to increase revenue from the peasantry¹⁰⁹. All of the proclamations apparently did not consider the existing situation on the ground and the income of the peasant farmers during the period under discussion. The moral of the tenants was twiddled and this forced them to live destitute life in the woreda during the period under study¹¹⁰. On behalf of the burden of tax, the people also faced hardship in traveling from the areas to Hasasa Town where the woreda treasury was situated. Each family head was expected to pay tax levied by the assessors directly to the woreda treasury. The amount of money, time and labor force utilized by the people in their journey was another challenge for the tax payers. Averagely, the taxpayers used to walk 30 kilometers to reach Hasasa Town to pay tax during the period under discussion¹¹¹. They were also challenged by rivers and mountains, during their journey to Hasasa Town due to the absence of modern transportation.

3.4. Maladministration and Corruption

There was administrative prejudice and corruption in Gedeb Woreda in the post-liberation period. According to the new administrative plat form, the woreda governors were appointed by the Emperor himself upon the recommendation of the Ministry of the Interior. At the same time, a governor of the awrajja recommended individuals for such status to the governor general who transferred the information to the Ministry of Interior. But, such dual recommendations sometimes created unfairness in the appointment. It gave a good opportunity to the governors of the awrajja to select their own relatives, friends and families for such status. Local informants noted that, there was nepotism in the selection and appointment of the woreda and Gedeb woreda governors in Gedeb. Individuals, who had friendly relations and blood ties with the awrajja governors, were given important positions and sometimes they were promoted to higher positions without any criteria¹¹². Amazingly, all of the woreda and Gedeb woreda governors were appointed from the central government in the study area in the post-liberation period. None of the local balabbats got the chance to govern the woreda and Gedeb woreda governors during the period under discussion.

¹⁰⁸ ibid

¹⁰⁹ Abera Zeleke, "Agriculture and Land Tenure in Walmara Warada(Western Shoa) 1941-1991"... , P.61.

¹¹⁰ Informants:- Ababu Guta, Butta Irressa, Wonji Kajawa and Sulxi Hora

¹¹¹ ibid

¹¹² Abayneh Girma, "The Nature of Administration and Development in Ethiopia the Case of Walamo Development, "... , P.26; nformants: Zegeye Asfaw and Gezahign Degefa

In the post-liberation period, the level of administrative injustices was increased. According to the structural administrative system of the period, the governors of the bottom level were responsible to the officials at the next status of the administrative hierarchy¹¹³. Similarly, in Gedeb administrative structure, many governmental institutions were established both in the woreda and Gedeb woredas. The court, police, treasuries and secretarial offices were established in the district. The central government had assigned each organ to implement specific tasks. However, sometimes the government agencies in the Gedeb Woreda exercised out of their specific duties, because of the complex nature of the administrative system of the period under discussion. But, either due to inability of the governors in implementing their task or due to the failure of the higher administrators to respond urgently to requests and directions, several administrative issues remained unsolved¹¹⁴.

Informants also stated that, most of the governors of the woreda made little efforts to ensure the progress of the area. Almost in many cases, they were described as inefficient. On the contrary, the peasant provided gifts to the local chief and government officials. The gäbbars were required to provide their masters with different special dishes in cases where they held personal feasts for a wedding, the baptism of their children and other related occasions¹¹⁵.

As Pawulos explains, one pot or gänbo of local beer (tälla or täj), bread and enjera were supplied to the balabbats, chiqa shum and government officials¹¹⁶. The labor of the peasants was exploited by the local chiefs and government bodies. They were expected to construct the houses and fences of the local lord or the court, government offices, churches as well as storehouses for the produce that was collected from the locality¹¹⁷.

Oral testimony stated that, there was interruption or problem in the fields of justice in the woreda in the post-liberation period. The judges did not usually carry out their duties on time and the judges mostly decided in favor of their relatives, friends and those who could pay good bribery.

The Judges knowingly, rescheduled hearing for further abuse. This in return set more burdens on the peasants who made long tour or 30 kilometers leaving their works. The people were mistreated and discontented¹¹⁸. Moreover, the Town of Hasasa and Gedeb woreda governors were involved in

¹¹³ *ibid*

¹¹⁴ *ibid*

¹¹⁵ *ibid*

¹¹⁶ Pawulos Gnogno, *Até Menilek Bähagär Wuset Yätätsatsafuachew Däbdabéwoch* (AddisAbaba: Aster Näga Publisher, 2011), P.212

¹¹⁷ Mahetämä Sillasé Wäldä Mäsqäl, *Zekerä Nägär*, PP. 110-111; Gäbrä Wäld, PP. 17-21

¹¹⁸ Informants: Mamo Dino, Qoricho and Degefa

exploiting the human and material resources of the area. Adequate attempt was not made to develop the woreda. Side by side, complicated and slow bureaucratic systems of administration brought great exploitation and suffering on the residents of the woreda.

3.5. Agriculture

Like other third world nations 80%, of the Ethiopian economy depends on agriculture. Crop cultivation and animal herding are mostly practiced in the country interpedently. Both are often viewed in combination and mixed farming is evidently a typical feature of small-scale farming in the country. It is almost impossible for small holders to exclusively depend on one or other type for household subsistence¹¹⁹. Moreover, agriculture has occupied a basic place and played pivotal role in the long history of the Ethiopia. In Ethiopia agricultural products take the lion share in the large portion of export trade item which added the considerable to the national income¹²⁰.

Cereal production and raring of animals in Gedeb *Woreda* were inseparably related each other; and found in almost every farming households. Endowed with good climatic conditions, Gedeb *Woreda* is suitable for growing a variety of crops: cereals, pulses and oil seeds. Wheat (*Tricicum*), Barley and Teff (*Eragrotis Taff*) are the dominant cereals' in the *woreda*¹²¹.

The cereal crops were produced for home consumption in the area. Informants also indicated that the amount of land needed for the production was relatively small compared to the quantity that could be grown on limited areas.

As the Annual Reports of Administrative Offices the *woreda* (1989) indicates near to 26,662 hectares (25%) land are valid for crop cultivation out of 109,269 hectors of land in the *woreda*¹²².

Oral tradition testimony claims that, the economy of the inhabitants was based on herding livestock than cultivation¹²³. The presence of sufficient grazing land supports the peasant to rare animals broadly in the study area. For instance, among the total land of the area 26% (28742hectares) was reserved for grazing land, which was greater than cultivated land by 2% (26662 hectares). Grazing fields for livestock was are made up of fallows hill sides and swampy areas¹²⁴.

¹¹⁹ Adem Alo..., P.21

¹²⁰ Abera, P.25

¹²¹ Gedeb *Woreda* Agricultural and Rural Development Office (SWARDO): *Yä Qoyu Fayiloch*, Annual Report Dated since 1989, E.C, Box No. 11-12 files no. 12.

¹²² *ibid*

¹²³ *ibid*

¹²⁴ *ibid*

Even though the *woreda* was very conducive for raising livestock, the farmers were not able to adopt systematic feeding of livestock which reduced efficacious of peasants in the fields of animal herding. There was poor management which seriously affected the standards of livestock in the district. Farmers were unaware of a systematic means of feeding livestock and modern ways of farming. Fortunately, the imperial government had selected Gedeb *Woreda* to apply Minimum Package Program (MPP) or model farming extension in 1957. The project was established at the Mulo-Community Centre by the joint efforts of the World Neighbor Organization and the imperial government of Ethiopia¹²⁵.

The project was aimed at acquiring experience on modern ways of farming by the use of agricultural inputs, in the country. It was also target to get input for future plan in the agricultural sector. The project was a five years long program from 1957 to 1962 and it was expected to create model farming center to expand modern ways of farming¹²⁶.

Following the establishment of model farm center, the Ministry of Agriculture provided wheat and barley that was imported from Kenya in the 1960s which had high yields and rust resistant crop to tackle the problem.

Consequently, the productivity of the household peasants was mitigated both in farming methods and producing high yields¹²⁷. The moral of the peasants was also promoted. According to Sanford's report, the yields were grown from 5quntal to 25 quntal per hectares in the production years of 1961 and 1962.

In addition, the newly adopted crops resisted various diseases in the area¹²⁸. The dairy farms were also expanded in the *woreda* after 1957 by the support of the World Neighbor Organization. The farm center also provided vaccination services in the area to protect the health of animals¹²⁹.

As a result, the local populations were greatly interested in the newly introduced modern dairy farms and their productivity was improved than before. The center also provided modern ways of feeding

¹²⁵ ENALA: D.A Sanford Report, Box No. 182 File No. 32.06

¹²⁶ The First Five Plans (1957), P.6

¹²⁷ Sanford's Report, Box No. 182 File No. 32.06

¹²⁸ Ethiopia National Archival and Library Agency (ENALA): *A Letter from D.A Sanford of Community to Ministry of National Community Development*, September 1958 G C Box No. 176 File No.29.02

¹²⁹ ENALA: D.A Sanford Report, Box No. 182 File No. 32.06

cows for further milk production and others¹³⁰. The project also promoted milk production and breeding of cattle for meats. Grazing fields were supplemented by good feeding at night and occasional concentrates made of maize wheat and salts¹³¹.

Averagely, the daily milk production was grown up to 15 liters per cow day in the *woreda*¹³². Moreover; livestock were means of expression of wealth than cultivation production. In this case, poultry served as atypical source of cash revenue to the farmers¹³³.

In the first five years plan, the *woreda* was benefited in the area of public services and agriculture compared with the years before the plan was implemented. The productivity of the peasants was relatively improved. The productivity of the household peasants was increased both in farming methods and producing high quality yields.

For instance, the rate of growth was increased in the cereal cultivation (wheat and barley). According to Sanford's report, the yields had grown from 5 quntal to 25 quntal per hectar during the period under discussion. In addition; the attitude of the local farmers was improved toward agriculture and agricultural products¹³⁴.

Peasants adopted modern ways of farming style from World Neighbor Organization. However, the third five years plan on agriculture had no significant positive effect in the Gedeb *Woreda* on the life of peasants in the field of agriculture. Because, the integrated package projects were not implemented and such governmental neglect of the Gedeb agriculture implies how much the agricultural sector stagnated during the period under discussion¹³⁵. Even the already established farm center at Xamela and Geredela-Farm Extension was closed by the government in 1962 and this was a good indicator for the failure of the sector in the *woreda*

3.6. Trade

The striking thing about trade as aspect of economic activity is their insignificant role in the national economy. In the 1960s, trade constituted a mere 7% of the grossdomestic product and there was low circulation of goods in Ethiopia and a low volume of export commodities. The trade pattern, too,

¹³⁰ *ibid*

¹³¹ *ibid*

¹³² Gedeb Woreda Annual Progress Report April 1960 to June 1961, Box No. 178 File No.29.09

¹³³ Abera Zeleke, *Agriculture and Land Tenure In Walmara Warada* (Western Shoa) 1941-1975...P,33

¹³⁴ ENALA: D.A Sanford Report, Box No. 182 File No. 32.06

¹³⁵ Informants: Zeru Asafa and Gugsu Lemma

reflected the predominantly agricultural character of the country. Agricultural products constituted the bulk of the country's export. Coffee accounts 65% of export commodities followed by hides and skins; next came Pulses and oil seeds were exported on a very small scale. With regard to the nature of the country's trade partnership, it reflected its international alignment. Forty percent of the country's trade was with the United States, which absorbed about 70% of the total coffee export. On the import side, however, the United States came third after Italy and Japan. The balance of trade was generally unfavorable to Ethiopia, a situation aggravated by the steadily declining price of export and the rising price of imports. With respect to internal trade, the commercial centrality of Addis Ababa, began in the late nineteenth century, was further consolidated. Before 1941, Arada was the market center but after 1941; it was replaced by Merkato (Bahru, 2006)¹³⁶.

