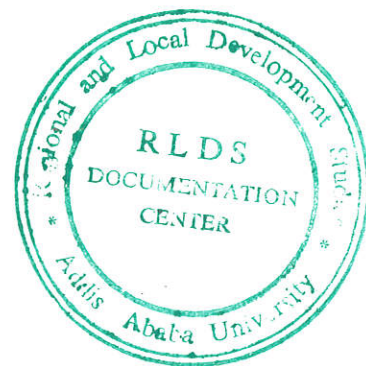


**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF GRADUATE  
STUDIES REGIONAL AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT  
STUDIES (RLDS)**

**ETHNIC RELATIONSHIPS IN ETHIOPIA: THE CASE OF ARGOBA  
AND THEIR NEIGHBORS**



**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE  
STUDIES OF ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL  
FULFILMENT FOR THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS IN REGIONAL AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT  
STUDIES (RLDS)**

**AZMERA W/HANA**

**DATE 2 August 2006**

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

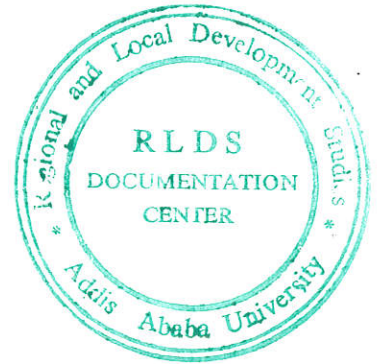
TOPIC: THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ARGOBA AND THEIR NEIGHBORS

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## List of terms

*Absuma* - a marriage type among the Afar where the Afar man marrying to his cousin

*Adal*: The term formerly used to refer to the afar-ethnic group

*Afersata* or *Awchachign* : Traditional mechanism of identifying offenders in Ethiopia.

*Danakil*: The term formerly used to refer to the Afar ethnic group

*Dejazmach* : Traditional high military rank common in the feudal system of Ethiopia

*Kebele* - Lowest level of government structure

*Wolasma*- a person who has pure (Argoba) blood, and who has land and is a member of the ruling class

*Woreda* - District level of Administration

*Woredawoch*- Amharic term for districts

## **Abstract**

The main focus of this paper is the ethnic relationships between the Argoba people who currently live in the Argoba special woreda and the Afar and Amhara ethnic groups who are residing in Dulecha and Ankober woredawoch respectively.

The Argoba are one of the few ethnic groups who live currently both in Afar Regional State and other parts of the country. The Argobba are one of the Semitic-speaking peoples, and their language is part of the south Semitic group of language. On the basis of the new administrative division, the people are found spread in the Amhara, Afar, Oromiya, and Harari Regions.

Partly based on secondary data, this paper will first review the ethnic conflict in the horn of Africa, and second it deals with ethnic relationships in Ethiopia. After that, it will outline the background of the Argoba people and their neighbors. The primary data was collected during a field visit to Argoba, Dulecha and Ankober woredawoch respectively for duration of two weeks. The primary data employed to collect information were questionnaires, interview, focus group discussions, and personal observations.

The paper tries to show the relationships of the Argoba with their neighbors based on primary data collected through a fieldwork to the Argoba special woreda, Ankober and Dulecha woredawoch. The researcher with his research assistants stayed two weeks in the three woredawoch to collect information on the topic under investigation.

The research stress the history of settlements of the Argoba to the present special woreda, the historical and current relationships of the Argoba with their neighbors, perceptions of the Afar and Amhara towards the Argoba ethnic group, initiation for the establishment of the Argoba special woreda, impact of the new federalism arrangement in the development of the Argoba special woreda.

In this paper more emphasis was given on the current political relationships of the two local administrations of Dulecha and Argoba special woredawoch. This is because by the time this research was conducted there was political insecurity in Argoba special woreda due to a conflict between the Afar and the Argoba. The conflict resulted in the death of Afar and Argoba community members and the evacuation of some Argoba settlers from their settlements like Metekleya, Wondoager, Libargi and Belanto. Both traditional and modern methods were used to manage the conflict. However, the interventions were not effective in bringing sustainable peace in the area.

Due to the problem of security in the study area, some of the Argoba ethnic groups had an interest to buy small arms to defend themselves and their territory against the intruders from Ankober and Dulecha woredawoch. On the other hand, the Afar had also a feeling that their territory was taken away by other ethnic groups.

The regional government played a role to change the security situation of the area by organizing peace conferences. Those interventions again were not fruitful to bring the desired peace in the area and develop mutual trust between the Afar and Argoba ethnic groups residing in Dulecha and Gacheni *woredawoch*

Thus, the aim of this paper is to see the ethnic relationships among the Afar, Argoba and Amhara and the impact of the new federalism arrangement on the development of the Argoba special woreda.

# CHAPTER I

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

Ethiopia is a home of different ethnic groups and nationalities. Presently, there are over eighty ethnic groups in the country. Primarily, they are distinguished from one another by linguistic factor. They have separate as well as shared cultures and belief systems. According to the Ethiopian history, these ethnic groups co-existed for centuries despite instances of conflicts between different ethnic groups. Governments who came to power at different times had taken different strategies to administer ethnic groups. For example, the Haileselesie and the Dergue governments used to follow centralized form of administration. Markakis argued (1994:26) that the period of Haileselesie and the Dergue marked as a period of ethnic subjugation by the dominant groups. According to him during the period of Haileselesie, the Christian Amhara ethnic group had controlled the political and economic powers in the country, and the other ethnic groups were marginalized. The writther further stated that (1994:27) in "Imperial Ethiopia it was easier for a non-Christian who also did not speak Amharigna to pass through the eye of a needle than to enter the charmed circle of power and privilege".

Ethiopia has exercised a new administrative system after the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) came to power. In 1995, after the government took power a new Constitution was enacted. The Constitution of the FDRE has granted nations and nationalities to administer themselves. Accordingly, nine Regional States and two Self-administrative Cities were established in the country. Article (39) No. 3 of the constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia states;

Every nation, Nationality, and people in Ethiopia has the right to a full measure of self-government, which includes the right to establish institutions of government in the territory that it inhabits, and to equitable representation in state and Federal governments (The Constitution of the FDRE, 1995).

However, the constitutional provision and its relevance to Ethiopian politics has caused a lot of debate before and after the enactment of the FDRE Constitution. This debate will be presented in the next chapter. The present Federal Democratic Republic Government of Ethiopia is following federal government system whereby nations and nationalities are granted autonomy to administer their localities and their affairs. And, this new arrangement of the government has provided the Argoba ethnic group to administer their localities and their affairs. Accordingly, in 1995 the Argoba special *woreda* was established. And, a formal political party, which has been recognized by the government and that stands for the interest of the Argoba people, has been established.

Based on the constitution of the FDRE a parliamentary seat is allocated to the Argoba people in the House of Representatives. Following the establishment of the Argoba *woreda*, the people of the Argoba ethnic group residing in other regional states such as Amhara and Oromiya have also started to request the establishment of their own administrative areas.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Ethnic groups are group of people whose members identifying themselves on the basis of common ancestors or common genealogy. Furthermore, ethnic groups are also united by common language, cultures, and religion. D. Smith (1988:21-26) defined ethnicity as

Ethnicity is a number of people living together and acting together, though not necessarily belonging to the same clan or tribe....The most common shared and distinctive traits are those language and religion; but customs, institutions, laws, folklore, architecture, dress, food, music and the arts, even colors and physique, may augment the difference or take their place.

Similar to the existing realities of most African countries, Ethiopia also has different ethnic groups residing in the country. In the course of history, the age-old interaction of the ethnic group in the country resulted in the assimilation and diffusion of cultures among the groups. Governments who assumed power in the country devised different strategies to rule multi-ethnic groups in the country.

Likewise, the present Federal Democratic Republic government of Ethiopia adopted a federal policy that allows the formation of federal states. Based on this new arrangement, nations and nationalities have started to administer themselves. Taking this opportunity, minority ethnic group also started to establish their own local administration. One of the ethnic groups who are granted self-administration is the Argoba ethnic group who are presently residing in Argoba special *woreda* in the Afar Regional State.

The establishment of the Argoba special *woreda* has caused the Argoba people living in the Afar Regional State to administer their localities. On the other hand, following the establishment of the Argoba *woreda* the Argoba community members residing in other regional states such as Amhara and Oromiya have also started to request for the establishment of their own administrative areas in these regions. For instance, the Argoba People Democratic Party has conducted a research that shows the total number of Argoba communities living in different parts of the Amhara Regional State. The purpose of the research conducted is to request self-administration for Argoba communities living in the Regional State. The Argoba Peoples' Democratic Movement has submitted the request to the House of Federation and the Ministry of Federal Affairs. The Party has requested for the establishment of special *woredawoch* in 12 *woredawoch* of the Amhara Regional State.

However, the current relationships the Argoba have with the neighboring Afars, has problem. Shortage of pastures and water on one hand and the revenge taken by the two ethnic groups against the killing of their members are frequently cited as commonly seen problems between the two ethnic groups.

Although the hostility between the Afar and Argoba has long history, the problems have been intensified after the establishment of the Argoba special woreda. Due to the conflict created between the two ethnic groups peoples died from both sides. Besides, the conflict between the Afar and the Argoba negatively affected the security situation in Argoba and Dulecha woredawoch, and this made difficult for people to move freely in the two woredawoch.

Therefore, this research paper particularly aims to study the relationships between the Argoba ethnic groups currently residing in Argoba special *woreda* with the Afars and Amharas living in Dulecha and Ankober woredawoch respectively.

### **1.3 The research questions**

1. What is the socio-economic and political system of the Argoba?
2. What types of relationships the Argoba people have with their neighbors before and after the new arrangement?

### **1.4 Objective of the study**

The following are the objectives of the research.

#### **1.4.1 General objective of the research**

1. To study the relationships of the Argoba living in Argoba special woreda, with the Afar residing in Dulecha woreda and the Amhara ethnic groups living in Ankober woredawoch.
2. To see the Impact of the new federal arrangement on the development of the Argoba special *woreda*

#### **1.4.2 Specific objectives**

1. To see the socio-economic and political relationships of the Argoba with their neighbors
1. To analyze the impact of the new arrangement on the social, economic and political development of the Argoba special *woreda*.

## 1.5 Theoretical Framework

Countries of the world consists different ethnic groups whose members identifies themselves on the basis of a common genealogy or ancestors. When we look back the history of nations in the world, there had been conflicts among ethnic groups who even share similar languages, cultures, and religions. Multi-ethnic states have historically used different strategies to manage or eliminate ethnic conflicts. Mc Garry and O' Leary (2004:52) identified four specific methods belonging to each of the two categories. "The specific methods for the first category (elimination of differences) include (a) genocide, b) forced mass population transfers C) partition and /secession and d) integration/ or assimilation. The second category (management differences) consists of a) hegemonic control, b) arbitration c) canonization and federalism and d) consociationalism or power sharing".

In Ethiopia, Governments who came to power in the course of history used some of the methods indicated above to deal with ethnic conflicts. "Among the methods used to eliminate ethnic differences, the Haileselassie regime promoted policies of assimilation, the military regime, which reigned from 1974 to 1991 under took forced population transfer and the EPRDF, allowed Eritrean sessions"( Asnake, 2004:52).

The methods employed by Ethiopian governments to rule the multi-ethnic country have resulted in the conflict among the ethnic groups. This conflict negatively affected the development of the country. Some argued that the history of Ethiopia is dominated by war. The war the country wagged was not only with external aggressors but also with the ethnic groups residing in the country. The conflicts that took place in the country affected the political, economic, and social development of the country. "The process of homogenization which has a certainly been taking place in Ethiopia over the last half-century and more has at the same time been accompanied by and has contributed to a corresponding process of ethnic conflict and differentiation" (Clapham, 1994:30).

Similarly, (Asnake, 2004:55) indicated that "The process that led to the multi-ethnic character of the country and the manner in which Ethiopia regimes sought to govern the country, greatly impacted conditions of peace and instability in Ethiopia".

Again, Ali (1998:108), argued that" Ethiopian governments have not only failed to provide mechanisms for mediation and conflict resolution, but have also sought to manipulate ethnic differences to promote their own narrow interests. In fact, the downfall of successive regimes is by and large attributed to, among other things, their failure to give fair treatment to all nationalities and ethnic groups, especially minorities".

On the other hand, the political form of administration that was used by the previous governments did not allow the devolution of power from the center to the grass root or the arrangement did not give chance for ethnic groups to administer their localities and manage their local resources. A good example that could be cited is the Haileselassie and the Dergue governments. These two governments were in favor of centralized administration systems.

*In modern times, almost all the rulers favored centralism. Tewodros II preferred external candidates to local ones for gubernatorial offices, though he turned to the latter at critical moments; Menilik II respected local government in the early years of his reign, but he attempted later to undermine regional autonomy. Haileselassie I, systematically removed all traditional regional or local prerogatives and perfected centralism. In fact, he removed most of the traditional territorial boundaries and clustered d/t political units into arbitrary provinces. His determination to dismantle the Eriterian federal system can be regarded as a part of this line of thinking which equated unity with uniformity (Birru, 1994:7).*

In support of the above argument Ali (1998:108), indicated that" Extreme centralization of power devoid of proportionate representation for the country's many ethnic groups, and denial of access to resource became breeding grounds for resentment among the marginalized groups and for armed confrontation with the central government."

After the military government was overthrown, the opposition groups that formed a coalition party (EPRDF) assumed the political power and formed the transitional government. A new constitution was drafted and the constitution granted ethnic groups to administer their localities and their affairs.

Asnake (2004:51) explained the new move taken by the EPRDF as follows:

*Ethiopia witnessed a major turning point in the arena of national politics since the early 1990s. One of the most important features of the political changes in post-1991 Ethiopia is the recasting of the Ethiopian state through a model of ethnic-based federalism. In an attempt to introduce a radical reorganization of state structures and state-society relations, the ruling regime has constitutionally formalized ethnicity as fundamental principles of political organization.*

The EPRDF-government and other supporter of the present political administration strongly argued that the federal government system that the country has experienced is the only solution to solve the age-old ethnic problems in the country. In contrast to the above view, there are groups and individuals who oppose the present federal system of arrangement. According to these groups, the current government policy has not solved the ethnic problem in the country rather it has aggravated the problem.

The ethnic-based model of federalization of Ethiopian state and the concomitant decentralization of power has neither satisfied the hitherto marginalized ethnic groups nor pacified the privileged groups of former years. Judged less kindly it has created many problems rather than solved the existing ones.

...moreover, the new ruling elite's divide and rule policy has led to series of clashes between people cohabiting the same or adjacent regions e.g. Between Oromo and Somali in the Borana region.

... The policy has also had the tendency to discriminate regional minorities, especially non-indigenous minorities, in education, employment opportunities and election of public offices (Merara, 2004:261).

In contrast to the above views there are also proponents of the new federalism arrangement of Ethiopia. The supporter of the present federalism arrangement argued that the new arrangement will solve the ethnic problems of the country

that stayed for many years. For example, the publication by the Ministry of Federal Affairs states;

The rationale for opting the federal arrangement is common desire to institute self-government and self-determination as the cornerstone of the 60-70 nations, nationalities and the peoples of Ethiopia the multi ethnic nature of the country fits better with the ability of a federal structure to allow self-determination (Ministry of Federal Affairs, 2003:2)

Similarly there are still writers who claim that the federalism arrangement that the country pursued for almost two decades can be seen as a building block to deal with ethnic conflicts

'The top-government officials who support the ethnic federalism argued that ethnic federalism represent an improvement on this discriminatory situation and the introduction of ethnic federalism is to be understood primarily as a mechanism of conflict resolution' (Sarah, V. 2003:21)

The Argoba ethnic group is one of the minority ethnic groups that presently live in Afar Regional State and other parts of the country. The ethnic groups are granted the status of a special *woreda* as per the right granted to ethnic groups in the Constitution. (J. Young, 2004:40)" The Ethiopian constitution allows nations, nationalities, and peoples within regional states the right to establish their own states"

Therefore, the aim of this research paper is to investigate the relationships between the Argoba and their neighbors and also to see whether the Argoba ethnic group are really benefiting from the new federalism arrangement or not.

## 1.6 Hypothesis

The establishment of the Argoba special *woreda* has positively influenced the relationships between the Argoba residing in Argoba special *woreda* and the Amhara and Afar residing in Ankober and Dulecha *woredawoch* respectively.

## 1.7 Scope of the study

The present work is limited to Argoba special *woreda*, which is located south of Afar regional State. The scope of this study focuses on the ethnic relationships of the Argoba with the Afar ethnic groups living in Dulecha *woreda* and the Amhara in Ankober *woreda*. Moreover, the study focuses on the impact of the new federalism arrangement on the development of the Argoba special *woreda*.

Accordingly, people representing 12 rural *kebeles* from the three *woreda* and people living in Aliyamba, Gacheni and Dulecha towns took part in the study.