According to the Oromia Finance and Economic Development Bureau 1995 Annual report¹³⁷, trade activity in Gedeb Hasasa and its Hasasa Town are very limited because of the absence of industrial activities as well as the people were not much participated in trade activity because of lack of enough capital.

Every market days, on Saturday and Tuesday peoples of the surrounding areas brought their agricultural products and sold them and brought different commodities such as salt, oil, sugar, kerosene and soap. While other goods that is not available in the surrounding area brought from different regions, such as from Sidamo, Walayta, and Bale. Hasasa market was attended by many merchants and farmers from different surrounding and distance areas. Tuesday and Saturday are the main weekly market day. The main important trade items which entered on this market day included all kinds of commodities including livestock.

According to information supplied by the Gedeb *woreda* Tourism and cultural office Annual report of 1996¹³⁸, the first abattoir was located along Asasa River. Later it was transferred to the present site area of Gobeta. There was no slaughterhouse in Gedeb *woreda*. This resulted the negative effect for the source of hides and skins production. In its surrounding areas, there were a large number of hides and skins were existed during the holidays. Such as in Easter, New Year, Meskal, Id alfter, Ramadan and during the months (January and April) which marriage tend to be frequently took place.

¹³⁶ Bahru, 2006

¹³⁷ Oromia Finance and Economic Development Bureau 1995 Annual report

¹³⁸ Gedeb *woreda* Tourism and cultural office Annual report of 1996

Chapter Four

4. Socio-Economic Development in Gedeb Hasasa Woreda (1941-1991)

There are certain factors which granted development activities and increase of its population. The first factor refers to the emergence of a weekly market in the early 19th century on the day of Tuesday and Saturday. The second factor that played a great role for the growth and expansion was the establishment of the municipality in 1954 and its subsequent activities. There are several reforms introduced by the municipality of the woreda. Such as delimited sites for the establishment of new houses in the area, began the distribution of land for the people who wanted to construct houses, before the establishment of the municipality there was a problem in the market regarding trade transaction, since there were no specialized markets for each commodity. But the municipality had brought the problem to an end by allocating separate quarters of land for each commodity¹³⁹.

In 1954, the administration of the woreda came under the municipality. It got a modern municipality administration system and began to be ruled by *mazagajabet shum*. According to the information obtained from informants, the first *mazagajabet shum* was *Ato Zerhun Engda*. As soon as the establishment of municipality in 1954 construction of modern houses, different shops and government offices started¹⁴⁰.

This period showed a significant change in the development of Gedeb woreda and Hasasa Town too. *Zerhun Engda* began to think day and night how to transform Hasasa into a big area of development. He concluded that unless trade and market were combined, development could not be transformed to a bigger one. He encouraged people to think about reforms. Furthermore, he bitterly condemned any activities related to corruption. As a result of his tireless efforts, people appreciated him and stood on his side for all reforms¹⁴¹.

A number of different factors can cause agricultural productivity to increase or decrease. As a result, those factors can be divided into natural and human factors.

In this world agricultural production is affected mostly by natural factors. Here, unusual weather patterns, such as drought, a prolonged rainy season, early or late frosts and other factors can ruin crops and bring decline of productivity. Ecological problems consisted of serious environmental hazards such as land degradation, loss of wild life and loss of forest resources. Land degradation is loss of soil and water, loss of soil nutrients and biological degradation. The environmental problems

¹³⁹ Gedeb Hasasa woreda Municipality Office Report, 2024

¹⁴⁰ Informants:- utta Wako and Gabi Mussa

¹⁴¹ Informants:- Guta Mange and Kada Wayu

resulting in serious threats to livelihood, cause conflict over land resources, depletion of forest cover and disappearance of the wild life. Yet, unreliable rainfall distribution has been an important climatic influence on crop production¹⁴².

Sometimes farmers have been forced to feed their animals with small amounts of ever green leaves. In some areas, the major constraint on livestock husbandry has been severe shortage of pasture during the long dry season. Large numbers of animals have died due to drought and the recovery from the loss has taken a much longer time¹⁴³.

In similar way, the forest coverage declined because of the over increase of peoples. As the result, the destruction of forests contributed the fast speed soil erosion and land degradations because of the absence of forest coverage. During the reign of EPRDF, attention was turned into the keeping the forest. However, it was not effectively worked. The current government of Ethiopia largely engaged in building of tracing to protect land degradation. It reduced run- off water that erodes useful nutrients from the region. Topography, rainfall, wind, lack of vegetation cover, soil properties and land use management practices are the immediate cause of soil erosion. There are also underlying distance causes such as population pressure, poverty high cost of increase ability of inputs insecure land tenure lacks of appropriate production and conservation technologies and many of these are further influenced by government policies¹⁴⁴.

Additionally, the high land areas of the district have intensively cultivated with continues loss of soil. In the distance past, the mountain tops were remote and difficult to reach and were not cleared as much as forest of mid latitude areas for agricultural purposes. Recently even these have been cleared and these high lands have been intensively eroded by heavy rainfall since soil has been easily washable from the high lands. Suitable agriculture had been badly affected by the higher degree of soil erosion in this district. Because of land degradation, some high land parts have progressively become less productive. Crop yields have decreased in terms of producer per unit of land output per unit of labor and output per productive unit¹⁴⁵.

The major human action that causes soil erosion is deforestation. Vegetation cover can increase organic matter content or nutrient structure and protect the soil from direct solar heat or from rain and wind that would otherwise wash or blow it away. Almost all dwellers of the district (both rural

¹⁴² Adinew Bitew. "The Political and Socio-Economic History of Asosa *Woreda*, 1941-1991"

M.A .Thesis, History Department: Addis Ababa University, 2016

¹⁴³ *ibid*

¹⁴⁴ *ibid*

¹⁴⁵ Informants:- Gabisa Kuma and Abas Muda

and urban) have used fuel wood for cooking. It is generally acknowledged that with the rapid increase in the number of people and higher rates of urban population growth, the need for fuel as a source of energy continues to grow. As fuel wood consumption increases, so does the diminishing of forests. In fact, urbanization seems to have a direct effect on the loss of forests as the spread of deforestation near the urban areas¹⁴⁶.

Indeed, since the last half of 20th century deforestation has accelerated the dramatic change of the rural landscape. Deforestation has been conducted by using a machete and a short-handled axe. Farmers have cleared more by setting fires to the base of large trees in the dry season to make land ready for plantation during the rainy season. This has led to the depletion of natural forest, the peril of the environment and the disruption of the natural ecosystem. Artificial and less complex ones have substituted the natural and complex ecosystem. The unrestricted ruthless clearance of forest led to runs— offs together with dry up of ground waters, the disturbance of hydrological cycles and depressed ecological balance. The combined effect of these chains of processes has been the deterioration of agricultural production¹⁴⁷.

In some places, population growth appears to have reached a thresh old where the local ecology can no longer scope. Thus, the over populated land has been parceled out into minuscule holdings and every piece of it, including valleys and mountain slopes, has been cultivated. Losses of vegetation cover, little grass and intensive land use have characterized this zone. Soils of the area have been used for many generations, being cultivated every year. Due to over cultivation (repetitive farming without fallowing) and overgrazing (keeping too numerous animals on small land), the soil has been exhausted and exposed to severe erosion which has eroded the material base of village life¹⁴⁸.

The old communal grazing especially deteriorated the stocking capacity of the land. The absence of forest cover has led to the inability to check erosion and declining soil fertility. High intensity of land use has caused land degradation. This area has been highly degraded. The intensive land degradation in turn affected soil fertility. Low conservation based farming practice worsened the problem. Under intensive land use, traditional technology encourages erosion¹⁴⁹.

¹⁴⁶ Fikre Alemayehu, "The impact of Rainfall Variability on Rural livelihood and Coping Strategies in Ethiopia: The case of Arsi Robe *woreda* of Oromia National regional states," M.A Thesis, Institute of Development Studies, Addis Ababa University, 2011

¹⁴⁷ Bahru Zawde, *A Short History of Ethiopia and the Horn*, Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 1998

¹⁴⁸ Informants: -Abu Gada and Kadiro Game

¹⁴⁹ Ketabo Abdiyo, "A Historical Survey of Arsi, 1910-1974", M.A Thesis, Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa, 1999

This has forced farmers to change cropping patterns and increase application of expensive inorganic chemical fertilizer to boost yield with high environmental and public health risks since fertilizer (especially together with biocides) create environmental hazards.

A shortage of wetland plants has affected the supply of fruit food, medicinal materials and craft industries, which were important sources of rural income, especially when harvests were poor. Following the 1984 famine, the process of village in the late 1980s, through which the *Dargi* Regime tried to concentrate the dispersed rural population into villages, also had impacts upon wetlands. In some communities, wetlands have been drained in depth and degrading these rich areas, which have ended up as rough grazing grounds for cattle. This in turn has often been a short-lived benefit as the trampling action of cattle aided the process of soil compaction and erosion¹⁵⁰.

Agricultural production is also affected by human factors. Among them, governmental policy is a main factor. The securities of Land and land right question in countryside were the basic element that might need to be address in emergent sustainable land management. Farmers' rights recognized as rights a rising from the past contributions of farmers in conserving, improving and making available plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. Favorable institutional provision and agricultural land policy are significant for long-term sustainable development. Lack of security in land may lead to improper use of common resources and reduction in output¹⁵¹.

The communal ownership by the local Oromo people disrupted and eventually the local people reduced to *gabbar* or tenant. They were forced to pay tribute and give corvee labor. The major types of tribute were land tax and rent tax. To retain the right to use a piece of land owned by the settlers, each *gabbar was forced* to render special service to the *neftegna* or the landowner. To retain right to use a piece of land owned by the settlers, each *gabbar was forced* to render special service to the *neftegna* landowner¹⁵².

Informants emphasize that in the post-1941 period, there were considerable efforts by their turning government of Hayila-Sillaasee and newly appointed officials to alienate the local holders from their possession of land. There were two major ways through which some of the local owners were forced

¹⁵⁰ Belai Giday. *Ethiopian Civilization*, Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 1991

¹⁵¹ Braukamper, Ulrich, *Islamic History and Culture in southern Ethiopia: Collected Essays*

¹⁵² Afework Hailu, "Religious Tolerance in Addis Ababa, 1991-2008," M.A Thesis in Ethiopian studies specialization in contemporary cultural studies, Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University, 2009

to lose their holdings. Some of them were accused of failing to pay tax. The vicious effect of revenue collection became one of the major burdens on the peasantry and facilitated the process of dispossession. Failure to pay tax for three consecutive years resulted in the loss of land. Defaults on heavy taxes appear to have become one of the principal factors behind the loss of land by the local people. Most of such government lands were soon sold to officials at apparently cheaper price¹⁵³.

The land reform (proclamation No. 31/1975) of Derg truly abolished the landlordism and all rural land became communal property of people (Girma, 2018). It restricted the right to use the land by prohibiting the lease (rent, donation, sale, exchange, mortgage and inheritance (except minor child run of the land)). *Derg* also enacted a proclamation No. 47/1975 that nationalizes all urban lands and extra houses (houses other than those that are occupied by family for residential purposes) without compensation¹⁵⁴.