## 1.8 Significance of the study

To bring peace and sustainable development the objective reality of the country should be studied and analyzed. In any local development efforts, reliable and valuable information about the relationships between ethnic groups should be studied carefully.

Presently, the federal government of Ethiopia has planned to promote peace and development in the country. To realize this effort, the government in collaboration with other funding agencies, has allocated a budget to enhance good governance at a grass root level. The Afar-Regional State is taken as one of the focal States. There is a felt need to study and analyze the objective situation in the region. The present case study of the Argoba special *woreda* looks into the achievements and shortcomings of the new arrangement in terms of socio-economic development and peace with the neighboring communities.

The present study among others, will contribute: 1) In enabling regional officials to have better understanding about the relationships between the Argoba and their neighbors 2) In indicating the impact of the new administrative system (Argoba special *Woreda*) on the development of the special *woreda*. 3) In helping decision makers to plan a strategy which will promote the relationships between ethnic groups

in the study area. 4) In understanding the problems, which hamper the establishment of good governance in the study area. The greatest significance of this study is that this is the first study made since the establishment of the Argoba special *woreda*.

### **1.9 Limitation of the study**

Both external and internal factors have affected the research study. And, these factors might influence the reliability and validity of the study results. During this research study, there were some key informants who were suspicious in providing prompt information to some of the questions, and there were also shortage or absence of secondary data on the topic under investigation. In addition, there was serious shortage of transportation to travel to all places in the study area. Finally, the current security problems in some parts of the Argoba and Dulecha *woredawoch* made movements difficult for the researcher and the assistants.

### **1.10 The research methodology**

The present study has employed both primary and secondary methods of data collection. The primary data is obtained from field research that took place in the target communities. The researcher together with his research assistants and party members of the Argoba People Democratic Movement (APDM) and other official traveled to Dulecha, Gacheni and Ankober *woredawoch* in May 2005 for duration of two weeks to collect primary data.

#### **1.10.1 Background to the data collection**

The researcher traveled to the Semera, Argoba, Ankober and Dulecha *woredawoch* for the duration of two weeks. Probably, the current position the researcher has significantly facilitated the data collection in a short period. Presently the researcher is working as a National Program Coordinator in the Ministry of Federal Affairs for UNDP-supported Decentralization program in Afar, Somali, Benishangul Gumuz and Gambella States, and this gave a chance for the researcher to interact with top-level regional officials and to share the purpose of the research study. The regional and

local officials, political party heads of Afar Regional State and the political party heads and members of the Argoba People Democratic Movement also largely facilitated the collection of the data through organizing the necessary materials, manpower, and communication with the concerned local officials.

Accordingly, the researcher traveled to Dulecha and Ankober *woredawoch* with his research assistants and with Civil servants from Argoba ethnic groups and political members of APDM. Upon arrival, the administrator of the Argoba *woreda* warmly welcomed the researcher, his assistants and arranged a rest room for the researcher, the Afar region decentralization program coordinator who belongs to the Afar ethnic group and the APDM members. Following, the group explained the purpose of the mission and asked the local officials to identify people who know the history of the Argoba ethnic group and are willing to participate in the key informants, interview and focus group discussions from both sexes, occupations and different age categories.

### **1.10.2 Units of data collection and analysis**

#### **A. Individual**

The units of data analysis are individuals who represented different age categories and positions in the communities. Accordingly, the local officials in the three *woredawoch* in collaboration with the researcher and his assistants identified individuals who are involved in the research study. Religious and clan leaders, civil servants, youth and women groups, elders, government officials, peasants and pastoralists were identified and contacted.

Attempt was also made to involve people who reside both in the urban and rural *kebeles* in the study area. Due to shortage of time and problems of security to travel to most of the rural *kebeles* the researcher tried to get people from some of the rural areas of the three *woredawoch* on market days that are held in Aliyamba town. On

the market, people who came from different kebeles with the help of the *kebele* administration and other civil servants identified and contacted.

### **1.10.3 Methods of data collection**

#### **1.10.3.1 Primary data**

In order to ensure the reliability of the data triangulation methods was used. The methods used are in-depth interview with key informants such as government officials and other community members, personal observation, focus group discussions, and questionnaires for the communities.

##### **A) In-depth Interview**

To get in depth information about the topic under investigation unstructured interview was used with key informants such as regional Afar officials and local officials of the three *woredawoch* and other community members.

##### **B) Questionnaires**

To get information on the ethnic relationships of the Argoba people residing in the Argoba special *woreda* with the Afar and Amhara people living in Dulecha and Ankober *woredawoch* and also to understand the achievements made in the Argoba special *woreda* after the new federalism arrangement open-ended questionnaires were distributed for civil servants, peasants, pastoralists, and women and youth groups living in the three *woredawoch*. Those respondents who read and write Amharic were given the questionnaire to fill it by themselves. On the other hand, the enumerator and research assistants assisted respondents who cannot properly read and write in filling out the questionnaires.

### **C) Focus group discussions**

The other methods employed to gather information was focus group discussion. Six sessions of focus group discussion with men and women groups were held in the three *woredawoch*. As the cultures of the people in the study, area does not allow women to speak in the midst of men separate focus group discussions were held for the women groups. Accordingly, three separate sessions of focus group discussion for the women and the men groups were arranged in the three *woredawoch*. People representing the communities such as youth, elders, peasants, pastoralists, civil servants, and local leaders involved in the discussion. The number of people involved in a group ranges from 10-12.

### **D) Personal Observation**

To supplement the data obtained through questionnaire, interview and focus group discussions and also to some extent to check the reliability of the data attempt was made to employ personal observation methods. Using this method, the researcher observed that there are new infrastructures like government buildings, residence houses, power supply, water pumps that were constructed after the new arrangement. Besides, the researcher observed that there were marriage relationships between the Afar and Argoba ethnic groups residing in the study area. Especially, in Dulecha woreda the researcher met the Argoba women who married to the Afar. On the other hand, he also observed that due to the conflict between the Afar and the Argoba ethnic groups the Argoba ethnic groups were afraid of traveling to Dulecha woredas for fear of revenge that might be taken by the Afar ethnic group.

#### **1.10.3.1.1 Size of sample population**

The total size of sample population is 166. That is 75 people responded the questionnaires, eight local officials of the three *woredawoch* and the regional officials were involved in the key informants, 12 individuals such as civil servants, pastoralists and merchants who have knowledge about the topic were selected for personal interview and 71 individuals in the focus group discussions sessions.

### **1.10.3.1.2 Sampling technique**

The sampling technique used is purposive sampling or non-random sampling. The method is convenient to identify and contact people who have the knowledge about the topic under investigation. As I indicated earlier, the local leaders of the three *woredawoch* and the members of the Argoba People Democratic Movement who accompanied the researcher were primarily responsible for identifying people involved in the study area based on the criteria given by the researcher. The criteria used to select the target population are the knowledge they have about the topic under investigation, their duration in the area and willingness to provide unbiased information.

### **1.10.3.2 Secondary sources**

A combination of archival materials, other secondary sources like books, magazines, government reports, manuscripts, unpublished works, reports and government records were used

### **1.10.3.3 Data analysis**

The information gathered through different data collection methods analyzed separately. The data obtained through qualitative method integrated with the findings from the quantitative method. The data collected through in depth interview was written down in a notebook and translated into English language. The response gathered from the focus group discussions recorded in a tape recorder was written down and translated into English language. Finally, the data collected analyzed based on the nature of the questions incorporated in the questionnaires.

## 2. Organization of the paper

The paper is divided into five chapters. Chapter one presents introduction, statement of the problem, and objectives of the study, research questions, research methodology and limitations of the study. Chapter two presents review of related literature that provides theoretical and conceptual framework for the research. Chapter three describes the profile of the study area, the population and case studies of some special *woredawoch*. Chapter four examines and analyzes empirical findings of the research followed by summary and conclusions presented in chapter five.

## CHAPTER II

### 2. Review of the related literature

#### 2.1 Ethnic conflict in the horn of Africa

The history of the countries of the horn since the end of colonialism in the region has been one of violent oppression and revolution. There are both internal and external conflicts in the region. As it has been known, the Horn of Africa consists of countries such as Ethiopia, Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Somalia. According to Julia and Abebe (2001:2) struggles, which have taken place in the Horn of Africa over economic and political powers often take the form of ethnic conflict.

On the other hand, one of the factors that aggravated ethnic conflict in the Horn of Africa is the degradation of natural resources. For the past two or three decades due to the population pressure the natural resources in these countries have been depleted from time to time. This has made the life of people who are dependent on nature worse. Julia and Abebe stated the situation as follows (2001: 2)

Desertification, droughts, environmental degradation and a scarcity of resources have displaced large number of people, driving them across national boarder as migrants. Aside putting pressure on state boundaries, their arrival sometimes results in feelings of insecurity and intolerance among the local population who now have to compete for the same limited resources. This of course can engender xenophobia and conflict of various kinds in the population of the receiving countries.

Similarly, the following article indicated that shortage of natural resources in the Horn of Africa has aggravated the conflict between ethnic groups living in the area. Concerning this Mar kakis (1994:218) wrote:

The natural endowment of the horn of Africa is meager and unevenly distributed and large parts of it are not fit for settled human habitation. Man's adaptation to it was premised on movement and the history of the area is marked by extensive and population shifts, the constant jostling and shoving of peoples in search of land,

pasture and water. Mobility was specially noted among the pastoralists who inhabit the Horn's arid expanses, and the epic migration of the Arabs from Egypt to Sudan, the Oromo from the tip of the horn to the Ethiopian Plateau, the Somali from the Gulf of Aden to the foothills of the East African highlands, and the Beja into Eritrea are well known instances.

In support of the above argument (Berman and etal, 2004:317) stated that "the conflict with in ethnic groups over social obligations, authority and the boundaries of community, and the conflicts between ethnic group over access to markets and control over the state, are fundamentally about the control of the sources of material property and political power".

In Africa, governments who came to power in the course of history tended to rely on the support of their ethnic groups. There are writers who argued that the nationalist movement that took place in the continent also dominated by major ethnic groups. These leaders entrusted to promote and protect the interest of their ethnic group. Those ethnic groups who realized this and marginalized often turn their face against these leaders.

In Africa, nationalist movements were frequently identified as under the domination of particular ethnic communities, which sought ascendancy in the new state and this, could provoke the competitive political mobilization of other ethnic communities that feared marginalization. Even before independence, nationalism movements were frequently rent by internal confrontations of political tribalism and held together by tenuous coalitions of ethnic leaders based on promised divisions of the resources of the state.. Regardless of their visions of the nation in the rough and tumble competition of political tribalism within nationalism movements, leaders relied on an ethnic base of support and their links with its patronage networks. (Simon and Murray, 2004)

Similarly, in countries like Djibouti access to political power had caused conflict between ethnic groups of the Afar and Somali (Issa). The civil war that broke out in 1991 between the Somali and Afar ethnic groups could be cited as evidence. Concerning this G.Nyuotyoh(2003:2 ) stated the following points:

*The isolationist approach that the Djibouti government adopted against its opponents and the economic breakdown that followed seemed to*

*have forced Afar tribesmen to take up arms. This move resulted in a civil war that started in 1991; a government military offensive in 1993 forced thousands of families to flee to Somalia and Ethiopia.*

On the other hand, according to Markakis(1994:222), expansion of people from their territory has created intimate contact of peoples which had different nationalities, cultures, religion and languages. However, this expansion had brought great potential for conflict in the nature of the relationships between those who controlled the state and those who became subjected due to the incorporation.

Again, there are also societies in the Horn where ethnic similarities could not guarantee peaceful co-existence among the nations. This reality is vividly seen in Somali. Hizkias (1999: 5 ), "Somalia was the envy of many African states it was a territory inhabited by people who shared the same ancestral origin, language, religion and culture. But that ethnic or nationality bond was not strong enough to prevent disintegration. Currently, an extremely bloody civil war is being waged between clans and sub clans".

No matter what the causes are, ethnic conflicts have been evident in the Horn countries. For example, the conflict between the North and South Sudan is between the Arabs Muslims and the black Africans. Like most of the African countries, Sudan was under the occupation of colonial powers. "After its independence the government power has been under the control of the Arab Muslim. As a result, they tried to establish a Muslim state, the southern Christian groups have rejected this effort of the government, and they started to fight the government in power for the past 30 years. Since independence, the Sudanese regions have been unable to accommodate the diversity of their people in an inclusive nationhood. The predominantly Muslim north has controlled each government. Non-Muslims in Sudan continue to occupy a tenuous position under a regime that has stated its aim to build and Islamic state according to a version of Islam that discriminates against non-Muslims" Markakis (1994: 228). From the above argument, we can conclude that the major cases of instability in the Horn of Africa are struggle for political power and control over natural resources.

On top of that, from this discussion, we learned that despite the fact that there are conflicts among ethnic groups who lived in the Horn of Africa, ethnic groups in the area have been assimilated in the course of history and developed shared cultures, languages and religions.

## **2.2 Ethnicity and ethnic relations in Ethiopia**

Ethiopia is a home of different ethnic groups and all these ethnic groups have their own identity, culture, and tradition and belief systems. The ethnic relationships in the country have stayed for centuries. The age-old interaction between the groups has resulted in the diffusion of cultures and traditions between the various ethnic groups. Mankelkilot elaborated the issue in the following statements. (1994: 1)

The history of Ethiopia can't be divorced from the interethnic activities that began thousands of years ago. The socio-economic state of today's Ethiopia is a cumulative result of the evolutionary interaction between its different ethnic groups. Religious activities, migration, intermarriage, exchanging services in market places, sharing a common culture and even wars were the major interacting factors.

Mankelkilot also argued that these interactions among the ethnic groups continued to exist for centuries. The earlier leaders like Yohannes IV, Tewodros, Menilik or Ahmed Gran were elements of historical coincidence in the process of social and cultural development. The history of Ethiopia has shown that the country had suffered from a long civil war that negatively affected the social, economic, and political systems of the country. Ethnic groups that exist in the country were affected negatively from the long civil war. However, with all these civil wars the various groups that survived in the country continued to interact in one way or another. The following scripts taken from the writing by Mankelklot corroborate this issue (Mankelkilot 1994; 1) as follows;

Even in the heat of the wars, the warring factions kept the social interaction a live through negotiation. For example, Oromo, Gurage and Sidamo negotiated for their market interaction to be continued

while they were fighting. In other cases, they agreed to establish a market place in a neutral zone while they were fighting.

Similarly, when we look back the history of the country, the trade relation ships between the North and South, between West and East and other parts of the country had significantly contributed as a major interacting factor for ethnic groups in the country. Moreover, the trade relationships had enabled ethnic groups to benefit from the trade exchange. The introduction of modern transport system in the country has greatly contributed for the interaction between different ethnic groups. Highways connecting the provinces to the administrative center as well as the feeder roads have induced people cross boundaries of ethnic groups. And, all these factors strengthened the ethnic relations in the country.

In contrast, there are scholars like Mar kakis who argued that the ethnic relation ships in the country were based on the exploitation of one group by the other. These groups argued that the ethnic group of Amhara dominated the political, economic and social systems of the country.

According to the proponent of this idea, the Non-Amhara groups were subjected to accept the dominance of the Amhara group. Similarly, Julia and Abebe (2001:5) stated, "Historically, the Semitic Amhara and Tigray peoples of the northern highlands of Ethiopia have dominated the political life in the region. Amharic and Amhara culture became the essential attributes of being Ethiopian."

Mar kakis (1994: 225) also argued that "The language of the Amhara and Christianity became the salient features of Ethiopian nationalism'. According to him during the Emperor Haileselassie period, no other indigenous language was allowed to be printed and broadcasted. And, the government tried to suppress the cultural and historical studies of the Non-Amhara ethnic groups".

The above author goes to the extent of comparing the access of Non-Amhara group or non Christians to power with the chance of a camel to pass through the eye of a needle." In Imperial Ethiopia for instance, it was easier for a non-Christian who also

didn't speak Amharigna to pass through the eye of a needle than to enter the charmed circle of power and privilege"(Mar kakis, 1994: 227).

However, others argued that the majority of ethnic groups in Ethiopia equally suffered from the exploitation of the few Amhara ruling class who assumed power in the course of history. According to the argument, leaders who came to power in the central government of Ethiopia did not represent the interest of the Amhara groups. The majority of the Amharas suffered from the dictatorial rule of the few. The following script taken from the article by Hizkias (1999:3) states the following;

*It is true that most of the symbols of the Ethiopian state (Official religion, official language, etc.) have taken the identity of what has been labeled " Amhara culture" and the persons who have occupied power and privilege have by and large, borne the great majority of the Amhara people have been "dominators" or beneficiaries of the political, economic, or social system that bore their name.*

On the other hand, there are scholars who argued that governments who came to power in the country did not belong to one specific and single ethnic groups. In fact, the writers took firm position to state that ethnic background of a person was not a criteria to assume political power in Ethiopia. To support this argument the earlier leaders like Haileselassie I and Mengistu Haliemariam are cited as an example. These two influential leaders who ruled the country nearly for six decades did not belong to the Amhara ethnic groups as others argued. The ancestors of the two rulers belong to the Oromo ethnic groups.

In most of Africa any prominent politician is instantly identifiable in terms of his ancestry, including not only his tribe but usually the clan or section with in it, this is not the case in Ethiopia. For example, there is no convincing and generally acknowledged account of the parentage of Mengistu Hailemariam. Most report place his paternal ancestry to Southern Ethiopia, Wolayita. To take another striking example, Emperor Haileselassie's father's father was Oromo; his father's mother was Amhara; his mother's father's was Oromo (Clapham, 1994:29).

In the support of the above argument, others still claim that the history of Ethiopia does not show the dominance of one ethnic group over the other. The

history of the country in the pre-modern era also showed that rulers who assumed political power in the country represented heterogeneous groups having different languages, cultures and ways of life. The writers continued to argue that representation of different ethnic groups in the political arena is not a recent phenomena and it stayed for hundreds of years in the country.

It is a scarcely disputed fact that the Ethiopian state is constituted of heterogeneous political entities, language, religions, and ways of life. This is not a recent phenomena, as some writers allege, Ethiopia has been a motley state throughout the last seven hundred or more years. Even the precursor societies of Aksum and Lasta were by no means homogenous (Biru, 1994:7).

No matter what the political orientation and inclinations of the writers are, one reality that could be seen in Ethiopia is that the ethnic groups, which live in the country, have been interacting for hundreds of years. This interaction has enabled ethnic groups to share their language, beliefs, traditions, customs etc. Moreover, the interactions that have stayed for centuries have brought ethnic groups together, and this has helped ethnic groups to establish intimate relationships.

Like other ethnic groups in the country, the Argoba who are predominantly a follower of Muslim religion have been interacting with other ethnic groups living in the country. Amhara and Afar ethnic groups border the Argoba who are presently living in Argoba special woreda. The Argoba have social, political, and economic relationships with both the Afar and Amhara groups living in Dulecha and Ankober *woredawoch*. These interactions have survived for centuries and continued to the present.

### **2.3 The position of the Ethiopian governments towards the questions of nationality and ethnicity**

The government of Ethiopia who came to power in the course of history had taken different measures to promote or demote questions related to nationality and ethnicity in the country. For example, when we look at the period of Haileseilasie and the Dergue governments, they had taken different measures with regard to nationality

and ethnicity questions in the country, and these measures of the government caused different movements in the country.

The early student movement, which was against the existing Feudal Aristocracy, had taken the banner of nationalities question. The issue of self-determination up to session had gained popularity among the student and their followers (the military group). However, after the military power had controlled the political power the issue of nations and nationalities was not properly addressed. Instead, the Military government tried to suppress those groups who had the agenda on nations and nationalities issues (Hizkias, 1999:7).

“The Dergue tried to purge all citizens suspected of harboring ethnic loyalties, especially Eritreans. It recognized the right of all nationalities to a form of self-determination, defined not as the right to secession, but regional autonomy, but the Somali invasion put an end to this tendency” (Julia and Abebe, 2001:5).

Similarly, the political of administration of most of the Ethiopian governments who assumed power in the course of history focused on central form of administration rather than devolving power to the lower tiers of administration. This could be vividly seen from the time of Menelik II to the period of Dergue government. In fact, one could argue relatively speaking the period of Menilik II was better in promoting regional government than his successors- the Hailesselassie and the Military governments.

The Hailesselassie government systematically removed all regional governments and concentrated power at the center. A good example for this is the removal of the Eritrean federation and the incorporation of the Eritrean federation to Ethiopia without the consent of the Eritrean.

Menilik II respected local government in the early years of his reign, but he attempted later to undermine regional autonomy. Hailesselassie I, systematically removed all traditional regional or local prerogatives and perfected centralism. In fact, he removed most of the traditional territorial boundaries and clustered d/t political units into arbitrary provinces. His determination to dismantle the Eritrean federal system can be regarded as a part of this line of thinking which equated unity with uniformity (Birru, 1994:6-7).

After the fall of the Emperor, again the measure taken by the Military government was not in favor of local administration; rather the Dergue government promoted central form of administration and the Constitution of 1986 declared that Ethiopia is a unitary state. The measure taken by the military junta government initiated some ethnic groups to take arms against the government. A good example is the Tigrean People Liberation Front, the Eritrean People Liberation Front and the Oromo People Liberation Front. Instead of bringing the opponent groups into round table discussions to solve the problem peacefully the Dergue government condemned the act of the political groups, and waged war against the groups. This move of the government negatively affected the political and economic development of the country. Above all, the long bloody civil war waged in the country between the rebellion groups and the military government had consumed the life of many generations. Besides, the internal war that stayed nearly for two decades also caused the migration of educated people outside of the country.

At the end of 1980s, the military government tried to introduce new form of administration. According to the arrangement, the country was divided into autonomous regions. Again, this new form of arrangement did not satisfy the demands of the opposition groups who took arms against the government.

The country was divided in 1987 into five new autonomous regions and 24 new administrative regions in place of the former 14 provinces. These new structures did not amount to any effective form of federal devolution of a kind that might have helped to end the many separatist civil wars raging then. Tigreans and Oromo liberation movements were, likewise, unsatisfied with any overtures made by the Mengistu government, and the Somali resistance in the Ogaden threatened to come to life again in the absence of an adequate vision of a new federal Ethiopia on the part of the government (M & Assefa, 1994:24).

From the above theoretical discussions, we can generalize that the concept of self-administration or federalism and devolution of power was not the agenda of Ethiopian rulers who assumed power in the modern era. Ethnic groups who used to enjoy from

regional autonomy before and after their incorporation to the central government did not appreciate these policies of the governments. That is why opponent political groups rushed in to bushes to throw the existing government through armed struggles. These two conflicting interests of the government and the political groups have negatively affected the democratic process of the country.

## **2.4 The current policy of the federal democratic republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) on the question of ethnicity**

Both political and ethnic groups who were disappointed with the policy of the former Dergue government took arms to fight the existing military government. After a long and bloody war, the opposition group such as the Tigray Peoples' Liberation Front (TPLF) the Oromo People Democratic Organization (OPDO) and the Amhara People Democratic Movement (APDM) who formed a front called, the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Party (EPRDF) defeated the military government and controlled the country. Concerning this Mar kakis (1994: 230) stated, "The movement that played the leading role in the overthrow of the military regime in Ethiopia in 1991 represents an ethnic constituency in Tigray province of northern Ethiopia. The inhabitants of this impoverished and famine stricken provinces have long resisted the domination of the Amhara in the imperial state."

After the military government was overthrown in 1991 a conference consisting of ethnic groups were organized. Following the conference a transitional government was established. Concerning this Sarah, (2003:17) stated the following:

Most important of the new policy direction was the introduction, the recognition of self-determination of ethnic groups of nations, nationalities and peoples. Seats allocated in the new legislature, the so-called transitional government council of representative, reflected the political balance of power at the time, a long with an attempt at comprehensive ethnic representation.

Soon after the transitional government consisting different political and ethnic groups formed a new constitution was drafted. The constitution drafted by the majority of

political parties and ethnic groups have granted nations and nationalities to administer their localities. "The construction of a new political system on the basis of ethnic autonomy was launched by the EPRDF and ethnicity became the dominant principle of political mobilization in Ethiopia" (Mar kakis, 1994:225).

The new federal arrangement has encountered both proponent and opponent groups. The proponent of the current ethnic policy of the FDRE argues that the new approach by the government will bring sustainable peace in the country. Moreover, they also argued that the new system would solve the ethnic problems in the country that has stayed for years. "The top-government officials who support the ethnic federalism argued that ethnic federalism represent an improvement on this discriminatory situation and the introduction of ethnic federalism is to be understood primarily as a mechanism of conflict resolution" (Sarah, V. 2003:21). Moreover, the article taken from the publication by the Ministry of Federal Affairs, Ethiopia; A Family of Nations and Nationalities, states the advantage of federal form of government as follows;

Another rationale for choosing the federal arrangement is common desire to institute self-government and self-determination as the cornerstone of the 60-70 nations, nationalities and the peoples of Ethiopia the multi ethnic nature of the country fits better with the ability of a federal structure to allow Self-determination (Ministry of Federal Affairs, 2003:2).

Similar to the above argument there are also scholars who support ethnic federalism as a solution for countries, which have multi-ethnic groups. Osaghae, (1996) in the Quest for peace and democracy indicated that "of all the perceptions of the utility as a solution to the problem of popular one is its utility as a solution to the problem of governing multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious countries, especially those described as deeply divided".

Supporting the above argument still there are scholars who advocate the advantage of federal arrangement in promoting peace among ethnic groups who are deeply divided, and also to protect the rights of minority groups.

Federalism enhances the ability of groups to live together in relative harmony through a strategy of 'disengagement'. While sharing in a national government making decisions for the whole, each group will be free to make its own decisions, according to its own values, cultures, needs and preferences through state, provincial or local governments that they elect. This will ensure that the minorities will not be frustrated by a national government in which they constitute a majority, and gives them protection against minority views being imposed on them. The creation of a protected political space will increase the sense of security of minorities; and this, in turn, will help reconcile minority members to continued membership in the larger system (Simeon & Murray, 2004:278).

The justification given by the ruling government, EPRDF for opting federalism is to bring sustainable peace to the ethnic problems that survived for centuries.

Furthermore, the government argues that the present federal arrangement is the only solution to manage ethnic differences in the country. Asnake (2004:52), "The party in power, the EPRDF Proclaims that this new model will be the basis for the reformed Ethiopian state structure and bring about a solution to the age-old crisis of Ethiopia state and society characterized by conflicts. The EPRDF also presents ethnic-federalism as a political instrument that serves the management of the country's conflict ridden ethnic relationships."

In support of the position of the government J. Young(2004:40) also argued that" The Ethiopian experiment with federalism is proving successful in meeting the EPRDF's goals of ending the hegemony of the Amhara ruling class in the centre and giving a role in administration to the marginalized nations, while at the same time ensuring the unity of the country".

On the other hand, the opponents of the policy of the government like Hizkias Assefa argued that the present ethnic policy of the government is not genuine and has got a hidden political agenda. According to them the government has used this tactic to divide the ethnic groups in the country who had lived for centuries together and divert the attention of the people from the government, by so doing the government will extend their time. Those who are against the current ethnic policy of the FDRE claimed that the present ethnic policy of the government is

favoring one ethnic group, which is the Tigreans elite. Moreover, the group also argued that classification of a society into ethnic boundary would lead to a conflict between ethnic groups (Sarah, 2003:21).

Similarly, there are also scholars who argued that federal system of administration, which is based on ethnicity or language, can cause conflicts among the group and eventually will lead to fragmentation of a country. "Federalism, when modeled on the basis of Ethno-linguistic diversities will tend to be anti-liberal and anti-majority, prone to conflicts and fragmentation, and frustrate countrywide free mobility of citizens." (Basta Flemer 2000: Cornell 2002: Watts 1998)

Those who still criticize the policy of the government said that due to the new ethnic federalism arrangement people have been forced out of the land they have inhabited for generations and told to return to their ethnic homelands. These groups also blamed the government officials for encouraging neighbors who have co-existed peacefully to emphasize their ethnic differences.

The formation of federal system along ethno-linguistic lines and the increased self-assertiveness of ethnic group are believed to have caused tensions between the regional majorities and settlers' communities. Even if the federal constitution stipulates the rights of Ethiopian national to live and work any where in the country (Art 32) some problems in the relationships between regional majorities and settlers communities have been observed. The difficulties in the relationship b/n the regional majorities and settlers communities could be seen from two view points: political participation and problem of displacement.

In many of the regional states, people from other ethnic groups are discouraged from participating in political activities. For example, in those regions, which have adopted regional working languages, people who don't speak the local language are not allowed to run for offices at both regional and national (Asnake, 2004:61).

Again, the counter arguments raised by others are also powerful. These groups argued that federal form of arrangement will intensify tensions among ethnic groups who have conflicting interest and eventually will lead to disintegration of the nation. The worry of these groups expressed as follows:

Federalism institutionalizes, exacerbates, perpetuates, and entrenches, the very conflicts it is designed to mitigate. Equipping minorities with the institutional armory of constitutional power and fiscal and bureaucratic resources provides minority elites with the tools to nurture and enhance regional identities and grievances and to challenge national identities. At the limit, empowered local governments can become the launching pad for secession (Ibid:280)

Despite the different views forwarded by the opponent and proponent of the current policy of the Federal Democratic Government of Ethiopia, presently with the new federal arrangement there are nine regional states and two autonomous cities in the country. Most of these states and autonomous cities consists different ethnic groups living together.

The regional states have the autonomy to administer their regions and utilize the budget allocated from the federal government to enhance development in their respective regions. Moreover, with the new arrangement, regional states like Oromiya have started to use their ethnic language as official language and school age children are also currently taught by their mothers tongue. On the other hand, as the levels of development of these states are different, presently the Ministry of Federal Affairs assists the four emerging regions such as Afar, Gambella, Benishangul Gumuz and Somali States. The Ministry office has established different departments like pastoral, rural and democratization to assist the pastoral communities and peasants living in these regions. In addition, the department of Democratization was established to promote good governance in the Regions. These departments have formulated and implemented different development projects that could fit the development needs of the regions.

Although two different contrasting views are forwarded against the policy implication and relevance of the new federalism arrangement in the country, one could easily see the advantages and shortcomings of the new arrangement. With the new arrangement and devolution of power to the lower tiers of administration ethnic groups started to administer themselves and initiate local developments. Above all, the federal arrangement granted ethnic groups to better exercise and use their cultures, languages, values and belief systems.

On the other hand, the Ethiopian federalism has not eliminated ethnic based struggles, as demonstrated by violent conflicts among ethnic groups. The cases in points are the conflict between Guji and Sidamas, Borena and Hammer, Oromo and Somali and many others.

Evidences also show that there are some elite and non-elite groups who belong to different ethnic groups and who are trying to capitalize the new federal arrangement to divert the attention of the majority towards their personal interest. If this negative and intentional act of the groups is not properly addressed it would cause hostility and conflict among ethnic groups and political insecurity in the country.

## Chapter III

### The Argoba and their neighbors

#### 3.5 The Argoba

The Argoba are one of the few ethnic groups who live currently both in Afar Regional State and other parts of the country. Richard, (1984:49) recorded the origin of the Argoba in the book *Muslim People: a world ethnographic survey* as follows;

The Argoba are a Muslim people in Ethiopia now reduced to small and separate population number less than 9000. They pose some of the major historical and ethnological problems remaining among Ethiopia's Semitic speaking peoples. The Argoba are divided into two groups, northern and Southern. The northern Argoba live in a long chain of villages some connected to each others isolated among different peoples. All of these villages are found in the hilly zone at the foot of the slopes of the rift valley. Amharic speaking Christians in the east Afar borders them in the west.

#### History and origin

Similarly, the article taken from the writing by Sheik Mohammed depicts the origin and history of the Argoba. The Argoba are one of the ethnic groups in Ethiopia. The Argoba ethnic group got the present name from the word 'Arab-geba' literally means the Arab has come to Ethiopia. The Argoba came to Ethiopia in two ways: The first group came through North of Ethiopia, Assab, before 'Hijera'. The second group came through the Eastern part of the country.

The second group had involved in trade activities and expansion of Muslim religion. This group moved to the central part of Ethiopia such as Goze and Aliyuamba. These settlers had converted people of the area into Muslim. Those who came from the northern part moved to Afar and settled in a place called Tegori.

*The data provided by knowledgeable elders in all the areas inhabited by the Argoba indicate that there are three different versions on the origin of this people. The first version holds that when the Arab clan known as Benew Imeya lost its ruling power to another clan 800 years ago and dispersed throughout the world, it came also to Ethiopia. The second version holds that when a dispute arose between the prophet Muhamed and the followers of other religions, eighty-two followers of the prophet came to Ethiopia to Ahmed Nejash carrying a letter asking him to accept Islam. After having delivered the letter, they came to Yifat and settled there. The third version on the origin of the Argoba are not immigrants, but an ancient and indigenous people who accepted Islam very early from religious leaders who came from Arabia (Tesfaye, 2000:197)*

There are also writers who stated that the origin of the Argoba is connected with the coming of Islam to Abyssinia and with the establishment of the Yifat Civilization.