As its rural counterpart, it allowed all tenants to maintain and use the houses they rented from land lords and made them free from any rent obligations or dept. The administrations of urban houses were given to *kebele* (sub-districts) and the ministry of housing based on the values of the houses. At the earlier the rural farmers were in better position in terms of production process, deciding what to produce on the land, yet, later erroneous policies and repeated land reforms made them to benefit little from it. The government, as an owner of the land, conducted repeated land reforms as a result farmers lost tenure security¹⁵⁵.

The collectivization of rural land and working in cooperation did not enhance the productivity, rather farther exhausted the farmers working habit because peasants looked it as forced production and had no awareness of what cooperation meant. In addition, peasants could not sale their products with better price due to quota's restriction¹⁵⁶.

Moreover, the Dreg's policies of village (putting all rural farmers at one spot), and resettlement in the 1980s evicted peasant from their homestead without their interest and collected them at identified place what called *Mender mesreta*. The moving of people away from their lands led to a

¹⁵³ Abera Zeleke, "Agriculture and Land Tenure in Walmara *Warada* (Western Shoa)1941- 1991"... , P.49; B. Henze, *Layers of Time: A History of Ethiopia* (Palgrave: New York, 2000), P.129

¹⁵⁴ Solomon Gebreyes, "A History of Arsi Robe town to 1991".B.A thesis: Department of History,AddisAbaba University, 2000.

¹⁵⁵ *ibid*

¹⁵⁶ Duguma Erasu. "Urban- Rural Linkages in Seru Town and its Hinter lands: Arsi Zone, Oromiaregion,"M.A.Thesis, Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa,2011

decline in agriculture as the distance to travel to these plots became extreme and their separation made them difficult to protect against wildlife. Despite the long established hill sided homesteads, the new villages were built on the plains land. Thus, the best agricultural fields in turn led to decline of crop production.

After the downfall of the Derg in May 1991, transitional government disbanded all collectivization and villagization programs based on the consent of the people. Collective farms were privatized to individual farmers; the government stopped the grain requisition program allowing peasants to sell their produce at market value. However, in 1995 (as proclamation No 1/1995), it decided to keep all rural and urban land under public ownership.

Like another factor, land fragmentation also a factor for affecting agricultural production. Since time of imperial, the kings and the ruling elites in Ethiopia controlled land. Because of the expansionist war of the ancient Ethiopian rulers with their neighboring tribes, the state could manage to include vast territories to its rule. Land was granted by the imperial power to individual people or peasants in the form of private *rist* (hereditary land right). The peasants were allowed using, rent, and inheriting the land to family members, but selling the land to non-family members was prohibited. In exchange, peasants were obligated to make different kinds of land related tax payments. Land given in live of salary might be reversed to the state in the event of non-fulfillment of the obligation by the holder of the land. Land was then transferred in the form of inheritance from family to children for generations with over time reduced the size of the farmlands¹⁵⁷.

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Because of selling salvation in return for treasure and land, perpetuating imperial power over the people, the church played a major role in propagating the mass to obey the king. Obedience to the king was justified in many of the Christian writings and the day-to-day teachings. Land owned by

¹⁵⁷ Solomon Gebreyes, "A History of Arsi Robe town to 1991".B.A thesis: Department of History, AAU, 2000

¹⁵⁸ *ibid*

the government was distributed to different people on the condition of serving the state at different levels¹⁵⁹.

Immediately after the revolution and the assumption of power by *Derg* and subsequent land reform it conducted, various insurgent group lifted arms against the *derg*. The current incumbent EPRDF won the war and replaced the *Derg* in 1991. After the downfall of the *derg* in May 1991, the new Transitional Government disbanded all collectivization and villagization programs based on the consent of the people. Collective farms were privatized to individual farmers, the government stopped the grain requisition program farmers, and the government stopped the grain requisition program allowing peasants to sell their produce at market value. In December 1992, it adopted a new economic policy where by the government declared that until a new constitution would be in place, land would remain under state owner ship. However, when it finally came out in 1995 (as proclamation No 1/1995), it decided to keep all rural and urban land under public ownership. According to the FDRE constitution, all urban and rural land is the property of the state and the Ethiopian people. Article 40/3 of FDRE constitution accordingly, sale, exchange and mortgage of land are prohibited. For all land was under the control of few people who has a position during the *derg*. New generations of Ethiopia general, Gedeb Hasasa in particular was still land less. They took share of crop with their labor after farming the land¹⁶⁰.

Additionally, lack of modern technology also included under factors that affect expansion of agricultural development. Even though industrious, the peasants have followed less productive traditional agricultural methods, which could not give them a better life. The technological transformation in agriculture has been inert and there has been no significant technological innovation made to improve agricultural techniques throughout the period under discussion. The basic tools of agricultural production have been crude implements and few of the basic parts of the plough have been changed over the course of the plow's recorded history. Ethiopian farming systems have not transformed themselves beyond the basic technology of an archaic plough, which was adapted to upholding of long fallow periods¹⁶¹.

Factors for the unchanging technology include the problems of difficult topography had its own contribution in impeding the use of new technological innovations like tractors and mechanization.

¹⁵⁹ Gedeb Woreda Archival Bulletin, 2024

¹⁶⁰ *ibid*

¹⁶¹ *ibid*

In some cases, peasants' indifference to the use of modern technology was presented as the main obstacle to the development of peasant agriculture¹⁶².

Occupations such as crafts, which could have triggered large-scale development of engineering skills, were unloved. But, the main factor is the problem of government strategy.

Nevertheless, through time government could not effectively subsidize imported input since its price was increasing in the international market. Limited supply of fertilizer was crucial problem to the farmers. The seed was also not reliable quality and not attractive to peasants. Therefore, farmers went on using previous seeds. On the other hand, there was an inadequate market for outputs. The price of the farmers' product was very low in comparison with the price of imported fertilizer and there were limited market incentives for farmers. However, there have been still some important problems that put the sustainability of agriculture under question. These include derisory supply of inputs, weak agricultural research and insufficient extension service. The delayed delivery of inputs has made farmers late in planting which in turn has reduced the yield¹⁶³.

Fertilizer cost has been rising following the 1992 devaluation and the subsequent depreciation of Ethiopian currency. The majorities of peasants have acquired improved seeds by preserving seed for planting from their own production or by purchasing from local markets where there has been no reliable seed quality and the seed quantity available has not been satisfactory. On the other hand, fluctuation of the price of agricultural products has affected the peasants' productivity. Farmers had no gained access of credit for the small farmers within the district¹⁶⁴. Demand for credit in the rural areas was occasionally met through friends and relatives as well as village money lenders who in many cases have charged high interest rates. Because of these factors, not all proportion of the farmers used fertilizer. Still the seed and fertilizer have been impure and unsatisfactory (ibid).

Poor infrastructure in the rural areas of Gedeb Hasasa has been another major problem of the agricultural production. Transportation and communication facilities were poorly developed in the district. A large numbers of rural households have been located far away from all-weather roads, making transportation and distribution of inputs as well as collection and marketing of surplus output difficult. The use of traditional transport has dominated the rural areas. Pack animals or human porters have transported the bulk of the farm output. The rugged topography of the

¹⁶² Abera Zeleke, "Agriculture and Land Tenure in Walmara *Warada* (Western Shoa)1941- 1991"... , P.49; B. Henze, *Layers of Time: A History of Ethiopia* (Palgrave: New York, 2000), P.129

¹⁶³ ibid

¹⁶⁴ Temam Haji-Adem, "A History of Amigna (1807-1941)", B.A Thesis, Addis Ababa, AddisAbaba University, 1996

district¹⁶⁵, lack government attention and shortage of capital has made construction and maintenance of rural roads difficult. Some villages in the district live many hours away from the nearest basic social services. Still access to these social services are poor, because the road system is poorly maintained and frequently in accessible during and after rains.

This shortage of road causes a problem in multi-directions. Most of the social services in the district were constricted along the main road except few of them. There were no high schools up to 1980. The students learned high school in Asella, Robe and Shashamane after long journey. For this problem, many students especially females dropped out their education in high school¹⁶⁶. More than half of kebeles in district have been travelling on foot and back animals in scattered settlement that contribute to obstacle in the rural villages youth, women, children and disabled people in accessing some of the basic social services. The cost of transportation is higher for those villages, as the functions of longer trip travelled to work and other activities, the poorer families count, the higher proportions of income spent on transportation¹⁶⁷.

In general, transportation has a great impact for agricultural development and selling their produced cereals to the market. As a result, the economic development of farmers' decreased followed by the lack of hospital service is another problem behind the people.

Still today, the woreda has no comprehensive hospital services in their area except a little clinic (*tenatabiya* or *bufata fayyaa*). The peoples were treated in Dodola, Asella and Shashamane and hospital.

Though there were relatively significant changes in the years 1941-1991 in the Gedeb Hasasa woreda, the development of infrastructure which provides public and private services for the community was not as such promising during the period under discussion¹⁶⁸. The government also paid less attention to rural residents in the area in providing public services compared to the town dwellers. For instance, in the early 1950s and 1960s five primary schools were established at the urban centers (towns) of the *meketel woreda* and this shows the less emphasis of the government to the rural residents.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Abbas Haji, "The history of Arsi (1880-1935)," BA Thesis: Addis Ababa University: Addis Ababa, 1982

¹⁶⁶ Gedeb Hasasa Education Office Report, 2024

¹⁶⁷ Dechasa Abebe, "Socio- Economic History of North Shawa Ethiopia: 1800-1935" ...P.81;

¹⁶⁸ Informants: Haji Gudi Godana, Raya Kajawa and Milkato Buno

¹⁶⁹ Informants: Obbo Gazzu Kimo and Yadate Abdi

In the 1950s and 1960s, around five primary schools were constructed in all administrative centres of the *meketel woredas* of the district. But, even a single school was not established in the rural *käbälès* of the study area. Different reasons were listed by oral informants for the low level development of public and private services in the rural areas of the *woreda*.

Firstly, the involvement of the local community was very low in the establishment and expansion of public services both in labor and finance¹⁷⁰. Secondly, although the amount of the collected tax for the central government was very high; the annual budget allocated by the imperial government to the *woreda* was poor.

Generally, the absence of reciprocate system between the government and the community had greatly affected the public service and infrastructural development in the district.

4.1. Educational Services

Education can be conceived as a means of gaining knowledge, skills and attitudinal changes. It is an instrument used to obtain information, develop skill and awareness regarding different issues which in turn change the attitude of people and bring about the overall improvement of the individual¹⁷¹. Besides, education is universally recognized as one of the most fundamental building blocks for human development and poverty reduction and a key to attaining growth and development.

Of course, modern education was a very recent phenomenon in Ethiopia. It was introduced in the country after the victory of Adwa. Especially, fortunate and self-educated groups of Ethiopian intellectuals had begun to appear in the country in the early 20th century¹⁷². Particularly, self- educated Ethiopian intellectuals had greatly influenced Emperor Menilek II himself regarding the necessity of modern education to their country.

Meanwhile, the interest of the state developed towards modern education for various purposes in the field of administration and diplomacy. The expanding bureaucracy needed educated individuals for the services of international relations and the governments itself needed educated persons for different

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, MOE, *Education Sector Development Program III, Action Plan* (Addis Ababa, 1994), P.31.

¹⁷¹ Getnet Tesfaye, “an Assessment of Adult Learners’ Perception on Social and Economic Benefits of the Integrated Functional Adult Literacy Program: The Case of Akaki Kaliti Sub- City *Woreda* One”(M.A Thesis; Department of Curriculum and Instruction Program: Addis Ababa University, 2016), P. 9.