*It is difficult to separate the origin of Argoba with the coming of Islam to Abyssinia, the Argoba and Yifat are inevitably cited. One version of the coming of the Argoba holds that they first came in via northern Abyssinia's commercial port of Dahlak(Massawa), then they crossed Tigari and came to the highlands of Central Shoa, from which they later moved southwards. Another version equally holds they first came in via Abyssinia's eastern port of Zeila from which they followed the Afar plains until they reached the Shoan Highlands, and subsequently moved to the south-eastern regions of Bale and Dara (Aklilu 2000, 176)*

## **Distribution Of The Argoba Ethnic Groups In Ethiopia**

The Argoba people were dispersed in different parts of the country so as to spread out Muslim religion. That is why presently they are found in Wollo, Shewa, Gonder, Keren/Eriteria/ and Ogaden areas (Unpublished Article 1992: 2-5).

On the other hand, the article taken from an occasional publication by the Ministry of Federal Affairs indicated that the Argoba whose number reach nearly 10,000, make the 29<sup>th</sup> *woreda* government of Afar, bordering Northern Shoa zone of Amhara State where even more Argobas i.e. 36,000 are found (Ethiopia: A Family Nations and Nationalities, 2003:26).

The article taken from the project document prepared by the Argoba Development and Relief Association (Awash, 1996EC), indicated that the Argoba ethnic group is sparsely populated in different rural parts of the country for centuries. In Afar the Argoba live in Argoba special *woreda* comprising 13 rural kebeles. In the Amhara region the Argoba are found in Northern Shoa such as Mingar, Shenkora, Berehet, Angolela and Asagirt, Ankober, Tarma Ber, Efrata and Gidim.

Moreover, the Argoba are found in more than 40 rural kebeles of Kewet *woreda*. In Oromiya Special zone the Argoba are found in Artuma and Fursi, Gile and Tumuga, Dewe and Chufuga and 36 rural kebeles of Bati *woreda*. In the southern Wello the Argoba are found in 15 rural kebeles of Kalu *woreda*. In Oromiya Regional state the Argoba are found in four kebeles of East and Western Harerghe. In eastern Hararghe zone, they are found in 30 villages of Fedis *woreda*. In western Hararghe zone the Argoba are found in 22 kebeles and villages of Miesso, Chiro and Anchar *woreda*. In Hararie Region the Argoba are found in seven rural kebeles of Hundene *woreda*.

*The Argobba are one of the Semitic-speaking peoples, and their language is part of the south Semitic group of language. On the basis of the new administrative division, the people are found spread in the Amhara, Afar, Oromiya, and Harari Regions. In the Amhara Region the Argobba live in the following villages of the sub-district of the Argobba, Aallu woredas, Debub Wollo zone, Areranechro, Chomiye, Medina and Afeso. In Oromiya zone of the same Region, they live in the villages of Shonke, Tolecha, Jile and Tumuga, Artuma, Farsi, Isye Gola, Chefa Gola and Dewe. In the Semen Shoa zone, they live in the villages of the environs of Shoa Robit, Goze Berasageze, Mafad and Aliyu Amba. In Afar Region the Argoba live in zone 3 in the special district of Gacheni in the villages of Suf Ager, Abale, Belai Metekleya, Betach Meteqleia, Chesa, Deberko, Koka Begweze, Work Amba, Maqo Amba, and Cheno. In Fentale they live in the towns of Awash and Methara, while in Amibara *woreda* they live in Melka Werer. In Ormoiya Region, they live in four *woredas* in two zones. In the Eastern Hararge zone they live in Fedis *woreda* in the villages of Gureqere, Afeyzero, Issaqoi, Ishiye, Genda Adem, Atero, Urde, Adasha, Qaleya, Adadi, Shanqo, Umere, Hajigoda, Berofife, Areda, Gendegara, Gutush, Nure Kliche, Arer Hamero, Fedati, Sadiqo Berbere, Roriso, Qelad, Qululut, Towiko, Ademrare, Umerkelle, Bereda, Adamhakola, and Qumash. In Meiso *woredas* of Western Hararge zone, they live in the environs of the towns of Bordede, Asebot, and Mieso, in Lega Arba kebele of Chiro *woredas*, and in the villages of Cheleleqleqa, Fera, Besse, Adaele, Gedamba,*

*Boradiya, Chorora and Bedey of Anchar and Gurba Qorcha woreda. In Harari Region the Argobba live in Hundane woredas in the villages of Koreme, Umerdin, Halilo, Eledi, Werarawa, Alela, Afer Deba. and Qaqi (Tesfaye, 2000: 195-196)*

## **Economic Activity**

Unlike the Pastoralists of the Afar and Issa, the Argoba are agriculturalists. They occupy the Woyna Dega zone (3500 to 6000 feet). The Argoba till their land and grow the lowland crops of sorghum, maize and coffee. Moreover, they grow 'chat', cotton, and tobacco as cash crops. Significant portions of the Argoba are still engaged in long trade especially in camels and cattle. Richard, (1984)

## **Marriage**

The matrimonial practice among the Argoba is endogamy, but few of the Argoba marry to other ethnic groups. The following article by Richard, (1984) indicated the common type of matrimony:

*Village endogamy is the preferred form of marriage and this endogamy is believed to derive from Muslim inheritance laws wherein males receive full shares and women receive half shares. Among the Argoba, land is passed through the male line a preferred type of wedding, called auaziza is one in which two men of a village exchange closely related relatives as brides. These are designated "sisters" for the purpose of the wedding.*

After the founding of the new federal system in the country, the Argoba ethnic groups that live in the Afar Regional State have started to exercise the benefit of the new federal state. Following the new federal arrangement, a political party that stands for the rights of the Argoba people living in different parts of the country was established. Based on the rights of nations and nationalities that are clearly stipulated in the constitution of the federal democratic republic of Ethiopia, presently one seat has been allocated to the Argoba ethnic group both in the House of the Federation and the People's Representative, representing represented in the regional parliament and

cabinet. On top of this, the new federal arrangement also enabled the Argoba ethnic group residing in the Afar regional state to get the status of special *woreda*.

## **Language**

The language of the Argoba is called Argobigna and it is from the Semitic language family, which is classified as a member of the southern Ethio-Semitic languages. The language has yet no alphabet and no literature. There is a high degree of linguistic exchange and assimilation going on. In this regard, the Argoba language is being submerged by and giving way to Amharic, Afarigna and Oromigna. The Argobigna language is widely spoken in the villages of Shonke and Toleha in the Special Oromiya Zone of the Amhara National Region. It has also been possible to observe that in some villages of the other regions, especially women and the Youth speak the language. However, even in such villages, the language has come to gradually give way to the dominant language of some other ethnic groups. In general, Amharic, Oromigna, and Afarigna either singly or two of the three, are spoken as second languages along with Argobigna (Tesfaye, 2000:197)

### **3.6 The Argoba special *woreda***

The Argoba special *woreda* is located in the Afar Regional State and currently it is the 29<sup>th</sup> *woreda* of the Afar Regional State. The Argoba special *woreda* has a total population of 13430 (of which 6874 are men and 6556 women) (source from the population and agricultural survey conducted by Argoba *woreda* Agriculture office, 2002).

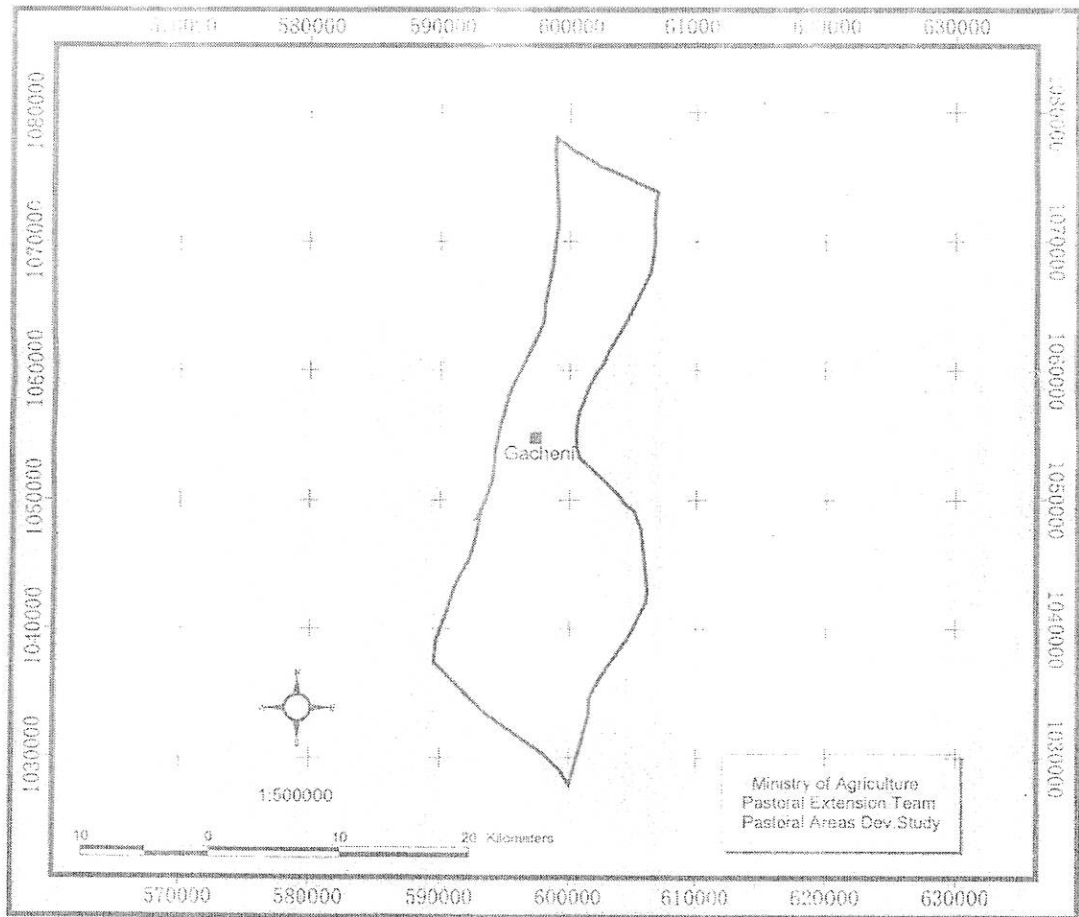
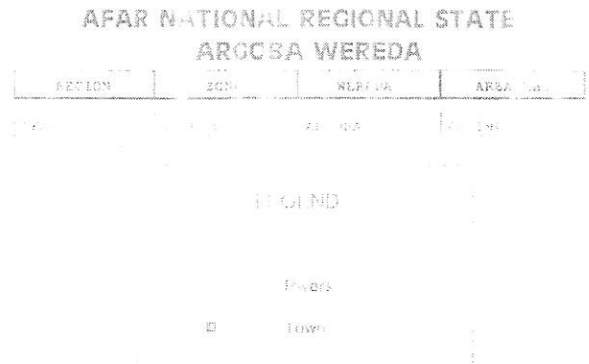
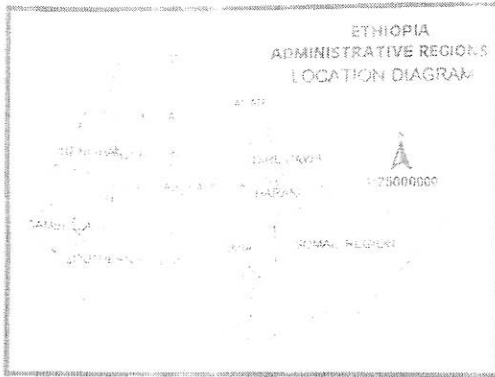
The special *woreda* is bordered by Awash Fentale and Berehet in the North, Semurli (Afar) and Tarma Ber(Amhara), Dulecha in East and Ankober in West. There are nine rural *kebeles* from Ankober *woreda* bordering Argoba. These are both the urban and rural *kebeles* of aliyuamba, wedera, zoma, sebredin, adisalem, haramba, zombo and washa. From berehet *woreda* there are 4 *kebeles* bordering Argoba. These are mahfuz, mikagn, mintamir and metehbila. From tarmaber *woreda* mahfuz and

agamber *kebles* borders argoba. (Survey conducted by the Argoba People's Democratic Party, 2002).

The *woreda* has a total size of 42196sq.km. There are ethnic groups of Amhara and others who live in the special *woreda*. In terms of economic activities 25% of the population are agriculturalist, 10% are engaged in pastoralism, 60% practice mixed farming and the remaining 5% are engaged in trade and cottage industry (data from the study conducted by Argoba *woreda* Agricultural office, 2002).

The special *woreda* was established in 1988EC. The Argoba people residing in and outside of the *woreda* established a political party called the Argoba People Democratic Movement (APDM). The people through their political party had started a movement to exercise the rights of nations and nationalities granted by the constitution of the FDRE. The objective of the movement was to establish the special *woreda* administered by the Argoba them selves. This request was brought to the Afar Regional State and the Amhara Regional State to grant self-administration for Argoba people who reside in the two Regional States. And the Afar Regional State and the House of federation have accepted this request. As a result in 1988EC the Argoba special *woreda* was established. The move taken by th regional government to grant the Argoba ethnic group the status of special woredas is greatly appreciated by the Argoba ethnic group. However, there are some Afar who criticized the decision of the regional and the federal governments.





## Background to the neighbors of the Argoba special woreda

### 3.2 The Afar people

The Afar people are predominantly Muslim people living in the North Eastern part of the country. The highlanders referred the Afar as *Danakil* and *Adal*. Some writers argued that the term *Danakil* or *Adal* have a derogative meaning and they preferred to call them as the Afar.

The Afar belongs to the Cushitic-speaking group like the Oromo, Saho, Beja and Somali. However, this does not mean that all the Afar do not speak other languages spoken in the country.

A few speak Oromo, the language of the Western neighboring group; and a few of the committee members of the influential grazer associations; traders etc. speak Amharic, the national language of Ethiopia. The Afar bordering the Northern part of Ethiopia, Tigray, do also speak Tigrigna language. Moreover, the Afar who lives in Eritrea and have close interaction with the highlanders speaks Tigrigna. The Afar and the Somali, unlike most other peoples in the East Africa are Muslims with remnants of Pre-Islamic beliefs. The Afar adheres to a single faith, Sunni Islam (Ayele, 1986:2).

The Afar inhabits a vast rangeland in North East Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Eritrea. Before the present government came to power, the Afar historically divided among the former provinces of Tigray, Wollo, Shoa and Assab. The Afars engaged in pastoral way of life in one of the harshest of the entire arid environment in tropical Africa. (Ethiopia: A Family of Nations and Nationalities, 2003:25).

Similarly, Ali(1998:108) stated that” The Afar occupy a vast area in Ethiopia, Djibouti and Eritrea. In Ethiopia, they are found in the northeastern, lowlands, now delineated as the Afar region.”

The Afar were divided into different traditional groups and the traditional leaders used to perform different roles and functions in the course of history. In relation to this (Richard, 1984: 10) pointed out the following points.

"Traditionally the Afar were divided into four paramount sultanates, Raheito, in Djibouti and Awssa and Biru in Ethiopia and each had smaller Chiefdoms. The Afar lords had powers of taxation, but their main role was as arbiters of disputes overgrazing and water rights."

According to the history of Ethiopia before the expansion of Menilik II to Afar or prior to the late nineteenth-Century, the relationship the Afar had with the highland Christians was full of conflict. Ayele (1986) quoted from Trimingham(1952) the historical relationships between the highland Christian kingdom and the Afar as follows.

During the 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> Century the Abyssinian Empire, also referred to as Ethiopia was warring against the judiazed. Agaw this helped the spread of Islam in Ethiopia highlands. In the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, the Christian highlands were invaded by the Afar and Somalis under the leadership of Ahmed Gran and his Muslim groups.

On the other hand, there are writers who argued that the relationships between the central government and the Afar had improved during the period of Emperor Haileselassie. These historians argued that the Emperor had granted the Afar Chiefs titles in the Amhara civil hierarchy with accompanying power perquisites. According to Richard, (1984:12)" cases in point are, the Sultan of Awssa who was designated as *Bitwoded* or "beloved of the Emperor" and the Sultan of Birru, on whom bestowed the title of *Dejazmach*".

Although the degree of cultural assimilation of the Afar with the highland Christian is not significant, the interactions that stayed for decades resulted in the diffusion of cultural values between the highlanders and the Afar.

### **3.3 Economic Activity**

Most of the Afars are pastoralists and their subsistence is based on practicing multi species pastoralism. These include cattle, camels, sheep, goats, and donkeys. However, very few groups of Afar are engaged in different economic activities like

petty trades and farming. The Afar food supply is often derived mainly from milk and butter. Livestock is kept as a hedge against future needs. The Afar achieves economies of scale by cooperating in herd diversification. Each household has its own animals. The animals are individual property. However, the members of a specific local community have residual rights and obligations over the animals of its members and livestock, which are thought of as some kind of social fund. The members of a local community recognize a special status in the ownership with respect to the animals in question. In other words, an Afar could say “my herd is our herd” and “our herd is my herd”. The Afar consumes the product of their animals. Besides, they sell their animals to buy grains, and the amounts of grain they purchase depend on the amount of milk produced by herds and flocks. The number of animals to be sold solely depends on the availability of food at a household level. That is during a dry season the people rely more on purchased food and they sell more animals (Ayele, 1986: 32-36).

Getachew, (1998:146-147), indicated that” The Afar are pastoralists who purge their livelihood in subsistence based mixed livestock management of camels, cattle, goats and sheep. They employ a wide range of livestock management techniques which are well adapted to the limitations of varies of their arid country”.

However, since the past few decades some Afar have been engaged in a range of non-pastoral pursuits, such as marginal cultivation, wage labor, urban business and government jobs (Ibid: 147).

The above theoretical presentation generalize that the Afar are predominantly pastoralists and they rare animals like camel, sheep, goat and cattle. The Afar primarily derives their food from animals they heard.

### **Dulecha Woreda**

Dulecha *woreda* is one of the *woredawoch* in Afar Regional State. It is located in western part of *Gacheni*. The population of the *woreda* is primarily the Afar with a few other ethnic groups residing in the *woreda*. The *woreda* has a total population of

18,000. In terms of economic activity 95% of the *woreda* people are pastoralists and the remaining 5% are farmers. As the *woreda* is remote compared to other *woredawoch* in the region like *Awash*, the infrastructures are poor and inadequate (source, interview with Ato Nuru Mohammed, March 2005). Compared to the newly established Argoba *woredas*, the *woreda* is relatively in a better position in terms of infrastructure development such as residence houses, Hotels, Shops and etc.

### **Ankober Woreda**

*Ankober woreda* is one of the neighbors of Argoba special *woreda*. Ankober was established in 1733 by the Shoa ruler Negasi Merid Amhea Yesus(1733-1767). Ankober is located 42 km east of Debre Birehan town. Before the capital city of Ethiopia moved to Addis Ababa, Ankober had served as a seat of six Shoa rulers. Ankober was the seat of diplomats and government officials and government offices during those days. When king Hailemelkot enthroned the town was captured and devastated by Tewodros (1855-1868). Again in the 1980s when Menilik II came to power Ankober had been reestablished and started to serve as a seat of the Emperor. Presently, Ankober is one of the *woredawoch* of the *Amhara* regional state (*Amhara Region Tourism Booklet, 1999:8-9*).

Again when we compare Ankober *woreda* with both Argoba and Dulecha *woredawoch* it is relatively more developed in terms of infrastructure and transportation services. This is probably because the *woreda* has a long history and is closer to Debrebirihan town and the main road that links the Northern part of the country with Addis Ababa.

### **Aliyuamba**

There are urban and rural *kebeles* named by *Aliyuamba*. *Aliyuamba* is under Ankober *woreda*, and it is located 12kms away from Ankober. *Aliyuamba* was one of the trade centers in Ethiopian history and the first place where the government tax or custom was introduced. The majority of the populations in the *kebele* are the *Argoba* and the

### **3.8 Case study on the conflict between Derashe and Zeise**

The Derashe and Zeise communities share common borders. Before the two communities came to be ruled by the central government, both Derashe and Zeise had had their local leaders. According to the 1994 Census both communities have a population size of 54721 and 10842 respectively. The underlying causes for the conflict between the two ethnic groups have been the use of agricultural land and other natural resources. The study also pointed out that absence of strong local government in the two areas and narrow ethnic sentiment aggravated the conflict.

To solve these conflict different interventions were taken since 2001 by the woredawoch and zonal administration, but the intervention didn't bring lasting remedy to the clash. In 2003 a technical committee comprising educated people from the two areas and other community member was set up to look for solution to the crisis. After gathering the relevant information the committee suggested to demarcate the territory of the two areas (Teshome Mekonnen, 2003:12).

The conflict between the two ethnic groups has been predominantly over the ownership of agricultural land along the boundary of Derashe special *woreda*. The conflict that took place in 1993 was said to have been allegedly resolved. (Ethiopia: An inventory of 28 conflicts, 2003:129).

### **3.9 The case of Derashe and Konso special *woredawoch***

The *Konso* are mainly found in *Konso* autonomous *woreda* of the SNNPRS. A significant number of *Konso* are also found in neighboring Oromiya State. At the time of the 1994 Census, the total population of *Konso* was reported to be 153419 (Ethiopia: A Family of Nations and Nationalities, 2003).

The result of the study also showed that there was a conflict between *Konso* and *Dershe* by the time the study was conducted. According to the study the underlying cause for the conflict was on the issue of the control of land. During the study the relationships between the local communities of *Gato Fuchicha kebele* in *Derashe*

*woreda* was broken with the *Konso* community at *kebele* level. In addition the relationships between the *Konso* communities at *kebele* level were broken with *Derashe woreda* administration (Taye Amberbir, 2003:82).

On the other hand, the article taken from inventory of 28 conflicts showed that the first fighting between *Derashe* and *Konso* took place in 1993. Again in 1998 a new conflict erupted in the area. The major cause for the tension between the two groups is the control over land. (*Ethiopia: An inventory of 28 conflicts*, 2003:129).

### **3.10 The case of Amaro-Burji special *woredawoch***

According to the report of the 1994 Census both the *Amaro* and *Burji* special *woredawoch* have a population of 128676 and 51596, respectively. Like the above special *woredawoch* both the *Amaro* and *Burji woredawoch* have not been immune to similar conflicts. The study conducted by GTZ in collaboration with the Ministry of Federal Affairs indicated that by the time the study was conducted the relationships between the security forces in the two *woredawoch* were broken down. The cause for the conflict between the two groups was the demand for the control of power over boarder areas (Taye Amberbir, 2003:83).

Similarly, the article taken from inventory of conflict also depicted that there were ongoing conflicts on the boundary *kebeles* of Nedele and Halame. The referendum, which was held in 1993 regarding the status of the two *kebeles*, led the incorporation of the two *kebeles* under *Burji woreda*, and this brought disappointment on the side of *Amaro* ethnic group. Both sides accuse each other for harassing their people. This harassment has taken the form of unreasonable arrest, erection of checkpoints, taxation of goods and destruction of farms by livestock. This conflict has escalated in 2001 and consumed the life of 7 people. The writer also stated that lack of fertile land in *Amaro woreda* is the other cause for the conflict (*Ethiopia: An inventory of 28 conflicts*, 2003:128).

From the above case studies, we can generalize that demarcating special *woreda* cannot be a guarantee to ensure peace and security among ethnic groups who have conflicting interests.

## CHAPTER IV

### Analysis and presentation of the data

#### 4.1 Background

In order to collect primary information on the topic under investigation, the researcher traveled to *Semera*, the regional capital of Afar state. Regional government officials who have the knowledge about the issue were interviewed and questionnaires were distributed for key informants. And, professionals who belong to the Argoba ethnic group and who are currently working in different government offices in Semera town were also interviewed.

The researcher employed a research assistant from Argoba ethnic group who lives in Semera. The researcher, with his assistant and members of the ADPM traveled to Ankober, Argoba and Dulecha *woredawoch*. Briefing was given to the three-*woredawoch* government officials about the mission. With the assistance of the local government officials, people who would be participating in the focus group discussion and key informants interview were identified and contacted. Attempts were made to ensure gender balance. The discussion revolved around the ethnic relationships between the Argoba and the neighboring Afar and the Amhara residing in Dulecha and Ankober *woredawoch*. The impact of the new arrangement on the development of the Argoba special *woreda* was the other issue taken up in the discussion of the groups. As the culture of the people in the study, area does not allow women to speak in the midst of men, separate focus group discussions for both men and women groups were arranged. Questionnaires were distributed to community members who were represented from different groups.

The researcher and his assistant spent two weeks in the study areas to collect the data. For the purpose of analysis, the results of the key informants and focus group discussions are incorporated together. Tabulated charts and figures are used as

reference and response of the focus group participants are put as annex for further reference.

## **4.2 Characteristics of respondents**

### **Age and sex distribution of respondents**

People in different age categories were represented in the study. And this also holds true to sex distribution of respondents. Almost half of the participants are women. From the table we generalize that both sexes representing different age categories participated in the study.

### **Marital status of respondents**

More than half of the participants (70%) were living in marriage by the time this study was conducted. Of course, as one can, see from the table there is also significant number of people who were single and involved in the study.

### **Place of birth of respondents**

All of the participants of the study drawn from the three neighboring woredawoch were born in Ankober, Dulecha and Argoba woredawoch. This shows that the people selected are familiar with the area and the topic under investigation.

### **Occupation of respondents**

People from all occupations were also involved in the study. As one can observe from the table there are government officials, civil servants, peasants, pastoralists and self-employed who participated in the research and this gives more chance for the researcher to draw different opinions and views from the participants.

## Educational status

The educational backgrounds of respondents are also recorded. The above table shows respondents who took part in the study have different educational backgrounds. The level of education varies from reading to writing to attending higher levels of educations.

### Table 4.2.6 Ethnic background and residence of respondents

The ethnic groups involved in the study are the Amharas, Afar, and Argoba. Besides, the majority of the respondents are currently living in the study area. This shows that the target groups are aware of the existing realities in the study area.

## 4.3 History of settlement

The first question responded by the key informants, focus group participants and other interviewees was the period in which the Argoba started to settle in the present special *woreda*. The majority of the respondents from the *Ankober* and *Dulecha woredawoch* do not have idea as to when the Argoba started to settle in the area. However, all the respondents from *Argoba woreda* indicated the possible period the *Argogba* started to arrive in the area. The women groups from Argoba ethnic group said 'the Argoba appeared in the area during the *wolasma* dynasty or in the 13<sup>th</sup> C'. On the other hand, the men respondents from the same *woreda* also stated that 'the Argoba were the original settlers in the present special *woreda*. The Argoba inhabited in the present *Dulecha woreda* before the arrival of the Afars to the Area'.

The information obtained from an interview with the Argoba local officials confirmed the response given by the Argoba communities. On the other hand, some of the focus group participants mentioned that 'the first Argoba settlers arrived at the present special *woreda* between 7-8<sup>th</sup> Century' while others stated that the Argoba arrived at the area during the period of Haileselassie. The results of the interviews

obtained from the Argoba officials confirm the response of key informants from the Argoba communities. However, the interviewee from *Afar* and *Amhara* did not know exactly about the period where the Argoba appeared to the area.

Similarly, Ahmed (1994:9) stated that "The Argoba seems to have been one of the important Semitic-speaking communities occupying North East Shoa for many centuries. In Gidem the Argoba burial mounds of Sarafa and Set Amba seem of early origin. Similarities are also found in the district of Qawat among which the hilltop of Goze stands out as especially prominent".

From the above argument, we generalize that the Argoba have existed for centuries in the area.

#### **4.4 The perceptions of the neighboring communities towards the Argoba**

Respondents of the interview also elaborated the perceptions of the Afar and Amhara ethnic groups residing in Dulecha and Ankober woredawoch towards the Argoba ethnic groups. Accordingly, the men respondents from Argoba ethnic group used the following words to express their response. 'The perception of most Afar in Dulecha woreda towards the Argoba is not good and they have negative outlook towards us'

The interviewee from Argoba local officials also supported this response. The reason given by the respondents for this is the fact that they have historically hostile relationships between the Afar and the Argoba. On the other hand, the women respondents from the same *woreda* expressed their feeling in their own words 'during the Emperor Haileselassie period the Amhara had no good attitude towards the Argoba. For example, during the reign of the Emperor the Amhara group under the leadership of Abebe Aregay once waged war against the *Argoba*.' In contrast to the response given by the Argoba ethnic groups, the response obtained from the majority of the respondents from Amhara revealed that the Amhara have good attitude towards the Argoba.

However, the respondents indicated that the views of some Afar ethnic group residing in Dulecha *woreda* towards the Argoba have not been friendly. The majority of the Afar group said 'we have positive attitudes towards our neighbor who are the Argoba'

On the other hand, some of the respondents from the Afar and Amhara groups did not feel much about the difference of attitudes.

Similarly, some of the focus group informants have indicated the perceptions of the neighboring ethnic groups (the *Afar* and *Amhara*) towards the Argoba before and after the new arrangement. Hence, some of the participants responded that 'presently some of the *Afar* ethnic groups in the neighboring *woreda* (*Dulecha*) have got a negative feeling towards the Argoba due to the hostile attitude they have had for long.' While others indicated that in the earlier regions the Argoba were not treated properly, but now they are recognized like other ethnic groups in the country. However, the majority of the focus group participants took the position that most of the Amhara and the Afar have positive feeling towards the Argoba ethnic group. The result of interview with the Amhara and Afar officials does not support the information given by the *Argoba* groups.

Hence, from the above-mentioned responses we can generalize that the Argoba ethnic group, by and large, have a feeling that the attitude of most Afar ethnic group is negative towards them.

#### **4.5 Establishment of the special *woreda***

The other point responded by the survey respondent was about the establishment of the Argoba special *woreda*. The responses obtained from the majority of the respondents 52(69%) have shown that the Argoba special *woreda* was established to grant the freedom of the Argoba ethnic group, to administer their localities as per the right granted to all ethnic groups in the constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

Similarly, the responses obtained from the women respondents 12(16%) from the Argoba seemed to go in line with the above responses that the special *woreda* was established to grant the freedom of the ethnic groups that was neglected by the previous governments. On the other hand, the responses obtained from some of the Afar ethnic group 11(15%) revealed that the special *woreda* was established to strengthen the historical relationships the Afar have with the Argoba ethnic groups.

The key informants\* from Argoba special *woreda* and Afar region also stated that initially the Argoba and the Afar were administered by the Dulecha *woreda*. And, all the government offices were in Dulecha *woreda* and the Argoba had to go once a week to Dulecha for Administrative purposes. And, this arrangement was not convenient for the Argoba ethnic group. This arrangement also continued during the *Dergue* regime. When the Argoba traveled to the *woreda* there were often attacks from the Afar. This prompted the Argoba living in the special *woreda* to look for solution to the problem. One of the remedies suggested was to incorporate the present Argoba *woreda* with the near by *Amhara woreda* called Ankober. Finally, however, the question of establishing the special *woreda* had got acceptance both from the Regional and the Federal governments.

**Table 4.5.1 Establishing a special district**

Issues							%
	Argoba		Afar		Amhara		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
To establish their own territory	16		7	5	12	12	69
To grant the freedom of the ethnic group		12					16
To strengthen the historical relationship between the Afar and Argoba			4	7			15
Total	16	12	11	12	12	12	100

Foot note

\* Ato Abdulkadir Mohammed, Head of Water Resource Development Bureau, Afar (Date of interview 2 May 2005 Semera town)\* Ato Nuru Mohammed, Woreda Administrator, Argoba special Woreda (Date of interview 6 May 2005 Gacheni town)

The response obtained from the majority of the focus group participants revealed that 'the special *woreda* was established to promote good governance in the area, to exercise the constitutional right granted to the Argoba ethnic groups and to develop the area.' The interview with the regional officials\* indicated that the special *woreda* was established to respect the rights of the minority groups in the region. And, the Argoba ethnic group is one of the minority ethnic groups presently living in the afar-regional state. From the response we learned that the *Argoba woreda* was established by the consensus of the Argoba ethnic group, the Regional and Federal governments.

Similarly, the responses obtained from the participants of the study about the initiation for the establishment of the special *woreda* revealed that the initiation for the establishment of the special *woreda* came from the people themselves. According to the response, the Argoba ethnic group organized themselves under a political party called the Argoba People Democratic Movement to request the right of the ethnic group for self-administration.

After the party made long struggle the regional government expressed its willingness to bring the issue to the House of Federation. The House of Federation finally decided the establishment of Argoba special *woreda*.

The establishment of the special *woreda* clearly reveals that the Argoba ethnic group living in the Afar region has started to exercise the right granted to ethnic groups to administer their localities. (J. Young, 2004:40)" The Ethiopian constitution allows nations, nationalities, and peoples within regional states the right to establish their own states"

And, currently the Argoba make the 29<sup>th</sup> *woreda* government of Afar, bordering Northern Shoa zone of Amhara State (Ethiopia: A Family Nations and Nationalities, 2003:26).

\*Ato Abdulkadir Mohammed, Head of Water Resource Development Bureau, Afar (Date of interview 2 May 2005 Semera town)

\* Ato Hussien Ali, Head of Decentralization Program, Afar (Date of interview 15 May 2005)

From the above responses, we can generalize that the initiation for the establishment of the special *woreda* came from the Argoba people themselves and this initiation led to the formation of the Argoba People Democratic Party. The regional and federal governments accepted the request for the establishment of the special *woreda* and the special *woreda* was established in 1988EC.

#### **4.6 Summary on the impact of the new arrangement on the development of the *Woreda***

As stated earlier before the new arrangement was made the present special *woreda* was administered under Dulecha *woreda*. The officials and the people in the special *woreda* indicated the special *woreda* was established even before any infrastructures were developed in the *woreda*. According to officials from the special *woreda* when people thought of establishing the special *woreda* the first meeting took place under a tree located in the present Gacheni town.