¹⁷² Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia from 1855-1974*, (Addis Ababa 1992), P.53

jobs like clerks and accountants¹⁷³ Moreover, schools were established and spread by the government to mitigate problem in public services in a good manner. More probably, the government gave great focus for the establishment and expansion of modern education in the country in the post-Italian occupation period.

Menilek Primary School was opened in 1908 and it was the first government secular school in the history of the country. Even though, modern education was opened in the first quarter of 20th century, it was more expanded in different parts of the country in the post-liberation period (1941)¹⁷⁴.

For the beginning of modern education in the country, religious (church) education had played vital role. Church education had been dominant and it was delivered through the clergymen and missionaries. Oral testimony stated that education was provided to the adherents of different religion were constructed by religious men and by the local people.

The role of the church was very great in the beginning and expansion of modern education in the area. Gradually, the number of students who attended church education increased in the district. Parallel to church education, a few of the local elites became interested to establish modern education in the early 1950s. Raya Kajawa and the village leaders decided to establish a school, in the Gedeb *Woreda* in the late 1940s. By their initiation, two primary schools were constructed in 1956 and 1957 at Hasasa and Bucho Towns respectively¹⁷⁵. Raya Kajawa was one of inhabitants of Hasasa Town who freely gave land to the local people for the construction of a school and the Hasasa Primary School was established in 1956.¹⁷⁶ The classes were constructed from local materials like; mud, grass and wood which could easily be exposed to damage at a time of rainy seasons. It was first opened to teach grade 1-2 students having two teachers.

In 1957, Kajawa Primary School was constructed by the government. The school started teaching grade 1 students in classroom having one male teacher¹⁷⁷. Even though, Asasa Burkitua nd Tijo Wakentera primary schools were established on the Hasasa-Dodola main road, the basic problem was not solved in the field of education and others public services in the *woreda*.

¹⁷³Meaza Bekele, "A Study of Modern Education in Ethiopia: It's Foundation, Its Development, Its Future with Emphasis on Primary Education" (PHD Dissertation, Colombia: Colombia University, 1996), PP.32-34.

¹⁷⁴ Bahru Zewde. *A History of Ethiopia: 1855–1991*, (2nd ed) (Eastern African studies

¹⁷⁵ Informants: Obbo Abdi Wako, Guta Game and Hasan Jilo

¹⁷⁶ *ibid*

¹⁷⁷ *ibid*

As written materials show, an auspicious agreement was made between World Neighbor Organization (WNO) and the government of Ethiopia in 1957, on the area of agricultural and public service sectors. It was a five years agreement (1957-1962) and it was aimed at applying Minimum Package Program (MPP) in the *woreda*. The Imperial government made agreement with WNO to get experience on improving public services and the agricultural sector in the first five years plan¹⁷⁸. The project had short term plan and it had aimed at acquiring experience towards education, modern agriculture and health services. The Mulo-Gedeb *Woreda* was selected to apply the project in the first five years plan. Sanford was appointed as administrator of the project on the side of the World Neighbors Organization¹⁷⁹.

Following the beginning of the project, the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts and World Neighbors Organization were working jointly to solve the following existing problem in the field of education. Three problems were mainly distinguished by the government which needs solution in the *woreda* during the period: First, there was a problem concerning the arrangement of educational structures in the *woreda*, which guide and control the activities of education in the district. For instance, qualified persons were not appointed as a head-master of the schools until 1957¹⁸⁰.

The second identified problem by the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts was related with the quality of the constructed schools. The already established schools had not fulfilled the necessary facilities. The absence of strict and frequent inspectors by qualified Ministry of Education and Fine Arts inspectors was also identified as another problem in the *woreda*.

The 3rd problem was related to the shortage of schools and absence of classes above grade IV and V¹⁸¹. Three of the above challenges attracted both the World Neighbor and Ministry of Education and Fine Arts to work jointly. To minimize these challenges, the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts took serious measures in the field of education.

The Ministry of Education and Fine Arts gave duty to B.A. Sanford to supervise and advise the schools in the *woreda*. Similarly, a qualified and professional person was assigned as a head of the Education Office in the *woreda*.

¹⁷⁸ World Neighbors, Annual Report to the Ministry of Education in December 1959, file no. 189box no. 0.17.9.

¹⁷⁹ *ibid*

¹⁸⁰ *ibid*

¹⁸¹ ENALA: Progress Report from B.A Sanford, Mulu Community Centre to Ministry of Education, Imperial Ethiopian Government, 2nd September 1958 to 31st August 1959, Box No192. File No.32.09.

Ato Bullo Gemmada was appointed as head-master of these schools and he was assigned as facilitator of the teaching-learning process in the district¹⁸². According to the reports of B.A. Sanford, World Neighbors had begun its career in 1957 to curb the above listed problems¹⁸³. Following the joint works of the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts and World Neighbor different improvements were seen in the field of education during the period under discussion. Of course, five of the *Gedeb woredas* had great interest to establish and expand modern education in their respective area. For instance, in *Gedeb Woreda* the local people started the teaching-learning process in a private house in the first month (September) in 1958, before WNO accomplished its project. The Asass Burkitu Primary School was conducting its career beginning from December 1958 in the new constructed school. Its facilities was better than Bucho and Tijo Wakentera Primary Schools¹⁸⁴.

The local people and World Neighbors Organization took the lion share in the construction of Gonosa-Primary School. 7 Ethiopian *birr* was imposed on each individual by Ambo Wake (local chief) for the construction of school and almost all the inhabitants had paid the required *birr* within six months in 1958¹⁸⁵. Qualified teachers were supplied by the Arsi Province Educational department.

In the construction of these schools, the local community was actively involved both in supplying finance and providing free labor forces. Necessary materials were fulfilled by the inhabitants and the local *balabbats*. The World Neighbor Organization was also technically involved in the construction of these schools.¹⁸⁶ The educational program was going on satisfactory way with the full cooperation of Ministry of Education and Fine Arts under the supervision of B.A. Sanford in the *woreda*. Relatively, impressive changes were witnessed in the fields of education both in the numbers pupils and the number of primary schools¹⁸⁷.

4.2. Health History

Until the 1940s, there was no modern health service which provided service to the inhabitants of the *woreda*. Informants underscore that the first private aid clinic was established in Gedeb- area in 1947 and it was begun by private owners. But, the problem of health services was going ahead with bad situation till 1957. As written materials indicate, the Ministry of Public Health had made an

¹⁸² *ibid*

¹⁸³ IES: Annual Report from B.A. Sanford, Mulu Community Centre to Ministry of National Community Development, Imperial Ethiopian Government and December 1960 Box No 12. FileNo 12.10

¹⁸⁴ *ibid*

¹⁸⁵ Informants: Simee Gudata and Abay Banti

¹⁸⁶ IES: Annual Report from B.A. Sanford, Mulu Community Centre to Ministry of National Community Development, Imperial Ethiopian Government and December 1960 Box No 12. FileNo 12.10

¹⁸⁷ *ibid*

agreement with UNICEF in 1958 to construct a health center at the Gedeb-Community center to avert the problem of the health services in the *woreda*. 5,000.00 Ethiopian *Birr* was allocated for the constructions of the health center. The necessary facilities were fulfilled by the support of World Neighbor Organization¹⁸⁸.

From December 1957 to September 1960, general medical service was provided to the local people both at the head quarter of the project and sub-center of the *woreda* with the aid of an ambulance. The organized professionals from the center were involved in the treatment of the disease and creating awareness at Gedeb marketing center (Jimate- Gebeya)¹⁸⁹.

Hasasa Town was the head-quarter of the project. More than 20 houses (offices) were constructed from local mud and wattle. Waiting room, registration room, examination room, laboratory room, treatment room, finance, clinic, sanitarian and managerial offices were constructed to run the project properly in the field of health in the *woreda*. Similarly, additional house for emergency medical room cases, and one delivery room were constructed at Gedeb-Health Centre¹⁹⁰.

The health center provided its services in 1960 for the local people and a system of payment was introduced for treatment in March 1961. This was 0.5 cents for registration and 0.25 cents a minimum payment for the drugs received. All communicable diseases and mothers and children health problems were treated freely. The Ministry provided a treatment card, which greatly aided the continuity of treatment and keeping of statistics¹⁹¹.

Gadeb clinic was opened by organized professionals to provide health services for five days in working day peer a week. It was provided to the people for three years. Mother and child welfare clinic held service once a week on a market day. The Gedeb-Health Centre provided this service. Similarly, mobile health team and school health services were setup and were giving service in the *woreda*¹⁹².

Hospitalizations of Patients - using ambulance 23 patients were transported from the community development to Asella Hospital in the preceding years (1960-1962). 11 patients were taken to the Asella Hospital. 8 of them were sent to Adama Hospital. Two of them were taken to Hailamariam Hospital and the two remaining patients were taken to Tikur Anbasa Hospital¹⁹³. According to

¹⁸⁸ *ibid*

¹⁸⁹ ENALA: Progress Report from B.A Sanford, Mulu Community Centre to Ministry of Education, Imperial Ethiopian Government, 2nd September 1958 to 31st August 1959, Box No192. File No.32.09.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid*, B. Sanford Report Box No.178. File No 33.11.

¹⁹¹ ENALA, A Letter from D.A Sanford of Community to Ministry of National Community

¹⁹² *ibid*

¹⁹³ ENALA: Sanford Report, Box No.178. File No 33.11

Sanford's report, 9 patients obtained supportive letters from the local administrators with the information that they were poor and thus they got treated free from 1960 to 1962. For nine patients the World Neighbor Organization funded around 303 *Birr* for the treatment. Five patients paid for their own treatment amounting to 261 *Birr*. All cases taken to hospital were serious and except one patient, all of them were treated successfully¹⁹⁴.

Mobile Health Team services - were implemented out of the health center on the market day weekly at sub-centers of the health center. A group of mobile health teams used to give medical services on the market days. The health teams used a vehicle for transportation to work in the sub-centers of the *woreda*.

The team was usually composed of a driver, a nurse, a dresser and cashier and conducted the clinic service from 12 mid-untill 9:00pm at each market days with similar price and service to the Gedeb Health Centre.³²⁹

According to the Paul Agnano's report, more than 16, 598 individuals got health services by the joint works of the Ministry of Public Health and the World Neighbor Organization in the 1960s.³³⁰ The health officers and sanitarians taught the local people weekly at sub-centers on market days about keeping the cleanness of the body, values of healthy, preparation of food and the like. Soaps and cakes were donated by UNICEF to all pupils monthly at the schools and non-fat milk was given for pre-school children. But, such services were limited to the town. Shortage of professional persons was another problem of the *woreda* in the health service area. Lack on equipment and shortage of bed-rooms forced the patients to remain for a long period without treatment. Generally, health service was some extents weakened in the early 1970s due to less of the imperial governments towards health service¹⁹⁵.

4.3. Road Transportation

Regarding road transportation, the *woreda* was characterized by inadequacy of well-organized infrastructure. In the absence of modern transportation in some parts of the rural areas of the Ethiopia, pack animals such as donkeys, mules and horses are largely used to transport commodities and people from place to place still today¹⁹⁶. In the *woreda*, pack animals were the major means of transportation

¹⁹⁴ *ibid*

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid*

¹⁹⁶ Harold Marcus, *the Life and Times of Menelik II: Ethiopia 1844-1913* (Oxford: ClarendonPress, 1975)

in the rural areas in the absence of modern road transportation and the difficulty of the geographic features of the district¹⁹⁷.

In the history of the area, modern means of road transportation was introduced during the period of the Italian occupation (1936-1941). For instance, road was constructed by the Italians from Addis Ababa to Bale-Goba which passes through the Hasasa Town and Gedebe *woreda*. Except the main road, there was no modern track road that could link the sub-districts of the *woreda* during the rainy season. It was unthinkable to provide vehicle service in the *woreda* in the rainy season¹⁹⁸.

For instance, Gedeb *Woreda* was challenged by Wabe River during the rainy seasons to communicate with other *meketel woredas*, due to the absence of bridge and modern transportation service in the area. To improve such tedious transportation system in the *woreda*, the local *balabbats* initiated their people to start construction of bridge. By the efforts of the local governors and the *balabbats*, a traditional bridge was constructed from wood on the Hasasa and Burkitu Rivers in 1956 which connects more than three sub-districts¹⁹⁹.

Similarly, the *woreda kebeles* were connected with each other by roads that were constructed by the labor force of the people. The construction of dry weather road enabled the local people to communicate each other for different reasons. The people used the road during the market days and for other public services²⁰⁰.

Generally, transportation system was improved than before by the initiation of World Neighbor Organization and the active participation of the local community. Such, significant changes in the fields of transportation positively influenced the socio-economic condition of the people. The inhabitants managed to easily communicate each other and they also, began to supply their products to the markets easily²⁰¹. Seasonal transportation was relatively improved and the people of the *woreda* were easily using the constructed roads for different purposes.

4.4. Communication

Communication is the most important aspect which played a vital role in the social, political and economic development of any country. Telecommunication, postal, and media were some of the types

¹⁹⁷ Informants: Obbo Habiba Bakara, and Gudisa Hurisa.

¹⁹⁸ *ibid*

¹⁹⁹ ENALA: D.A Sanford Report, Box No. 182 File No. 32.06.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid*

²⁰¹ Informants: Obbo Malka Hunde, Gebi Usha and Abu Guta

of communication services. In the context of Ethiopia, the idea of communication services could be traced back to the reign of Emperor Menilek II and it was introduced in 1904²⁰². Even though, telecommunication plays a great role in the exchange of ideas and information in different political, social, economic and cultural spheres, the rural and urban inhabitants of the *woreda* were unable to get communication services during the period under discussion²⁰³.

In addition, electricity is the most important sector for transformation and development of towns. It put basis for the development of business, technological and industrial sectors. But, in the period under study, the *woreda* had no electric light supply except in the -Community Centre. The majority of local inhabitants had no access to electric light²⁰⁴. Moreover, the spread and expansion of communications like; postal and telecommunication was very poor in the *woreda*. Even still now, the spread and expansion of communication is not adequate both in the rural and urban areas in line with the demand of the inhabitants of the *woreda*.

4.5. Other Public Services

Electricity was introduced in 2012 in the town and Gedebe *woreda* by the *Woreda* administration and public participation. It was used mainly for consumption of light and to some extent as source of small scale business. Currently, the dwellers of the town and its *woreda* become benefited for the 24 hour electric power and almost more than half in habitant won light indicator.

Transportation is one of the major factors affecting the development of *woreda* people from rural to urban. The development of transport has revolutionized town life. The major road that passes from Gedeb *woreda* to Gedeb Town and Dodola *woreda* and Town became the agendas of the *woreda* people. This road had great important for the economy of the area and interconnect Oromia regions and South nation nationalities and peoples region²⁰⁵.

4.5.1. Culture and Social Organization

West Arsi-Gedebe Hasasa *woreda* possesses some tradition and cultural life such as marriage, food habits, religious practices, way of clothing, the burial system and community organization.

4.5.1.1. Marriage Practices

Marriage is an important institution among the Arsi community. Being married increases social respect and acceptance in the community. There are various types of marriage practices in the studying

²⁰² Adinew Bitew, "The Political and Socio-Economic History of Asosa *Woreda* from 1941-1991" (MA.Thesis, History Department: Addis Ababa University, 2016), P.72

²⁰³ Informants: Obbo Tashita Dassaa and Kuma Muda

²⁰⁴ Gedeb Hasasa *Woreda* Culture and Tourism Office reports, 2024

²⁰⁵ *ibid*

areas including *Gabbara* (bride wealth marriage) parents decide for their children the time of marriage and choose marriage partner for them because children were not regarded as mature enough at making informed decisions on such vital matters.

Under effective management and strength, a cooperative can be effective institutional arrangement in breaking the vicious cycle of poverty in the rural socio-economic context.

Walgara (exchange marriage) is the cultural marriage system in which father gives his daughter for other clan or *gosa* son in exchange of that clan or *gosa's* son sister or daughter to his male son. Which means male son of given clan marry wife through giving his sister to brother of his wife from opposite clan or *gosa* in which marriage ceremony hold one day or one after the other by the agreement.

Asenna- is where a girl enters the man's house that she wishes to marry without the knowledge of the boy and his family. In the house, she scattered *hiddi* (solanaceous fruit) and get sits there. The scattered *hiddi* implies that she wishes more wealth to the family she has joined.

Butta (abduction) - is the forceful marriage practices.

Minbeetoo is another form of marriage arrangement upon the death of someone's wife; her kin group gives the wife's sister as a wife to the widower in the form of replacement. This type of marriage practice was done in order to treat her died sister's children and the resources of her sisters.

Dhaala- is one of the marriage types practiced by inheritance. It is taken place when a husband is died from his wife due to different reasons the bridegroom's families make her to marry his elder brother or younger brother of her deceased husband²⁰⁶.

4.5.1.2. Food Habits

The traditional food that are known in the study area includes *marqaa* (porridge) usually made from barley or wheat and butter. Porridge is made from flour or *qamashaa*. The latter is made from wheat flour and looks like pasta. *Qixxa* is another food item which looks like bread made of unfermented dough of any cereals; *haphii*, *takii*, *marmaree*, *shimo* (is boiled grain served either at home or funeral after the burial ceremony is over. *Qorsoo* (sort of snack) that is usually served with coffee.

Galaa (traveler's food) that a traveler takes with him during his journey .It has the quality of staying for a long period of time. *Basso* could be a good *galaa* food item. *Chukko* which looks like chocolate made from barley flour with butter. According to Oromo custom *galaa* is not eaten alone. It is shared among friends that take the same journey. It is also not eaten for *quufaaf* (satiety) but for the sake of

²⁰⁶ ibid

being to have energy. The travelers ought to consume their *galaa*, so that they are able to use it for their whole journey.

Hence, in Oromo culture, *Oromoon osoo karaa hin fixin, galaa hin fixan jechuun qusannoo galaa ibsa* is meaning that one does not finish their provision before ending their journey. The people of the study area have a good habit of *waliin nyaachuu* (eating together). Based on this, the Oromo people said that *namni waliin nyaate gara wal nyaata* people who were eating together feel considerate for one another. Before eating their food especially during several ceremonies the Oromo people of the study area arewal ebsuu (blessing each other) as the following²⁰⁷.

Afan Oromo

English translation

Waaqni nagaan nu oolche, nagain nu haa bulchu Give us a peaceful night as you gave us a peaceful day

Kan nagaan nu bulche, nagaan nu haa olchu Give us a peaceful day as you gave us a peaceful night

Daafii, sababii nu yaa olchu, irraa gora nu yaa olchu May he protect us from evil transgression the whole day

Dogoggora nu yaa olchu May he protect us from missing

Kan fagatee nuuf yaa dhiyaatu May he who is away come near

Kan dhiyaate nuuf yaa oowwaatu May who closes shall respond

Kan dheekame nuuf yaa arraaramu May who blusters shall reconcile

Roba nagaan quufa gabbina nuuf yaa kennu May he provide us rain of prosperity

Wanta kadhane, nuuf haa dhaga'u May he receive what we begged

Wanta godhanu jalaatee nurraa yaa fudhatu May he accept what we have done

Mijuun sifa Daraaran sifa Let everything be blessed.

The other food known in the study area such as *biddeena, ittoo* it is a kind of sauce or gravy made of different components depending on the economic level of the family. *Dabboqolo, dirqosh* sun-dried injera; *dabbo* or bread, *gulban*-boiled wheat and beans eaten by Christian on the eve before Good Friday; *qinche* boiled split wheat soaked in spiced butter; *chechebsa qitta* broken into fine pieces

²⁰⁷ ibid

soaked in spiced butter. There are also various types of *dhugaatii aadaa Oromo* (Oromo cultural drink) including *aannan* (milk), *dadhii* (mixture of honey and water), *birzii*, *buna* (coffee).

The above mentioned traditional food and drink of the Oromo of the study area are served by different *meeshaa aaddaa* (cultural materials) like *qorii* the cultural service object used to put porridge in it. *Jahii* respected cultural material in which Arsi woman served food for their husband; *dardara*, *fal'aana*, *mooqqaa*, *oorboo* milk container while milking, *Xuunxoo* small milk container, *baarree* a bigger milk container, *buqqee* traditional container for perfumed butter. In addition, there are various Oromo cultural materials included *okkote* (pot) used to prepare different cultural food like *marqa*, *qamashaa* and *shimo*. *Gaawaa* similar to *okkote* but it is bigger than it²⁰⁸.

²⁰⁸ *ibid*



Figure 1: Cultural materials of Arsi Oromo

Source: Photo by researcher in 2024



Figure 2: Cultural materials of Arsi Oromo

Source: Photo by researcher in 2024

4.5.1.3. Clothing

Before cotton and fabricated clothes were introduced to the area, the people of the town are known by wearing *uffata aadaa* (traditional clothes). Most of these traditional clothes were made up of from animal skins which were known as leather clothes. As explained above, since the people of the study area is attached to their cattle; they depend on the cattle for their food and use their skin or hide as a raw material for making clothes. There are various types of traditional clothes known in the study area. *Wandaboo* (is a skirt of Arsi Oromo woman that made from skin or hide.) *Qoloo* (is a traditional Arsi Oromo t-shirt.) An Arsi Oromo woman uses *hanfalaa* (traditional belt made from hide strings) and *sabbata* (a cotton waist tie).

In the study area, woman also wears *guuftaa* (a black fabric head dress) and *shaashii* (white cotton shawl worn by Arsi woman to secure *guftaa*); *kittaa* (it was a traditional cloth of young children in which fissure in both sides. *Kaldhoo* traditional leather clothes made from skins that used to carry children by Arsi Oromo woman. According to Arsi culture, jewelries like *callee* (bead) with different colors and *dooqa* or *ilillaa* are made for children to protect them from *budaa* (those who believed to be posse's evil eyes).

Other traditional clothes used by Arsi Oromo people of the study area were *waya* or *bullukkoo* (night cloth). In addition, there is a traditional tanned hide which is used as *itillee* (bed mattress). It is one of the products of the *duugduu* (tanner) of the study area. In additional to the traditional clothes, the Arsi Oromo women are using different *faaya* (jewelries) including *faaya adda* (fore head jewelry) like *sandaaba*, *faaya mormaa* (neck jewelry) such as *jomoree*, *kaafura jombollaa* and wearing different *tasfe* (beads) with different colors. *Bito harka* (hand jewelry) and *qube quba* (ring of finger). According to Oromo culture *qube* is wearing by *durba kadhimaa* (engaged girl) and married woman. It is forbidden for unengaged girl to wear *qube*²⁰⁹.