The information obtained from the officials and the local communities indicated that there were practically no services in the *woreda* when the *woreda* was first established. After the new arrangement was made, with the involvement of the local community and the regional government some infrastructures and services were put into place. After the Argoba special *woreda* was set up the regional government established four-health posts in Gacheni town, Bilu, Cheno and Upper Metekleya kebeles. Following this initiative of the government, the local communities constructed basic schools in the rural *kebele* of Goze. Similarly, the regional government and the local communities in Gacheni, Cheno, Upper Metekleya and Woretamba *kebeles* constructed four elementary schools. Moreover, two-spring water developments were also done in the two rural *Kebeles* of Goze and Bilu. The current construction of water pump in Gacheni town by the regional government not only significantly reduced the burden of women in particular, but also made it possible the provision of clean water supply for people in Gacheni town.

On the other hand, after the new arrangement was made, dry weather roads were constructed in some of the rural *Kebeles* in the *woreda*. The data collected from the *woreda* administration indicated that these roads were constructed with the involvement of the local communities and the regional government. With regard to telecommunication services in the *woreda*, presently there is one satellite telecommunication system, which connects the special *woreda* with the rest of the country and the world. On top of this, the regional government has constructed complex administration buildings in the special *woreda*.

The above response can take us to generalize that although the changes observed in the special *woreda* are not significant the move taken by the local government of Argoba and the communities can be seen as a good initiation in paving the way future development of the special *woreda*.

#### **4.6.1 Educational opportunities created for Argoba ethnic groups residing in the special woreda**

As indicated in the above statements, one of the achievements made by the establishment of the special *woreda* is the construction of schools. Taking this advantage the communities in the special *woreda* have started to send their children to school. This opportunity also enabled hundreds of school age children to get educational opportunities. The table below shows that there are 224 students who currently attend elementary school in *Gacheni* town. Out of these students, nearly 50% of them are girls.

On the other hand, out of the 1379 students in the *woreda* 1155 (83%) are located in the eight rural *kebeles*. This shows that the rural *kebeles* are also benefiting from the educational opportunities created in the *woreda*. The data obtained from the national statistics on the population Census of the Afar region indicated that the gross school enrollment ratio of the region is very low. The figure for the gross enrollment ratio for both urban and rural areas in the region is 7.2%. Similarly, the net enrollment rate in

primary school is 3.27% and this figure is one of the least figures in the country (Population Census, 1994). The construction of schools in the special *woreda*, after the new arrangement, has also benefited the *woreda* to draw teachers. As indicated in the table below a total of 32 teachers were assigned in the schools located in the *woreda*.

**Table 4.6.1.1 Distribution of schools in Argoba *woreda***

S N	Kebele	Type of school	Total no. of student			Total no. of teachers		
			M	F	T	M	F	T
1.	Gacheni	Elementary school	113	111	224	9	3	12
2.	Metekleya	Elementary school	153	100	253	4	2	6
3.	Cheno	Elementary school	47	55	102	3	0	3
4.	Bilu	Elementary school	35	28	62	2	0	2
5.	Geberoch	Elementary school	120	86	206	1	2	3
6.	Workamba	Elementary school	92	62	154	1	3	2
7.	Goze	Elementary school	76	65	141	1	2	2
8.	Keko	Alternative basic education	50	43	93	1	1	1
9.	Debrko	Alternative basic education	63	72	135	1	1	1
	Total =		749	630	1379	23	9	32

Source: 1997 Biannual Report of the *woreda* Education office

On the other hand, after the new arrangement the Argoba ethnic group also started to benefit from higher educational opportunities granted to the region by the Ethiopian Civil Service College.

The table below shows the total number of the Argoba ethnic groups who have got educational opportunities with the establishment of the special *woreda*. The interview with the local officials indicated that after the establishment of the special *woreda* many more Argoba ethnic groups have started to get educational opportunities at higher institutions. According to the information obtained, the Ethiopian Civil Service College has granted the educational opportunities to the ethnic group through the regional government. On the other hand, the report by the Argoba People's Democratic Party has indicated that since the establishments of the special *woreda* a total of 155 people from the *woreda* have got employment opportunities in the government offices. Both from the responses of the study participants and the data obtained from the *woreda* we can generalize that there is a good effort to enhance the capacity of the *Argoba* ethnic group through the provision of educational opportunities at higher institutions.

**Table 4.6.1.2: Educational opportunities provided to Argoba ethnic group**

Type of educational opportunities obtained	Total number of trainees
Certificate level	31
Diploma and Degree levels	30
Total=	61

Source: Report from the Argoba people Democratic Party, 1996, Awash Fentale.

From the above discussion, one can conclude that the establishment of schools in the special *woreda* has given educational opportunities for school age children. On top of that the new arrangement has enabled some Argoba ethnic groups to benefit from higher educational opportunities granted by the Ethiopian Civil Service College to the region.

Similarly, with the new arrangement in place health institutions were established in the *woreda*. As indicated in the table below there are ten health workers who came to the *woreda* after the establishment of the *woreda*. Although the numbers of health workers presently working in the *woreda* are very small, the present effort can be seen as a good initiative for the *woreda* like Argoba, which was established very recently from nonentity. There are a total of five medium level nurses, two in Gacheni town, one in Metekleya and another two in Cheno and Bilu *kebeles*. Moreover, there are five front-line health workers in the above-cited areas.

**Table 4.6.2 Distribution of health staffs in the *woreda***

SN	Kebeles	Medium level nurse	Front line health workers	Total
1.	Gacheni	2	2	4
2.	Metekleya	1	1	2
3.	Cheno	1	1	2
4.	Bilu	1	1	2
5.	Total =	5	5	10

Source: 1997 Bi annual Report from the *woreda* Education Office

## 4.7 Economic relations of the Argoba with their neighbors

### 4.7.1 Economic basis of the Argoba and their neighbors

The other point of discussion with the study participants was about the economic basis of the Argoba and their neighbors. The result obtained from all of the questionnaires respondents (100%) in the three *woredawoch* revealed that 90% of the Argoba living in the special *woreda* are agriculturalists and they cultivate field crops like sorghum mainly for domestic consumption and only marginally for sale; others are engaged in Cottage industries and trade. Similarly, more than 90% of the Afars in *Dulecha woreda* are pastoralists and the neighboring Amhara living in *Ankober woreda* are engaged in farming activities and they cultivate a variety of crops such as barley, wheat and pulses primarily for household consumption and marginally for sale.

This is further confirmed by the research conducted by (Seyum & Tesfu, 2002:332) "The Amhara in the highlands are engaged in small-scale subsistence agriculture producing a variety of crops such as barely, wheat and pulses mainly for domestic consumption and marginally for sale. The Afar are engaged almost exclusively in livestock husbandry based on nomadic pastoralist productions system and the Argoba are predominantly nomadic pastoralsim and settled agriculture."

**Table 4.7.1.1 Economic basis of the Argoba and their neighbors**

Responses	Response						
	Argoba		Afar		Amhara		%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
The majority of the Argoba (90%) are agriculturalists and others are engaged in trade and cottage industries like weaving.	8	6	3	3	5	2	36
More than 90% of the Afar are pastor lists and almost all of the Amhara in the neighboring District are engaged in farming.	-	3	6	7	7	6	39
All of the above	8	3	2	2		4	25
Total=	16	12	11	12	12	12	100

The focus group participants also confirmed the information. Moreover, the personal interview with Mr. Nuru Mohammed, the Administrator of Dulecha *woreda* confirmed that 95% of the Afars in Dulecha *woreda* are pastoralists and they raise animals like camel, goat and cattle and the remaining 5% are farmers. From this, we can generalize that the economic basis of the Amhara and Argoba is agriculture while that of the Afars is predominantly animal husbandry.

Looking at the above discussions, we can generalize that the Argoba and the Amhara are predominantly agriculturalists and the Afar in Dulecha *woredas* are engaged in animal husbandry.

### **a) Trade relationships**

“The Afar sell their animals to buy grains, and the amounts of grain they purchase depend on the amount of milk produced by herds and flocks. The number of animals to be sold solely depends on the availability of food at a household level. That is during a dry season the people rely more on purchased food and they sell more animals” (Ayele, 1986: 32-36).

The members of the three ethnic groups who filled the questionnaires also indicated the kind of trade relationships between the Argoba and their neighbors. According to the responses 75 (100%), the Afar sell animals such as goat, sheep, camels and animal products to their neighbors. Similarly, the Argoba and the Amhara sell agricultural products to the Afar. Besides, both the Argoba and the Amhara residing in the neighboring *woreda* sell finished products like cloth to the Afar. However, the trade relationships the Argoba and Afar used to have in Dulecha *woreda* have no longer been there by the time this study was conducted. This was due to the conflict erupted between the two ethnic groups. As a result, the Argoba strengthened the trade relationships with the *Amhara* in the neighboring *woredas*.

**Table 4.7.1.1.1 Trade relationships**

Responses	Argoba		Afar		Amhara		%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
The Afar sell goat, camel, sheep and animal products to the Argoba and Amhara	4	2	6	3	4	2	28
The Argoba sell cloth and agricultural products to the Afar and sometimes they work as a daily laborers in the neighboring Districts	6	5	3	7	5	3	39
The Amhara also sell agricultural products to the Afar and Argoba	2	4	2	2	2	4	21
All of the above	4	1	-	-	1	3	12
Total=	16	12	11	12	12	12	100

The responses obtained clearly revealed that the three ethnic groups have had trade relationships that benefit each group. However, as a result of the conflict between the Afar and the Argoba groups the trade relationships between the two groups have been significantly affected.

**b) Impact of the new arrangement on the trade relationships**

The majority of the respondents of the questionnaires 23(31%) indicated that the maintenance of the road that links the Argoba *woreda* with Ankober and Dulecha *woredawoch* has facilitated the trade exchange between the three ethnic groups. 16 (21%) informants responded that after the new arrangement some people are engaged in off farm activities like petty trade activities. In contrast to the above responses, 15 (20%) respondents took the position that the change recorded is not significant. On the other hand, the result of interview with the majority of local officials on the impact of the new arrangement revealed that the new arrangement has not brought significant change on the trade relationships among the three ethnic groups.

From the responses, we learned that there is significant diversion of attitude between the key informants and the majority of local officials involved in the interview.

**Table 1.2.3 Trade Relationships**

Responses	Argoba		Afar		Amhara		%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
The maintenance of the road has facilitated the trade exchange between the groups	6	4	3	3	4	3	31
It has enabled some of the people in the District to engage in off-farm activities	3	6	-	2	4	1	21
The change is not significant	3	2	3	1	3	3	20
Nothing	1	-	2	-	1	5	12
No response	3	-	3	6	-	-	16
Total=	16	12	11	12	12	12	100

#### 4.8 Availability of land and water in the study area

“Environmental problems and demographic pressure have always been the underlying causes of the major conflicts in Ethiopian history. Interestingly enough the conflicts between the Christian and Muslim communities in the Ethiopian region, which lasted for more than 300 years were centered around the control for resources and trade routes”(Medhine, 2000:192)

With regard to the availability of land and water in the study areas, some of the respondents of the questionnaires 19 (25%) responded that there was no scarcity of land and water both in Argoba and their neighbors and others 33 (44%) indicated that there was scarcity of land in Amhara and a shortage of water in Dulecha *woreda*. In contrast to this opinion, some respondents 11 (15%) from Afar argued that there was no shortage of land and water in the three *woredawoch*. The reason given for this by the group was that the populations in the two *woredawoch* were sparsely populated and hence, there was no shortage of land. Still other respondents from

Dulecha *woreda* 12 (16%) believed that there is scarcity of land and water in Argoba and the two neighboring *woredawoch*.

**Table 4.8.1 Availability of land and water in the study area**

Responses	Argoba		Afar		Amhara		%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
There is no scarcity of land in Argoba but in some places like Metekleya there is shortage of water.	11	6			2	-	25
There is scarcity of land in Amhara and shortage of pasture in Afar or Dulecha District	5	6			10	12	44
There is no shortage of land and water in the three Districts			11				15
There is scarcity of land and water in Argoba and neighboring Districts			-	12			16
Total=	16	12	11	12	12	12	100

The data from the national statistics shows that Ankober *woreda* is one of the densely populated *woredawoch* from the region. The population density in the *woreda* is 119.9 people per square kilometers (Statistical abstract, 2002). This shows that the high concentration of people in the *woreda* will definitely causes shortage of agricultural land in the *woreda*. In contrast, the Afar region in general and the study area in particular is one of the sparsely populated areas in the country. Both the interviewee and the focus groups participants also confirmed the responses given by the key informants about the availability of land and water in the study area.

On the other hand, the responses obtained from the focus group participants indicated the causes for the shortage of resources in the study area. 'The primary reasons, for the scarcity of land among the Amhara are high population growth and drought'

The data from the national statistics indicated that the Amhara region stands third in general fertility rate in the country. And, the total fertility rate for the region is 6.35 and this figure is higher than the national average, which is 6.32 (Statistical Abstract, 2002). The other reason forwarded from the key informants for the shortage of land in the Argoba *woreda* is the current conflict between the Afar and the Argoba, which forced some Argoba ethnic groups to leave their farmland. According to respondents, this temporary problem could be solved in the future together with the security problem in the area.

From the above responses, we can generalize that compared to the Argoba and Dulecha *woreda* there is a shortage of agricultural land among the Amhara ethnic group living in the Ankober *woreda* and shortage of pasture among the Afar.

#### **4.8.1 Alternatives taken to resolve scarcity of resources**

“The major historical events drastically changed the Ethiopian history were mass movements triggered by ecological problems. This was mainly true for the movements of the Somalis and the Afar towards the fertile highlands of the Harar plateau in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century. The so-called wars of Ahmed Gragn in the 16<sup>th</sup> century were nothing but the result of the crystallization of pastoralist and semi-pastoralist communities in eastern Ethiopia in search of fertile land” (Ibid:192-193).

Different alternatives were taken to deal with the shortage of agricultural land and water by ethnic groups in the area. All of the survey respondents 75 (100%) pointed that some of the Amhara in the neighboring *kebeles* of the Ankober *woreda* (Aliyuamba) traveled to Argoba special *woreda* to rent agricultural land from the Argoba on contractual basis. Moreover, in a very rare cases very few Amhara group tend to use force to cultivate the land, which belongs to the Argoba; and during draught seasons, the Afar in Dulecha *woreda* took their cattle to Argoba and other *woreda* in search of pasture and water.

**Table 4.8.1.1 Alternatives taken to deal with the shortage of agricultural land and water by ethnic groups in the area**

Responses	Argoba		Afar		Amhara		%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
The Amhara rent agricultural land from the Argoba	6	2	6	3	4	5	34
The Afar during the drought season take their cattle to Argoba and other Districts in search of pasture and water	6	5	3	7	5	3	39
All of the above	4	5	2	2	3	4	27
Total	16	12	11	12	12	12	100

The above discussions by the ethnic group can lead us to conclude that both the Afar and Amhara ethnic groups travel to the special *woreda* in search of water and pasture and agricultural land respectively.

#### **4.9 Responses of the Argoba towards the intruders**

People naturally tend to use different means to respond to the demands of strangers on the sharing of resources that exist within their territory. Some tend to use force to protect their resources; others may resort to arrangements that could benefit mutually from the resources. When we look at the responses obtained from the majority of the survey respondents, the Argoba tended to use both peaceful, mutually beneficiary ways, and at times the other extreme against the intruders who cross their territory in search of land and pasture. The Amhara in the neighboring Ankober *woreda* and the Afar in Dulecha *woreda* go to the Argoba *woreda* in search of pasture and agricultural land. Accordingly 21(28%) respondents of the questionnaires took the position that the reaction of the Argoba towards the Afar who come to the special *woreda* in search of pasture was peaceful as long as the animals don't touch the crops that belong to the Argoba. 12 (16%) respondents responded that the reaction of the Argoba to the Afar who took their animals to the crops land of Argoba was armed resistance, again 16 of the respondents (21%) answered that the reaction of

the Argoba depends on the approach the intruders employ. The other 7 (9%) indicated that the reaction of the Argoba was good or peaceful whatever the outcome was.

**Table 4.9.1 Response by the Argoba towards the intruders**

Responses	Argoba	Afar	Amhara	%
Armed resistance	5	2	5	16
Tolerance/peaceful response	11	5	5	28
Taking/withholding the animals		5	-	7
Depends on the approach	9	3	4	21
Good	1	3	3	9
No response	2	5	7	19
Total	28	23	24	100

The responses given by the survey respondents are further confirmed by the focus group participants and the majority of local officials who were interviewed by the researcher. Similarly, the following article taken from Seyum and Tesfaye reveals the response of highlanders to scarcity of land.

“The response to the scarcity of land is to seek additional land elsewhere. Highlanders move down to lower altitudes which in variably provokes violent reaction from people living there responses by allegedly aggrieved parties range from livestock rustling and murder to the appeal to *Woreda* authorities” (Seyum & Tesfaye, 2000:336)

The above responses could lead us to generalize that the reactions of the Argoba against the Amhara and Afar who came to their territory to look for farmland and pasture depended on the approach the intruders employ. They either welcomed the groups peacefully or used armed resistance depending on how the latter react.

#### 4.9.2 Perceptions of informants on the frequency of intrusion on other territories

Responding to the frequency of intrusion on other territories 18(24%) of the survey respondents responded that the Afar ethnic groups very frequently come to the special *woreda* in search of pasture, the other respondents 18(24%) said the Afar frequently come to Argoba while the majority 39(52%) said the Afar occasionally came to the *woreda*. The respondents stated that the Afar came to the special *woreda* during droughts season to look for pasture and water for their animals. The majority of the focus group participants and the interviewees also confirmed the responses given by the majority of the questionnaires respondents. According to the responses of the participants the Afar occasionally come to the special *woreda* in search of pasture and water

**Table 4.9.3 Frequency of intrusion on other territories**

Frequency	Argoba		Afar		Amhara		%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Very frequently	6	4			5	3	24
Frequently	6	5	1	1	3	2	24
Occasionally	4	3	10	11	4	7	51
No response			-	1			1
Total	16	12	11	12	12	12	100

In line to the above topic (Seyum & Tesfaye, 2000:332) indicated, “The nomadic pastoralist production system involves the seasonal movement of people and live stock over large territories”.

Therefore, it can be summarized that the two neighbors of the Argoba especially the Afar occasionally come to Argoba special *woreda* merely in search of pasture and water during drought season.

#### 4.10 Community perception on livelihood change

The key informants and other interviewees in the three *woredawoch* were also asked to respond to the impact of the new arrangement on the change of livelihood of the people residing in the Argoba special *woreda*. Accordingly, the majority of respondents stated that the new arrangement has made it possible to generate employment opportunities for some people in the special *woreda*. Moreover, the responses of the informants have indicated that the new arrangement has facilitated the trade relationships between the Argoba and their neighbors. Especially, the maintenance of the road that links Gacheni town with Ankober and Dulecha *woredawoch* has facilitated the transportation of people and goods to and from the *woreda*. And this has reduced the labor, time and cost of the people engaged in trade activities.

Moreover, the focus group participants from the Argoba special *woreda* indicated that the establishment of agricultural office in the special *woreda* has helped farmers to get improved seeds, fertilizers, and chemicals. And this has improved the livelihood of the dwellers. Moreover, the women respondents from the special *woreda* also indicated that the establishment of the special *woreda* has created employment opportunities for them. Respondents elaborated that the new arrangement has helped them to engage in petty trade activities like construction of rental houses for government employees, and this in turn has improved their livelihood.

The response obtained from the key informants, focus group participants, and individual informants shows that the establishment of the special *woredas* has helped some Argoba ethnic groups living in the special *woredas* to engage in off- farm activities.

The establishment of the special *woreda* has also helped poor women to get credit from the government micro-finance institutions operating in the region to engage in income- generating activities. The responses have shown that presently around 80 households both in the town and the rural areas have got credit in kind. This form of credit has enabled the beneficiaries to get goats and sheep that would be fatten for

some time and later sold in the market. The *woreda* Agricultural Office has also confirmed this information.

From the responses given above, we learned that the establishment of the *woreda* has created employment opportunities for some community members. And respondents from the special *woreda* have also witnessed that the employment opportunities have positively influenced their livelihood. However, the change of livelihood marked in the *woreda* as compared to the living standard of the majority of the population is not a significant one.

#### **4.11 Social relationships between the Argoba and their neighbors**

“The Argoba boys and girls live with their parents until they get married. Girls marry at the ages of 10-15, while boys at the ages of 18-20. Marriage is arranged through parents. On the other hand, the practice of preferential patrilineal cross-cousin marriage (*absuma*) is common among the Afars”(Tesfaye, 2000:200 and Getachew, 2001:147)

In relation to the above statement, the marital practice among the three ethnic groups is recorded in the following table. The Argoba are often wedded to their own ethnic group. However, this does not mean that they cannot marry to other ethnic groups. According to the responses obtained from all of the survey respondents 75 (100%), the Argoba ethnic group, approximately 2% of the Argoba marries the Amhara Christians if they are willing to change their religion to Islam. And approximately 5% of the Argoba marry to the Afar. During the field visit to Dulecha *woreda* the researcher has found out that there are a lot of Argoba women who married to the Afar. On the other hand, the common type of marriage practiced among the Afar is ‘*Absuma*’, a type of marriage where by an Afar man marries his cousin. This arrangement gives access to an old Afar man to marry to a young girl with out her full consent.

**Table 4.11.1 Marriage common to the Argoba and their neighbors**

Responses	Argoba		Afar		Amhara		%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
The common type of marriage among the Afar is 'absuma'	4	2	6	3	4	2	28
Endogamy is common to the Argoba, but in rare cases the Argoba also marry outside of their ethnic group.	6	5	3	7	5	3	39
The Amhara practice traditional marriage based on Christian Orthodox culture	-	4	2	2	2	4	19
All of the above	6	1	-	-	1	3	14
Total=	16	12	11	12	12	12	100

Both the focus group participants and people involved in the interview also confirmed this information.

From the above responses, we can generalize that some of the Argoba ethnic groups mixes with both the Afar and the Amhara through marriage. And, this had contributed to alleviating the tension between the Argoba and Afar. However, the reality on the ground does not confirm the above generalization.

Respondents also answered about the cultural values, shared by the Argoba and their neighbors. Accordingly, the key informants stated that bride price; the mourning and marriage ceremonies of the Argoba and the Afar are more or less similar. Informants from the Amhara groups indicated that some of the cultural values shared by the Amhara and the Argoba are mutual respect and observing religious days. These respondents also elaborated that the marriage and mourning ceremonies of the Argoba and the Afar are more or less similar. In contrast, there are some respondents from both the Afar and Argoba groups who stated that there are no cultural values common to the Argoba and Afar. These groups stated that the only thing the Afar and Argoba ethnic groups share is their religion. Apart from this they stated, there are no any cultural values that are similar to the two groups. On the other hand, informants from the women group from Argoba didn't know the common cultural values practiced by the two ethnic groups.

Similarly, the response obtained from the focus group participants indicated that the practice of paying for blood price between the Afar and the Argoba ethnic groups are also similar. The participants also stated that dispute mediation between the Argoba and the Afar are also some how similar.

Concerning the historical social relationships the Argoba had with the two neighbors, the interviewees (key informants and others) provided their responses. According to the responses from the majority of the Argoba ethnic groups the social relationships the Argoba had with both the Amhara and the Afar in both the Emperor and the military government was relatively better compared to the present relationships with both ethnic groups. The responses obtained from the majority of the Amhara groups showed that during the Emperor period the Amhara were ruling the Argoba and the Muslim religion practiced by the Argoba in the area was not appreciated by the Christian rulers. The respondents also stated that the relationships the Argoba had with the Afar were influenced by the conflict between the two ethnic groups.

On the other hand, all the Afar respondents elaborated that during the emperor period the two ethnic groups were working closely and there were no major conflicts between the two groups. The responses obtained from the group indicated that both the Afar and the Argoba used traditional methods called *Afersata*- traditional mechanisms to identify offenders in Ethiopia, and this method had contributed a lot to reduce the conflict between the groups.

The responses obtained from the focus group participants about the historical social relationship were quite different. The majority of the respondents responded that the historical relationships the Argoba had with the Afar and Amhara ethnic groups were on good terms while some participants said that the relationships was weak during the Emperor and the Dergue.

This group of respondents indicated that there were instances of conflict among the three ethnic groups that weakened the relationships. Still some respondents explained that the Argoba used to teach Muslim religion to Afar and this had created a good relationship with the Afar. Although the responses obtained on the historical

social relationships the Argoba had with their neighbors varied, the majority of the participants tended to appreciate the historical social relationship among the three ethnic groups and agreed that it was relatively better than what is seen today.

With regard to the present social relationships, the Argoba have with the two ethnic groups residing in Ankober and Dulecha woreda the response obtained from the majority of the survey respondents 55(73%) revealed that the Argoba and the Amhara have good relationships compared to the relationships with the Afar ethnic groups in Dulecha woreda. This response is further confirmed by the following statement (Ahmed, 1994:140) "The northeastern escarpment of the Shewan plateau, constituted the heartland of the medieval Muslim sultanate of Shewa and Ifat, which thus makes it one of the earliest place for Christian-Muslim contacts in the interior." On the other hand, the responses from the men respondents of the Afar indicated that the current social relationship between the Afar and the Argoba has improved due to the effort exerted by the local government of Dulecha and Argoba woredawoch in bringing good governance in the areas.

**Table 4.11.4 The current social relationship between the Argoba and their neighbors**

Responses	Argoba		Afar		Amhara		%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Presently the social relationship the Argoba have with the neighboring Afar is not good, but the relation with the Amhara is good	16	12		12	7	8	73
Initially the social relation with the Argoba was not good but now efforts have been made to improve the relationship			11				15
There is no difference with the past					5		7
We don't know						4	5
Total	16	12	11	12	12	12	100

The responses obtained from the majority of the questionnaires respondents were corroborated by the responses given by the majority of the focus group participants and the interviewee. However, some focus group participants indicated that there was no difference between the past and the present relationships of the two ethnic groups.

The responses obtained from the participants lead us to generalize that the present social relationships the Argoba have with the Amhara have been relatively better than the relationships they had with the Afar. This may probably be related to the security problems, which have been prevalent between the Afar and the Argoba groups living in Dulecha and Argoba special *woredawoch*.

Similarly, the respondents of the survey questionnaires elaborated about issues related with the impact of the new arrangement on the social life of the people residing in the special *woreda*. Based on the responses obtained from the majority of the respondents 63 (86%) the establishment of schools in the special *woreda* has enabled the community in the special *woreda* to send their children to schools. The Argoba ethnic group also started to promote their culture, which was neglected, and abandoned before. Moreover, the establishments of health facilities have opened an opportunity to the local communities to have access to health services with in their locality.

**Table 4.11.5 Impact of the new arrangement on the social life of the people**

Responses	Argoba		Afar		Amhara		%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
The Argoba started to send their children to school	6	5	5	4	5	3	37
The Argoba started to develop their culture and language	5	4	2	2	3	2	24
Construction of health institutions has increased the access of the local people to health facilities			2	3		2	9
All of the above	2	-	2	-	3	3	13
No response	3	3		3	1	2	16
Total=	16	12	11	12	12	12	100

From the responses, we concluded that the establishment of some infrastructures like schools and health posts has positively affected the communities in the special *woreda*. In addition, the Argoba ethnic group has started to teach Argoba language to their children.

#### **4.12 Political relationships**

Looking at the historical political relationships the Argoba had with the two ethnic groups the responses obtained from the survey respondents revealed the following points. 18(24%) of the informants indicated that in the previous two governments (The Emperor and the Dergue) the Argoba ethnic group had no peaceful political relationships with both the Afar and Amhara. This was due to the conflict they had with the Afar and the interests of the Amhara ethnic group to rule the Argoba with out their consent. On the other hand, the majority of the respondents 33 (44%) responded that during the emperor period the political relationships were relatively good, but in the Dergue period there were conflicts between the Argoba and Afar. The respondents indicated the traditional conflict solving mechanisms exercised by the two ethnic groups in the Emperor period had contributed a lot in enhancing the relationships between the groups. And, 17 (23%) of the respondents didn't have any idea about the historical political relationships between the Argoba and their neighbors.

On the other hand, the following article shows that the historical relationships between the Argobba and the Christian Amhara were good and there was cooperation between the two ethnic groups. "The wolasma alliance will continue to be of crucial importance for the expanding kingdom of Shewa and particularly in its confrontation with both the Oromo of the Region and the Afar of the Awash valley (Ahmed, 1994:26).

**Table 4.12.1 Relations in previous times**

Responses	Argoba		Amhar a		Afar		%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Under the former governments the political relationship was not good both with the Afar and Amhara ethnic groups	7	5			6		24
During the emperor the political relationship was relatively good, but in the Dergue period there were conflicts between the Argoba and Afar	9	7	7	4		6	44
During the Emperor the Amhara ruled the Argoba.			3	2			7
We don't know	-		2	6	5	6	25
Total=	16	12	11	12	12	12	100

On the other hand, significant numbers of the focus group participants share the views of the majority of the key informants.

From the above statements, we summarize that the historical political relationships between the Amhara and the Argoba was relatively better than the political relationships between the Argoba and the Afar.

The other Issue taken up in the discussion was about the current political relationship between the local government of the Argoba special *woreda* and the two neighboring *woredawoch*. 60 (80%) of the questionnaires respondents pointed out that the present political relationships between the Argoba special *woreda* and the Amhara has been found to be good and encouraging. However, the political relationships between the two local governments (the Argoba and Dulecha *woreda*) have got instability due to the recent conflict, which erupted between the two ethnic groups. This response given by the respondents is in line to the argument by (Asnake, 2004:55) "The process that led to the multi-ethnic character of the country and the manner in which Ethiopia regimes sought to govern the country, greatly impacted conditions of peace and instability in Ethiopia."

Similar to the historical social relationships the Argoba had with their neighbors the responses obtained from the key informants generalize that the historical political relationships among the ethnic groups was relatively better than the present relationships.

**Table 4.12.2 The current political relationships**

Responses	Argoba		Amhara		Afar		%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Presently the Argoba have good political relationship with the neighboring Amhara, but not with the Afar	16	12	12	5	8	7	80
There is a conflict between the Argoba and Afar				7			9
We don't know	16	12	11	12	12	12	11

However, the responses obtained from the focus group participants on the current political relationships the Argoba have with the Amhara and Afar was different. Some answered that the present relationships the Argoba had with the two ethnic groups is very good, but others feel that the relationships with the Amhara has not been satisfactory; again some of the respondents stated that the political relationships between the local government of Argoba, Dulecha and Ankober *woredawoch* is improving.

The responses obtained from the participants generalize that the political relationships between the local government of Dulecha and Gacheni *woredawoch* have been negatively influenced due to the occasional conflict between the two ethnic groups. However, the relationships between the local government of Gacheni and Ankober are encouraging and promising.

### 4.12.3 Instances of antagonism in the area

On the other hand, the respondents also indicated about instances of antagonism in the area. The responses revealed that currently there are instances of antagonism in the area. It can be viewed from the results of the survey respondents, 56 (75%) of the informants agreed on the presence of hostility between the Argoba and the Afar

residing in Argoba and Dulecha *woredawoch* respectively. Others 10(13%) pointed out that at present there are instances of enmity between the Afar and Amhara, but the problem has not been as serious as between the Afar and the Argoba.

**Table 4.12.3.1 Instances of antagonism in the area**

Responses	Argoba		Amhara		Afar		%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Presently there are instances of antagonism between the Afar and Argoba ethnic groups	16	12		9	9	10	75
There are instances of antagonism between the Afar and some groups of Amhara. However, there are serious antagonism between the Argoba and Afar			10				13
We don't know			2	3			7
No response	-		-		2	2	5
Total=	16	12	11	12	12	12	100

Both the results of the survey, interviewees and the key informants' discussions also confirmed by the responses given by the focus group participants.

From these responses, we can learn that currently there are instances of animosity among ethnic groups residing in Ankober, Gacheni and Dulecha *woredawoch*.

#### 4.12.4 Causes of the conflict

"The major determinant of conflict between the four major tribal groups-Afar, Argoba, Amhara and Oromo residing In the North Shoa Zone is the great scarcity of land and uncertain precipitation patterns" Seyum & Tesfaye, 2000:374)

Concerning the causes of the conflict in the area the responses obtained from the key informants are presented as follows. The first and the major cause as expressed by the majority of the questionnaire respondents 49 (65%) was the revenge taken by the two groups against the killing of their member. The responses obtained both from

the Amhara and Argoba groups revealed that the Afar had taken the first initiative by killing the member of Argoba group and the revenge started by the two groups many years back has still continued to present. On the other hand, 16 (21%) of the survey respondents agreed that shortage of pasture has been the underlying cause of the conflict. Again 7 (10%) of the respondents took the position that the underlying cause of the conflict between the two groups is the backward tradition of the Afar, which encourages young people to kill other ethnic groups including the Argoba so as to get a good wife and acceptance by the elders. This argument of the respondent goes inline with the findings by the above scholars "Persons from certain ethnic groups are more likely to respond with violence than others. A young Afar man, for example, has to prove his manhood by killing another man if he wants to marry a certain girl. Such cultural traits tend to make the Afar respond violently to any offence. However, this plays a minor role in inter-group relations because the requirement does not go as far as demanding that the victim be from another tribe" (Ibid:337).