4.5.1.4. Social Community Organizations

The people in Gedeb Hasasa formed relationships and networks through the formation of social institutions such as *Ikub*, *Idir* and others. These institutions were alien to the Arsi and they were introduced by the Shewans. The Arsi Oromo have their own traditional self-help organizations such as *Hirpha*. This type of helping custom is used to asst the people that happened incident problem. For instance, as a result of the incident of the fire, which Arsi Oromo called *Bishantu keesa ya'e* (inundated by water) taking the terms "burning house as a taboo" has been announced, every one living in the neighborhood joined hands to re-construct the house of the victim contributing various

²⁰⁹ ibid

house items including grain destroyed by the fire and re-establish the family in its former condition. These social institutions played a significant role in the consolidation of harmonious relationships among different people of the town.

Equb was established for the essential purpose of mutual support at times of bereavement but also for coordinating efforts to address a variety of community concerns. The contribution of the participant is made in cash weekly or monthly. The oldest *iqub* in Gedeb was started by local drink sellers in 1960s. Their members were twenty-five. They contributed 0.25 cents every week. It had a judge and secretary who had a leading role in the institution. The judge and secretary formulated rules and regulations that should be respected by all members. According to their rules of regulations the judge and secretary took the first and the second round of collected money.

Idir is formed by communities of religiously and ethnically heterogeneous people. Its main purpose is advance preparation for an eventual death in one of the member's families. They collect cash, grains, fire woods which are needed for funeral events for mourners of the members. The earliest and first *Idir* in Gedeb was called *Nebar iddir* in 1960's. The secretary of this earliest self-help association was *Ato Urga Dadhi*. The members of this association paid 0.10 cents every month. At that time the residents of the town were not divided into *kebele* and there was only one *idir*²¹⁰.

Following the expansion and growth of the town members were tired of going long distance and this forced them to form another association. This led to the formation of different *idirs* in the study area²¹¹. As the informant described that it is very difficult to find someone without any *Idir*. This is primarily a funeral association that makes resources and labor available to members who are bereaved. There are various types of *Idir* including women's *Idir* (*yerat idir* that help assemble food items at the house of the bereaved member for several nights), *dinkwan idir* that organize funerals and make financial contributions to the bereaved²¹².

The physical environment could facilitate the efforts of a given society for the betterment of their livelihood or could offer or hindrances to those efforts. The factorial aspects are accorded little emphasis in most of the studies dealing with economic history, specifically agricultural history. Many writers even rarely mentioned this issue in their works dealing with the socio-economic history of the country in general and regions in particular. Therefore, they appear to assume that the poverty of the country is the result of the lack of skilled manpower.

The other factors, such as the unreliability of rainfall, crop failure, pests and insects, seasonal fluctuation of the volume of rivers and streams, soil erosion since highland areas are sources of rivers,

²¹⁰ Informants:- Abu Bora and Guta Muda, interviewed on Sept. 20, 2024

²¹¹ *ibid*

²¹² *ibid*

the fact that these areas are not appropriate for irrigation, and the like have been accorded minimal emphasis. In particular, the problem of low soil fertility and a poor harvest from each plot of land is rarely discussed in historical accounts.

However, in the history of the nation, the soil or land impoverishment led to the deterioration of agricultural productivity and contributed to frequent shifts of the locality of the political capital because of the decrease in the capacity of land to accommodate a large number of people on a certain area of land.

The early writers described many land issues where a term, concept or traditional title had multiple dimensions or interpretations simply as a word used in day to day communications. Some of the units of measurement they listed are not in use today. In addition, these were even very heterogeneous or varied from locality to locality. They were not uniform in size and or amount, for units such as qunna, ladan, gurzign, enqib, dawulla, gundo, wäqét, korja, gerewina, etc which are mentioned in many of the sources. It was a difficult task to understand and transform them into the present day units.

The documents (archives) that deal with the period under study suffered from mass destruction because of the Italian occupation of the country. After liberation, many writers tried to reconstruct immense numbers of historical novels and memoirs of individuals who played roles in the areas were written and published. The novels, biographies, autobiographies were written from the supporters points of view during the liberation. The litigation over the possession of land was an exceptional issue from the pre-war period which was given space in the post-war record when individuals were forced to cite evidence from the incidents before the occupation, when matters were in a normal order.

The second category of sources comprises books written by amateurs, who wrote using local languages, acknowledging different materials as their sources or quoting or appending letters and speeches or sayings, either from the chronicles or *Tarikä Nägäst* (history of kings) as well as *Kebrä Nägäst* (glory of kings) and even sometimes the Bible. Writers belonging to this group include Täklä Tsadiq, Heruy, Asmä-Giyorgis and Paulos. Heruy and Täklä Tsadiq were the authors of several books. However, since they were high officials in the government bureaucracy during the reign of Emperor Hailä Sillassé, they may not have been free from bias in writing the political history of the country.

Heruy wrote on different issues besides history. His only comprehensive history book (manuscript up to 2007) emphasizes the genesis of the kingdom.

In this book, he discussed the economic activities of the occupied territories, the land tenure system, the type of farming, and the fertility of the land to a certain extent. Täklä Tsadiq wrote almost entirely on Ethiopian history, starting from very ancient times to the first half of the twentieth century.

Particularly, his last two books on the period of Emperor Tewodros, and Yohannes IV contained a relatively detailed history of modern Ethiopia and as such are of paramount relevance to this study²¹³.

As indicated, most of these authors were high officials in the central governments and regions, their attitudes towards Ethiopian history were dissimilar as they stemmed from somewhat different backgrounds.

For instance, Asmä Giorgis and Märsé Hazän were relatively different from the rest because they tried to describe incidents objectively. And their books were not also totally secondary sources since they incorporated their eyewitness accounts. Märsé wrote mainly on his own experiences, which is why he entitled his books *kayehutena Käsämahut* (from what I see and hear) and *Tizita: Selärasé* (Memory about me). They were at least familiar with issues that took place during their lifetimes and had considerable information about the existing oral traditions.

The other category of sources useful for this study encompasses biographies and memoirs of individuals. Since they had no intention to write about the history of the country or a region but rather to narrate their own experiences and roles in the political and economic spheres, they did not give priority to agricultural practice. However, since the society of the region in was agrarian, they could not escape from mentioning their experiences. Some of these for instance, Täklä Hawariat's autobiography, which covered the first three decades of the twentieth century, were therefore very important sources for this study. He studied in Europe and in particular his second field of study.

4.6. Access to Resources and Property Rights

A substantial number of books, articles in journals and theses that dealt with access to resources and property rights have been produced by various scholars from different disciplines, mainly from history. One of them is the work of R. Pankhurst entitled "Economic History of Ethiopia: 1800 – 1935"²¹⁴, a survey of the economic activities of the country before the period of Italian occupation. His description is overwhelmingly dominated by agricultural and related activities; in fact, it is the economic history of an agrarian society. In terms of sources, the author relied heavily on materials produced by foreigners. It seems that impoverishment is not his interest. In his description, he has not discussed the changes and dynamics in the socioeconomic history of the country in general and the south-eastern and south-western region of the country in particular during the period covered by his study.

²¹³ Gedeb Hasasa Archivals reviewed on Dec. 2024

²¹⁴ R. Pankhurst entitled Economic History of Ethiopia: 1800 - 1935

He hardly mentions the impoverishment of the peasants resulting from the nature of access to resources and property rights. A detailed analysis was seldom seen in his discussion of the economic situation during the period of his study.

But one can clearly understand, from his description, the existing economic situation of the peasants in the northern half of the country. His discussions also lack a consideration of the causes behind their situation. His examination of the tenure system, taxation and agricultural tools and trade activities as well as crafting could have been discussed from the point of peasant life. However, as is common in most of the works of the earlier Ethiopian scholars, his descriptions revolve around the privileged members of the society. He could have told us how the existing economic system with the other related variables disfavored the peasantry and eventually obliged them to lead an impoverished life.

Another scholar who wrote about the issue of access to resources and property rights is Berhanou Abbebe. He directly investigated the land tenure system in Shäwa during the late 19th and early 20th century. Regardless of his clear and analytical discussion about access to resources and property rights with their overall political implications during the period of his study, he offered few discussions of the peasant conditions and their impoverishment because of the existing legal situation. His discussion focused more closely on the political value of land ownership in Shäwa during the time of his study. His analysis is of the land issue as it was concerned with the ruling class: the peasants were not his subject of discussion; their way of life and the reasons for it do not interest him.

His major sources were the traditional Ethiopian writers such as Gäbrä Wäld Engeda Wärq, Täsäma Habtä Mikael (Käsätä Berähan), and Mahetämä Sillassé. However, he attempted to use the French systems as his model, comparing and contrasting his subject of study from the administrative and legal point of view with that of the French. In fact, from his discussions, one can see the burden of the responsibilities the farmers had to discharge and the taxes they had to pay in kind, which partly led them to a life of poverty or destitution²¹⁵.

Gäbrä Wäld Engeda Wärq has also contributed a book that can be considered as a mainstay regarding the land issues in Ethiopian history. As the author himself mentioned in his introduction, his purpose was to instruct the young graduates who would work in the bureaucracy about the nature of the land tenure and taxation system in different regions of the country. It seems that he considered the existing land administration as well established. Therefore, he intended to enable the government and the peasantry to work in harmony, which is why he wrote his book about the system, so that it would be implemented properly by the coming generation. Therefore, the major gaps were that most writers of

²¹⁵ R. Pankhurst entitled *Economic History of Ethiopia: 1800 - 1935*

Ethiopian history were from the northern parts of the country and were writers of the northern parts of the country as their focus of mirror images.

4.7. Conflicts and War

Conflicts and war contribute significantly to the impoverishment of a given nation or community. Many historical literatures on Ethiopia lacks discussion of changes and dynamics related to the issue, merely describing the situation of the incident during the time of its occurrence. Some of the Ethiopian scholars attributed the poverty of Ethiopian society by the end of the 19th and the beginning of 20th century, to the conflicts or wars and the rampant pillaging of the army. Two of them stand out, for their discussion and conclusion that Ethiopia was poor simply because of wars created intentionally by individuals who did not want to toil but aspired to live on the labor of others.

One of the two authors, Gäbrä Hiwot, wrote about the status of Ethiopian poverty from a feeling of heartfelt disappointment during the period under discussion. He linked the prevailing political system, mainly the outnumbered soldiers and their behavior, to his assumption that they were the ardent enemies of the peasantry owing to all the poverty which resulted. He tends to ignore, or did not know, the other factors which equally contributed to the impoverishment of the nation. All his strong and quotable statements about the issue are conflict related, or at least politically affiliated, as if all the other factors had nothing to do with the impoverished peasant life.

The same is true of Afäwärq; he accused the regional lords and rulers of the country of causing the extreme poverty of the peasantry. Because of his own personal reasons, he criticized the administrative system, mainly for the way in which the army, during wars and conflicts and owing to its billeting system, brought great suffering to the peasants. He declared the peasants had no reason to toil if everything they earned was taken over or spoiled by the army. Afäwärq pointed out that the peasants had no rights over their property during such times of conflict, let alone over their wives and daughters who were subjected to forceful sexual abuse. As with most of his contemporary authors, his analysis was attributed only to the political conflicts and the rampant activities of the period. He had no intention of discussing other areas in his scholarly works.

Another author was Asmé, who emphasized on the bloodshed and the antagonistic relations between the Oromo and the government of the country.

He underlined how the Oromo developed a deep hatred against the government because of this ill advice by the clergy. Even if he does not directly discussed conflicts, he overemphasized the role of the conflicts in disturbing the life of the people. Ultimately, the conflicts hindered the farmers from thinking about the future or devising a long term plan. His explanation describes the prevailing socio-

economic systems for us, though we cannot see the reasons for such a life style, except his perception that intentionally created such chaos among the peoples and government.

In summary, one of the most difficult activities in historical research is how to unearth the hidden or obscured sources and deal with the available ones. The problem is more serious in the case of issues dealing with rural peoples who did not have the habit of recording the date of events. This was a difficulty common to most of the topics in the study about the peasantry in African history²¹⁶.

4.8. Factors That Affect the Socio-Economic Development of Gedeb Hasasa Woreda

A number of different factors can cause agricultural productivity to increase or decrease. As a result, those factors can be divided into natural and human factors²¹⁷.

4.8.1. Unpredictable Weather Conditions

In this world agricultural production is affected mostly by natural factors. Here, unusual weather patterns, such as drought, a prolonged rainy season, early or late frosts and other factors can ruin crops and bring decline of productivity. Ecological problems consisted of serious environmental hazards such as land degradation, loss of wild life and loss of forest resources. Land degradation is loss of soil and water, loss of soil nutrients and biological degradation. The environmental problems resulting in serious threats to livelihood, cause conflict over land resources, depletion of forest cover and disappearance of the wild life. Yet, unreliable rainfall distribution has been an important climatic influence on crop production²¹⁸.

Sometimes farmers have been forced to feed their animals with small amounts of ever green leaves. In some areas, the major constraint on livestock husbandry has been severe shortage of pasture during the long dry season. Large numbers of animals have died due to drought and the recovery from the loss has taken a much longer time.

4.8.1.2. Soil Erosion

In similar way, the forest coverage declined because of the over increase of peoples. As the result, the destruction of forests contributed the fast speed soil erosion and land degradations because of the absence of forest coverage. During the reign of EPRDF, attention was turned into the keeping the forest. However, it was not effectively worked. The current government of Ethiopia largely engaged in building of tracing to protect land degradation. It reduced run- off water that erodes

²¹⁶ Hill, 2008

²¹⁷ Gedeb Hasasa Agricultural Office, 2024

²¹⁸ Abdurezak, 2006

useful nutrients from the region. Topography, rainfall, wind, lack of vegetation cover, soil properties and land use management practices are the immediate cause of soil erosion. There are also underlying distance causes such as population pressure, poverty high cost of increase ability of inputs insecure land tenure lacks of appropriate production and conservation technologies and many of these are further influenced by government policies²¹⁹.

Additionally, the high land areas of the district have intensively cultivated with continues loss of soil. In the distance past, the mountain tops were remote and difficult to reach and were not cleared as much as forest of mid latitude areas for agricultural purposes. Recently even these have been cleared and these high lands have been intensively eroded by heavy rainfall since soil has been easily washable from the high lands. Suitable agriculture had been badly affected by the higher degree of soil erosion in this district. Because of land degradation, some high land parts have progressively become less productive. Crop yields have decreased in terms of producer per unit of land output per unit of labor and output per productive unit

The major human action that causes soil erosion is deforestation. Vegetation cover can increase organic matter content or nutrient structure and protect the soil from direct solar heat or from rain and wind that would otherwise wash or blow it away. Almost all dwellers of the district (both rural and urban) have used fuel wood for cooking. It is generally acknowledged that with the rapid increase in the number of people and higher rates of urban population growth, the need for fuel as a source of energy continues to grow. As fuel wood consumption increases, so does the diminishing of forests. In fact, urbanization seems to have a direct effect on the loss of forests as the spread of deforestation near the urban areas.

Indeed, since the last half of 20th century deforestation has accelerated the dramatic change of the rural landscape. Deforestation has been conducted by using a machete and a short-handled axe. Farmers have cleared more by setting fires to the base of large trees in the dry season to make land ready for plantation during the rainy season. This has led to the depletion of natural forest, the peril of the environment and the disruption of the natural ecosystem. Artificial and less complex ones have substituted the natural and complex ecosystem. The unrestricted ruthless clearance of forest led to runs— offs together with dry up of ground waters, the disturbance of hydrological cycles and depressed ecological balance. The combined effect of these chains of processes has been the deterioration of agricultural production (Bahru, 1996).

²¹⁹ ibid

In some places, population growth appears to have reached a threshold where the local ecology can no longer cope. Thus, the overpopulated land has been parceled out into minuscule holdings and every piece of it, including valleys and mountain slopes, has been cultivated. Losses of vegetation cover, little grass and intensive land use have characterized this zone. Soils of the area have been used for many generations, being cultivated every year. Due to overcultivation (repetitive farming without fallowing) and overgrazing (keeping too numerous animals on small land), the soil has been exhausted and exposed to severe erosion which has eroded the material base of village life.

The old communal grazing especially deteriorated the stocking capacity of the land. The absence of forest cover has led to the inability to check erosion and declining soil fertility. High intensity of land use has caused land degradation. This area has been highly degraded. The intensive land degradation in turn affected soil fertility. Low conservation based farming practice worsened the problem. Under intensive land use, traditional technology encourages erosion (Tadassa, 1972).

This has forced farmers to change cropping patterns and increase application of expensive inorganic chemical fertilizer to boost yield with high environmental and public health risks since fertilizer (especially together with biocides) create environmental hazards.

A shortage of wetland plants has affected the supply of fruit food, medicinal materials and craft industries, which were important sources of rural income, especially when harvests were poor. Following the 1984 famine, the process of village in the late 1980s, through which the *Dargi* Regime tried to concentrate the dispersed rural population into villages, also had impacts upon wetlands. In some communities, wetlands have been drained in depth and degrading these rich areas, which have ended up as rough grazing grounds for cattle. This in turn has often been a short-lived benefit as the trampling action of cattle aided the process of soil compaction and erosion²²⁰.

4.8.2. Human Factors

4.8.2.1. Problem of Governmental Policy on Land Right

Agricultural production is also affected by human factors. Among them, governmental policy is a main factor. The securities of Land and land right question in countryside were the basic element that might need to be address in emergent sustainable land management. Farmers' rights recognized as rights a rising from the past contributions of farmers in conserving, improving and making available plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. Favorable institutional provision and

²²⁰ Belai, 1991

agricultural land policy are significant for long-term sustainable development. Lack of security in land may lead to improper use of common resources and reduction in output (Braukamper, 2004).

Therefore, lack of useful land right is one of the basic problem. A certain region had belonged to a certain clan, various clans with their component families settled in distinct localities. Each clan had known its right and responsibilities. Usually the region that belonged to a certain group named after the group. Each family in the clan settled anywhere they prefer for their residence in the land the clan possessed. However, the right of holding land ended by the conquest of the region. Land was confiscated by the new feudal administration.

Higher government officials, church dignitaries and soldiers who settled in the area representing the authority of the central government snatched the communal land of former possession of extended families. Land alienation was the most enduring effect of a feudal system administration.

The communal ownership by the local Oromo people disrupted and eventually the local people reduced to *gabbar* or tenant. They were forced to pay tribute and give corvee labor. The major types of tribute were land tax and rent tax. The price of the land tax differed based on the fertility of the land that graded as *lammaret* (fertile land), *lem-tef maret* (semi fertile land) and *tef-maret* (unproductive land). *Lammaret* (fertile land) was the land that well cultivated land. *Lem-tef maret* (semi-fertile land) was the land of fair fertility. *Tef-maret* (unproductive land) was the land of less productivity. To retain the right to use a piece of land owned by the settlers, each *gabbar was forced* to render special service to the *neftegna* or the landowner. To retain right to use a piece of land owned by the settlers, each *gabbar was forced* to render special service to the *neftegna* landowner.²²¹

Informants emphasize that in the post-1941 period, there were considerable efforts by their turning government of Hayila-Sillaasee and newly appointed officials to alienate the local holders from their possession of land. There were two major ways through which some of the local owners were forced to lose their holdings. Some of them were accused of failing to pay tax. The vicious effect of revenue collection became one of the major burdens on the peasantry and facilitated the process of dispossession. Failure to pay tax for three consecutive years resulted in the loss of land. Defaults on heavy taxes appear to have become one of the principal factors behind the loss of land by the local people. Most of such government lands were soon sold to officials at apparently cheaper price.¹⁹⁷

The land reform (proclamation No. 31/1975) of Derg truly abolished the landlordism and all rural land became communal property of people. It restricted the right to use the land by prohibiting

²²¹ Afework, 2009

the lease (rent, donation, sale, exchange, mortgage and inheritance (except minor child run of the land). *Derg* also enacted a proclamation No. 47/1975 that nationalizes all urban lands and extra houses (houses other than those that are occupied by family for residential purposes) without compensation²²².

As its rural counterpart, it allowed all tenants to maintain and use the houses they rented from land lords and made them free from any rent obligations or dept. The administrations of urban houses were given to *kebele* (sub-districts) and the ministry of housing based on the values of the houses. At the earlier the rural farmers were in better position in terms of production process, deciding what to produce on the land, Yet, later erroneous policies and repeated land reforms made them to benefit little from it. The government, as an owner of the land, conducted repeated land reforms as a result farmers lost tenure security.

The collectivization of rural land and working in cooperation did not enhance the productivity, rather farther exhausted the farmers working habit because peasants looked it as forced production and had no awareness of what cooperation meant. In addition, peasants could not sale their products with better price due to quota's restriction²²³.

Moreover, the Dreg's policies of village (putting all rural farmers at one spot), and resettlement in the 1980s evicted peasant from their homestead without their interest and collected them at identified place what called *Mender mesreta*. The moving of people away from their lands led to a decline in agriculture as the distance to travel to these plots became extreme and their separation made them difficult to protect against wildlife. Despite the long established hill sided homesteads, the new villages were built on the plains land. Thus, the best agricultural fields in turn led to decline of crop production.

After the downfall of the Derg in May 1991, Transitional Government disbanded all collectivization and villagization programs based on the consent of the people. Collective farms were privatized to individual farmers; the government stopped the grain requisition program allowing peasants to sell their produce at market value. However, in 1995 (as proclamation No 1/1995), it decided to keep all rural and urban land under public ownership.

4.8.2.3. Land Fragmentation

Like another factor, land fragmentation also a factor for affecting agricultural production. Since time of imperial, the kings and the ruling elites in Ethiopia controlled land. Because of the expansionist

²²² Solomon, 2003

²²³ Duguma, 2011

war of the ancient Ethiopian rulers with their neighboring tribes, the state could manage to include vast territories to its rule. Land was granted by the imperial power to individual people or peasants in the form of private *rist* (hereditary land right). The peasants were allowed using, rent, and inheriting the land to family members, but selling the land to non-family members was prohibited. In exchange, peasants were obligated to make different kinds of land related tax payments. Land given in live of salary might be reversed to the state in the event of non-fulfillment of the obligation by the holder of the land. Land was then transferred in the form of inheritance from family to children for generations with over time reduced the size of the farmlands²²⁴.

Land was granted to individual people or peasants in the form of *rist*. The peasants were they allowed using, rent, and inheriting the land to family members. In exchange, peasants were obligated to make different kinds of land related tax payments. Selling the land to non-family members was prohibited. Land was then transferred in the form of inheritance from family to children for generations with over time reduced the size of the farmlands. Land was also provided to the church that was considered as a major ally to the imperial power. The church is a major possessor of material wealth.

Because of selling salvation in return for treasure and land, perpetuating imperial power over the people, the church played a major role in propagating the mass to obey the king. Obedience to the king was justified in many of the Christian writings and the day-to-day teachings. Land owned by the government was distributed to different people on the condition of serving the state at different levels²²⁵.

Immediately after the revolution and the assumption of power by *Derg* and subsequent land reform it conducted, various insurgent group lifted arms against the *derg*. The current incumbent EPRDF won the war and replaced the *Derg* in 1991. After the downfall of the *derg* in May 1991, the new Transitional Government disbanded all collectivization and villagization programs based on the consent of the people. Collective farms were privatized to individual farmers, the government stopped the grain requisition program farmers, and the government stopped the grain requisition program allowing peasants to sell their produce at market value. In December 1992, it adopted a new economic policy where by the government declared that until a new constitution would be in place, land would remain under state ownership. However, when it finally came out in 1995 (as proclamation No 1/1995), it decided to keep all rural and urban land under public ownership.

²²⁴ Solomon, 2006

²²⁵ Gedeb Woreda Archival Bulletin, 2024

According to the FDRE constitution, all urban and rural land is the property of the state and the Ethiopian people. Article 40/3 of FDRE constitution accordingly, sale, exchange and mortgage of land are prohibited. For all land was under the control of few people who has a position during the derg. New generations of Ethiopia general, Gedeb Hasasa in particular was still land less. They took share of crop with their labor after farming the land²²⁶.

4.8.2.4. Lack of Modern Technology

Additionally, lack of modern technology also included under factors that affect expansion of agricultural development. Even though industrious, the peasants have followed less productive traditional agricultural methods, which could not give them a better life. The technological transformation in agriculture has been inert and there has been no significant technological innovation made to improve agricultural techniques throughout the period under discussion. The basic tools of agricultural production have been crude implements and few of the basic parts of the plough have been changed over the course of the plow's recorded history. Ethiopian farming systems have not transformed themselves beyond the basic technology of an archaic plough, which was adapted to upholding of long fallow periods²²⁷.

Factors for the unchanging technology include the problems of difficult topography had its own contribution in impeding the use of new technological innovations like tractors and mechanization. In some cases, peasants' indifference to the use of modern technology was presented as the main obstacle to the development of peasant agriculture.

Occupations such as crafts, which could have triggered large- scale development of engineering skills, were unloved. But, the main factor is the problem of government strategy²²⁸.

Nevertheless, through time government could not effectively subsidize imported input since its price was increasing in the international market. Limited supply of fertilizer was crucial problem to the farmers. The seed was also not reliable quality and not attractive to peasants. Therefore, farmers went on using previous seeds. On the other hand, there was an inadequate market for outputs .The price of the farmers' product was very low in comparison with the price of imported fertilizer and there were limited market incentives for farmers. However, there have been still some important problems that put the sustainability of agriculture under question. These include derisory supply of

²²⁶ Gedeb Woreda Archival Bulletin, 2024

²²⁷ ibid

²²⁸ ibid

inputs, weak agricultural research and insufficient extension service. The delayed delivery of inputs has made farmers late in planting which in turn has reduced the yield (ibid).

Fertilizer cost has been rising following the 1992 devaluation and the subsequent depreciation of Ethiopian currency. The majorities of peasants have acquired improved seeds by preserving seed for planting from their own production or by purchasing from local markets where there has been no reliable seed quality and the seed quantity available has not been satisfactory. On the other hand, fluctuation of the price of agricultural products has affected the peasants' productivity. Farmers had no gained access of credit for the small farmers within the district²²⁹. Demand for credit in the rural areas was occasionally met through friends and relatives as well as village money lenders who in many cases have charged high interest rates. Because of these factors, not all proportion of the farmers used fertilizer. Still the seed and fertilizer have been impure and unsatisfactory²³⁰.

4.8.2.5. Lack of Basic Social Infrastructure

Poor infrastructure in the rural areas of Gedeb Hasasa has been another major problem of the agricultural production. Transportation and communication facilities were poorly developed in the district. A large numbers of rural households have been located far away from all-weather roads, making transportation and distribution of inputs as well as collection and marketing of surplus output difficult. The use of traditional transport has dominated the rural areas. Pack animals or human porters have transported the bulk of the farm output. The rugged topography of the district, lack government attention and shortage of capital has made construction and maintenance of rural roads difficult. Some villages in the district live many hours away from the nearest basic social services. Still access to these social services are poor, because the road system is poorly maintained and frequently in accessible during and after rains.

This shortage of road causes a problem in multi-directions. Most of the social services in the district were constricted along the main road except few of them. There were no high schools up to 1980. The students learned high school in Asella, Robe and Shashamane after long journey. For this problem, many students especially females dropped out their education in high school²³¹.

More than half of kebeles in district have been travelling on foot and back animals in scattered settlement that contribute to obstacle in the rural villages youth, women, children and disabled people in accessing some of the basic social services. The cost of transportation is higher for those

²²⁹ Temam, 2015

²³⁰ ibid

²³¹ Gedeb Hasasa Education Office Report, 2024

villages, as the functions of longer trip travelled to work and other activities, the poorer families count, the higher proportions of income spent on transportation.

In general, transportation has a great impact for agricultural development and selling their produced cereals to the market. As a result, the economic development of farmers' decreased followed by the lack of hospital service is another problem behind the people.

Still today, the woreda has no comprehensive hospital services in their area except a little clinic (*tenatabiya* or *bufata fayyaa*). The peoples were treated in Dodola, Asella and Shashamane and hospital.

Chapter Five

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to fill the gap in the socio-economic history of Gedeb Hasasa Woreda from its foundation to 1991. The thesis had also showed its settlement pattern, socio-cultural aspects, and economic activities. The main historical study deals its development by classifying land mark periods that have showed sounded historical development effect for the mid 1930s. The Italian period though contributed its part in expanding urbanization, its effect did not outshine the prewar period. Gedeb Hasasa Woreda and its town, Hasasa's growth was also stagnant during the regime of Emperor Haileselassie. Change on economic and administrative system brought remarkable growth during the *Derg* period. There were several accomplishments have been registered that include the construction of resident houses in modern ways, expansion of social services, rapid population growth, establishment of public association and organizations and establishment of public shop.

The study looked at the period of the Italian occupation of 1936-1941. The study also assessed the formation of Gedeb *Woreda* and the appointment of the *woreda* as well as Gedeb *woreda* governors. The thesis examined the prevalence of maladministration in the post 1941 period. The *woreda* and Gedeb *woreda* governors exploited the inhabitants both in materials and labor. There was also taxation burden on local peoples during the reign of Emperor Haile Sillassie. The study also outlines the main features of land tenure in the *woreda* in the political and socio-economic aspects in the period under discussion. The study attempted to assess the forms of land ownership and its burden on the life of tenants in the district. The study clearly assesses the public and infrastructural developments in the area. Transportation, education and health services exhibited better improvement in the post-1941 period than before. But, other public services like; communication and water services remained low in the area. The effects of Minimum Package Program in the *woreda* also clearly illustrated.

This study has attempted to reconstruct the socio-economic history of Gedeb Hasasa Woreda from its foundation to 1991. During Italian occupation; the *woreda* did not show urban progress. Like the Italian period, there was no change and development during the period of Emperor Haile Silassie. In the post Italian occupation period, feudal administration greatly oppressed the mass of the people. The local people were more and more affected by the feudal exploitation. After the *Derg* came to power, the real expansion was seen. This was mainly because of agricultural stagnation, poverty and famine of the rural areas. In addition, the expansion of several social facilities attracted the *woreda*. Social services such as water supply, health care, education and roads were expanded.

After came to power, the *Derg* took several measures. Land was nationalized in rural areas ending landlordism and land was distributed to landless peasants. The other achievements and developments that took place during the *Derg* regime was the establishment of public shop and public association.

Agriculture is the most common economic activity of rural population of the *woreda*. Farming system in the *woreda* is mixed farming both animal rearing and crop production. Trade also contributed to the economy of the study area.

During the post 1991, the Gedeb *woreda* has made some improvements in the socio-economic administration were followed by the conflicts and maladministration under the 27 years of EPRDF.

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Lists of Informants

R No	Full Name	Sex	Age	Place of interview and Date	Occupation	Remark
1.	Mohammed Kuyyu	M	75	Gedeb Hasasa October,7,2016 E.C	Farmer and elder	Well known about Derg
2.	Lemma Gabisa	M	50	In Gedeb Hasasa Burkitu primary school,Dece10, 2016 Ec	Teacher	Taught history more than 30 years.
3	Abu Buta Irresa	M	70	Bucho village in December 20, 2016	Elder or Manguddo	Well known about Gedeb Hasasa history pre and Derg regime.
4	Kedir Haji	M	80	Xijo Wetago village December 30, 2016	<i>Abba-lafa</i>	Well known about the foundation of Gedeb Hasasa Woreda
5	Gelgalu Agaje	M	65	Xijo Wakertera village January 8, 2016 E.C	trade	Well known about activity of Gedeb Hasasa Woreda
6	Abebe Tessema	M	70	Gedeb Hasasa town January 15, 2016	Religious father in Gedeb Hasasa town in <i>Mulu- Wongel</i> Church	Well known about the foundation of the Gedeb Hasasa Woreda
7	Suleyman Kumbi	M	75	Gedeb Hasasa town January 20, 2016 E.C	Islam religious father	well known about the socio-economic development of Gedeb Hasasa Woreda
8	Churiso Fata	M	78	Bucho village February 6, 2016	Chairman of the Bucho Kebelle during Derg	Well known oral history of Gedeb Hasasa Woerda
9	Jemal Hamda	M	60	Gedeb Hasasa health center February 15,2016 E.C	Health professional	Well known about the foundation health center in Gedeb Hasasa
10	Deballe Gemmachu	M	65	Gedeb Hasasa town Febraury 30, 2016	Head of Agriculture office	Know in detail about the economic development of Gedeb Hasasa during and after the regime Dergue
11	Amana Bushe	M	78	Xijo Wakentera village March 8, 2016 E.C	Chairman of the <i>Kebelle</i>	Well known oral history of Gedeb Hasasa.
12	Gemmeda Defo	M	75	Gedeb Hasasa town March 16,2016 E.C	Head of the finance office	Well known the economic development of Gedeb Hasasa

13	Kedija Abdo	F	70	Gonosia village March 20, 2016 E.C	trader	Well known oral history of Gedeb Hasa
14	Kedi Genamo	M	60	Gedeb Hasasa town April 3, 2016 E.C	Head of culture and tourism of in office now in Gedeb Hasasa town	Well known the economic development of Gedeb Hasasa
15	Mamo HUNde	M	75	Temella village April 15, 2016 E.C	Farmer and Chairman of Temella village during Dergue	Well known oral history of Gedeb Hasasa
16	Gemmeda Eda'o	M	60	Xijo Wakentera secondary school April 29, 2016 E.C	History teacher	Taught history for more than 25 years. Know historical foundation of Gedeb Hasasa
17	Fikedu Kebeda	M	65	Gedeb Hasasa trade and industry office, May 10, 2016	Head of trade and industry office.	Well known about the development of trade in Gedeb Hasasa town
18	Kedu Bullo	M	78	Gedeb Hasasa town May 20, 2016 E.C	The leader of Gedeb Hasasa Woreda during the Dergue regime	Well known the socio-economic history of Gedeb Hasasa before and after the Dergue regime
19	Gelato Gemmeda	M	80	Gedeb Hasasa town May 28, 2016 E.C	Eldere or Manguddoo	Well known oral history of Gedeb Hasasa
20	Abdella Gelato	M	82	Adersho village June 10, 2016 E.C	Islam religious scholar	Well known about the foundation and socio-economic history of Gedeb Hasasa