And, a respondent took the position that the current act of the Afar against the Argoba shows that the Afars are not happy with the establishment of the special *woreda*. The participants from Argoba ethnic groups indicated that in the previous period whenever there were conflicts the people involved in the conflict from both sides were not more than four or five. However, presently the Afar forms a big group (up to 80 people) to attack the Argoba. This shows that according to their opinion the Afar would like to exterminate the Argoba living in the special *woreda*. Some respondents from Argoba side also believed that the Afar living in Dulecha *woreda* have vowed to demolish the newly established town named Gacheni.

**Table 4.12.4 .1 Causes of the conflict**

Responses	Argoba		Amhara		Afar		%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Revenge taken by the two groups	11	9	8	6	9	6	65
Shortage of pasture	3	2	2	2	2	5	21
The backward tradition of the Afar which encourages killing	1	1	2	3	-	-	10
The Afar are not happy with the arrangement	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
We don't know	-	-	-	1	-	1	3
Total=	16	12	11	12	12	12	100

The responses from the participants will lead us to come to a conclusion as to what the causes of the conflict in the study area might be. The primary cause as expressed by the participants was the revenge taken by the two ethnic groups against the killing of their members. The second reason was the scarcity of pasture that prompted the Afar to cross the boundary of the Argoba.

#### **4.12.5 Manifestation of the antagonism**

The manifestations of the antagonism as expressed by the majority of the survey respondents informants 66 (88%) were conflicts between the Afar and the Argoba ethnic groups. According to the responses obtained from the participants one and half month before this study was conducted five Argoba were killed in the special *woreda* by the Afar. And as of 2004 a total of 17 people were killed from both sides. And the local officials from Gacheni *woreda* also confirmed this figure. The other form of manifestation as explained by the groups was the theft of cattle by both groups.

Respondents from Argoba group indicated that the Afars who are armed occasionally come to the *woreda* to steal the cattle from the Argoba. If the owner of the cattle resisted the armed groups would kill the person and take away the cattle by force. On the other hand, according to the result of the discussion, since the new *woreda* was

established the Argoba living in different villages had retreated from their areas. The total number of villages evacuated according to the respondents ranges from three to five. Some of the names of the villages as indicated by the respondents are Tale, Gunager and Metekleya. The group also explained that the Argoba who were forced to leave their localities by the conflict were suffering from hunger by the time this study was conducted. Respondents from the Afar ethnic group don't agree with the above responses.

**Table 4.12.5.1 Manifestation of antagonism**

Responses							%
	Argoba		Afar		Amhara		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
The Killing of people both from the Argoba and Afar ethnic groups	4	2	6	3	4	2	28
Looting of cattle	6	5	3	7	5	3	39
Conflict	2	4	2	2	2	4	21
No response	4	1	-	-	1	3	12
Total=	16	12	11	12	12	12	100

Similarly the result of the study conducted about the environmental conflict in North Shoa indicated that the manifestations of antagonistic relationships between Amhara, Argoba, Afar and Oromo ethnic groups are Armed conflict, destruction of properties and stealing of livestock(Seyum & Tesfaye, 2000:348)

From the above responses, we can learn that the conflict between the two ethnic groups often manifested in the form of conflict and looting of cattle that belongs to the two ethnic groups. On top of that, the present conflicts between the Afar and Argoba groups have consumed a significant number of lives of people in the area.

#### **4.12.6 People often involved in the conflict**

Similarly, the participants also indicated the groups who often involved in the conflict from both sides. The response obtained from the majority of the survey respondents 57 (76%) revealed that the groups often involved in the conflict from both sides were

youngsters who are in the age category of 15-18. However, there have been also times when the adults too involved in the conflict.

**Table 4.12.6 .1 People often involved in the conflict**

Responses	Argoba		Amhara		Afar		%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Often Youngsters between the age of 15-18 and sometimes adults	14	9	8	7	10	9	76
No response	2	3	4	5	1	3	24
Total=	16	12	12	12	11	12	100

The focus group participants and interviewees also confirm the response given by the survey respondents.

The conclusion we could draw from the above answers is that the groups often involved in the conflict between the Afar and the Argoba are teenagers and at times the adult also could involve in the conflict.

#### **4.12.7 Impact of the conflict**

According to the response by the majority of the questionnaires respondents 67 (89%) the current conflict, which has a long history, has caused serious problems in the area. These are the death of people who are economically active and the withdrawal of people from their residence or settlements. Above all, the respondents pointed out that the conflict in the area has resulted in political insecurity especially in the special *woreda*. Similarly, the result of the personal interview with Ato Worke Yusuf, an expert from the Argoba *woreda* Agricultural office, revealed that the total hectares of land cultivated in the year 2002/03 was reduced by 1000 Hectares in the following years or 2004/05. This was because the problem of insecurity in the area forced the farmers to withdraw from their localities or farmlands. This opinion of the

key informants was also corroborated by the responses from the majority of the focus group participants.

**Table 4.12.7.1 Impact of the conflict**

Responses	Argoba		Afar		Amhara		%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
It has caused the death of people who are in the labour force and insecurity in the area	4	2	6	3	4	2	28
It has forced some Argoba settlers to evacuate from their agricultural land and settlements	6	5		3	4	3	28
It has created suspicion between the ethnic groups	2	4	2	2	2	4	21
All of the above	4	1	-	-	1	3	12
No response			3	4	1	-	11
Total=	16	12	11	12	12	12	100

The conflict that has a long history has claimed the life of significant number of people both from the Afar and the Argoba sides. Moreover, the conflict has forced some members to lose their property and settlements. The above responses indicated that the conflict that hasn't got the full attention of the federal government has consumed the lives of people from both sides besides creating political insecurity in the area.

### **Cases of two victim individuals**

1. Ami Yusuf Sheik Ibrahim, age 19, belonged to the Argoba ethnic group. He was a young man who used to live with his family in Argoba special woreda in a village called Metekleya. His families are engaged in Agricultural activities and he used to assist his family in the agricultural work. This young man was killed in June 9, 1996 EC in a place called Beragona by an individual who belong to Afar ethnic group. The name of the killer is Asker Dini, a young Afar

boy who was 19 years of age by the time he killed the young Argoba man. The killer was a pastoralist who lives in Dulecha woreda. According to the information obtained from the Informant (Ato Ali Yakin Bulo, Argoba woreda police Inspector ), the killer and the victim had friendship and they had no any conflict. The gun that belongs to Yusuf was the reason for Asker to kill his friend. That is, Asker was interested to rob the Personal Arm that Yusuf had. Having this idea in mind, the killer waited the victim while he was traveling from his village to the market in Dulecha woreda. And, he met Yusuf in a place where no one would help Yusuf and shot him dead. After he killed his friend, he took Yusuf's gun and escaped from the area. However, the police officers from Dulecha woreda who received the report from the deceased family started to hunt the killer, and finally they captured the killer and took him to the prison in Dulecha woreda. After spending some time in jail, the killer was released for reason that is not yet known to the deceased family, and the local administration of Argoba special woreda. The information obtained revealed that the killer was never appeared to the court, and this act of the local government of Dulecha woreda has grieved the Argoba ethnic group in general and the family of the victim in particular.

2. The other individuals who were victims of individuals who belong to the Afar ethnic groups are a father and his young son. The name of the father is Mr. Abdurrahman Ahmed and his son is Ahmed Abdurrahman. The age of the father was 35 and his son 9 by the time they were killed. The father and his son were killed in December 3, 1995 EC. The father was illiterate and his son was grade three by the time, they died. Mr. Abdurrahman was a farmer who assists his family from the income he used to get from the sell of agricultural products. The father and his son were killed in Argoba special woreda, Geberoch kebele, Aman Amba village for reason that is not yet clear to the local administration of Argoba woreda. The killers are a group of Afar who belong to Dahiruma tribe. After killing the two individuals, the killers escaped from the area, and the local government of Dulecha did not exert sufficient effort to hand over the offenders to the government. Eventually, the relatives of

the killer had negotiated with the victims' family to handle the issue in a traditional way. Accordingly, elders who belonged to the two ethnic groups mediated and settled the case. Based on the arrangement, the killers had agreed to pay blood price to the deceased family. Finally, the victim's family have accepted the proposal and agreed to take the compensation and finish the case in a peaceful way.

#### **4.12.8 Interventions taken to resolve the conflict**

"Traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution may have worked in small societies. But as societies become more complex they require a more complex governance structure with codified laws, rules and regulations. In economically less developed countries this responsibility is not always effectively discharged because of the weak administrative penetration by the state"(Ibid:337).

The survey respondents also answered about the interventions taken to manage the conflict. The responses of the majority of the Afar and Argoba 37 (49%) showed that both the traditional and modern methods were used to manage the conflict. The traditional method used was involving the elders from the two ethnic groups to mediate the groups through traditional ways. On the other hand, peace conferences were organized in both *woredawoch* and outside of the *woredawoch* by the regional government to solve the problem. 7 (10%) of the respondents from Amhara answered that there has been no measure taken by the local government of Dulecha *woreda* to manage the problem. The informants indicated that the local government in Dulecha was not willing to hand over offenders to the government. 4 (6%) respondents from the Ankober *woreda* indicated that the local governments of the Argoba and Dulecha *woredawoch* have tried to assign police force in the market place to reduce the conflict that took place in the market area between the two ethnic groups. The remaining 26 (37%) respondents either didn't have the knowledge about the issue or were not willing to comment about the topic.

**Table 4.12.8.1 Interventions taken to resolve the conflict**

Responses	Argoba		Afar		Amhara		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Traditional conflict resolving methods and organizing peace conferences	11	9	8	9			49
No measure has been taken					4	3	10
The government tried to assign police force to some extent in market places where the two ethnic groups meet					2	2	5
We don't know					6	7	17
No response	5	3	3	3			19
Total =	16	12	11	12	12	12	100

Similarly, the responses obtained from the majority of the interviewee and the focus group participants are similar with the responses of the key informants. According to the response both the local and regional government participated in changing the security situation in the area by organizing Peace conferences in the two *woredawoch* to reconcile the two groups and handover the offenders. From the responses given above we can learn that both traditional and modern methods were used to address the conflict and bring about peace in the area.

#### **4.12.9 Effectiveness of the intervention**

Although both traditional and modern methods were used to resolve the conflict and bring peace in the area the intervention made so far seems futile. The responses of the majority questionnaire respondents 48(64%) indicated that the interventions that were taken by the regional government and elders were not yet effective in bringing peace and changing the insecurity problem in the area. On the other hand, some respondents 6 (8%) responded that there was no viable measure taken by the government. The respondents further stated that the regional government has not

given sufficient attention to the problem and 19 (27%) didn't provide any response. The group indicated that the regional government wants to conceal the crisis from the eyes of the Federal government.

**Table 4.12.9.1 Effectiveness of the intervention**

Responses	Argoba		Afar		Amhara		%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
The interventions didn't bring long lasting solution	11	10	9	8	7	3	64
There is no measure taken by the government	2	-			2	2	8
No response	3	2	2	4	3	7	28
Total =	16	12	11	12	12	12	100

On the other hand, the responses from some of the focus group participants indicated that the interventions taken so far were following the suit of fire brigade approach and hence, have short-term impact and did not use long-term strategies to wipe out the prevalent tension once and for all.

Moreover, during the discussion some of the participants expressed their doubt on the commitment of the regional government to look for sustainable solution to the problem at all.

Similarly, in order to investigate the involvement of the Federal and Regional governments to solve the problem respondents were asked. The responses from most of the survey respondents 46 (61%) indicated that the regional government has been actively involved in managing the conflict through organizing peace conferences in Dulecha and Argoba *woredawoch*. However, significant number of respondents 29 (39%) indicated that the Federal government has not yet shown any involvement on the issue, and this has grieved the participants from the Argoba and the neighboring Amhara *woredawoch* (Aliyuamba)

From the responses we summarize that the interventions taken so far to solve the conflict between the two ethnic groups and bring sustainable peace in the area was not fruitful.

**Table 4.12.10 Involvement of the government**

Responses	Response						%
	Argoba		Afar		Amhara		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
The regional government organized peace conferences	5	2	6	3	4	2	29
Still there is no involvement from the federal government	6	5	3	7	5	3	39
Involving elders to mediate the groups	3	4	2	2	2	4	23
All of the above	2	1	-	-	1	3	9

The responses obtained from the focus group participants also revealed the involvement of the local communities in the peace process. According to the responses the communities in the area actively participated in the peace conferences organized by the regional government, the communities also involved elders and traditional leaders from both sides to mediate the two ethnic groups. Moreover, the community members and local leaders have agreed to bring the lawbreakers or offenders to justice. Accordingly, both local leaders have handed over some offenders to the regional government to be judged by the law. From the above responses we can generalize that the interventions taken so far were not effective to change the security situation in the area.

#### **4.12.11 Measures to be taken to manage the conflict and solve the problem according to the participants of the study**

The survey respondents also provided their responses on the measures to be taken to deal problems related with the conflict and bring about sustainable peace in the area. Accordingly, 33(44%) of the respondents agreed that both ethnic groups must

hand over offenders from both sides to the government to restore peace in the area. Some of the respondents from the Argoba *woreda* further stated that the local government in Dulecha *woreda* has to exert effort to bring the offenders to the law. Respondents stated that the local government of Dulecha has to exercise good governance in the area so as to deal with the problem. These informants indicated that the local government in the special *woreda* has already handed over most of the offenders to the government. The respondents also indicated that if an offender from the Argoba side leaves the area after committing crime the local government of the Argoba *woreda* goes to the extent of arresting his family to get the offender back. Similarly, the other respondents 18 (23%) felt that up to now the federal government didn't give sufficient emphasis to the problem and they suggested that the government has to give special attention to the problem if the security situation of the area is to be changed.

The responses obtained from the majority of the Amhara respondents 21 (28%) revealed that disarming the armed groups from both sides especially from the Afar side and organizing an ongoing awareness raising education program especially for the Afar ethnic group about the harmful effect of killing people would contribute a lot to manage the conflict and bring peace in the area.

**Table 4.12.11.1 Measures to be taken to manage the conflict and solve the problem**

Responses	Argoba		Afar		Amhara		%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Both ethnic groups must hand over offenders to the government	9	8	8	8			44
The federal government has to give special attention to the problem	7	4	3	4			23
Interference of the federal government through assigning federal police forces	-				1	2	4
Disarming armed groups from both sides especially the Afars					6	6	16
Awareness raising education must be given to the Afar					5	4	12

From the responses of the respondents, we conclude that on-going awareness raising education program has to be provided to the two ethnic groups to stop the conflict. Above all, the local government of Dulecha has to exert a lot of effort to handover offenders to the government. In addition, the Federal government has to give special emphasis to the problem.

#### **4.12.12 Opinions of the respondents on the peace in the area before and after the new arrangement**

The other response given by the respondents is the peace in the area before and after the new arrangement. The majority of the interviewees and focus group respondents indicated that the security problem in the area has been aggravated after the new arrangement due to the conflict between the Afar and the Argoba groups. Similarly, some the interviewee and focus group participants also pointed out that two years back the security situation in the area was better than what has been seen today.

Therefore, from the responses of the group we can learn that presently there is a security problem between the Argoba and the afar-ethnic groups. Although the problem is not new, it was aggravated in the past two years.

In contrast to the responses given by the above cited respondents few of the interviewees and the focus group participants revealed that the security problem has been improved after the new arrangement, though the peace in the area deteriorated in the past two years.

From the above responses, we learn that the conflict between the Afar and Argoba has a long history. But the problem has been aggravated in the past two years. Currently the two groups do not move freely outside of their territories due to the fear of revenge that might be taken against them.

#### 4.12.14 Areas where the conflict usually takes place

“Environmental degradation, which has always been the result of violence and war and an instrument put to their use, has recently become itself a source of violence in all Horn countries”(Medhane,2001:185).

Likewise, the questionnaire respondents indicated the areas where the conflict often takes place. The responses obtained from the entire Argoba group 28 (37%) showed that the conflict between the two groups has taken place in the villages that belong to the Argoba special *woreda*, like Metekleya, Wondoager, Libargi and Belanto. The response from the group indicated that compared to other kebeles these kebeles have better pastures and water resources. The Argoba group further stated that they were the Afar who usually takes the initiation in the special *woreda* to pressure the Argoba. And the Afar whose families were killed so far by the Argoba are the ones who often come to Argoba *woreda* to attack the latter in their own territory. The respondent explained that all the conflict which took place between the two groups were in their own *woreda* or territories.

Furthermore, most of the respondents 23 (31%) from the Afar and Amhara groups elaborated that the areas where the conflict usually takes place is in the Argoba *woreda*. These are Gerbuafer, Burteli, Metekleya and Debreko Cheno and Chifa. According to the response compared to other rural areas these areas have good pasture and water sources and this could be the reason for the conflict to take place in these places.

**Table 4.12.14 .1 Areas where the conflict usually takes place**

Responses	Argoba		Afar		Amhara		%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
In Argoba District Metekleya, Wondoager, Libargi and Belanto	16	12					37
In Argoba District gerbuafer and Burteli, Metekleya and Debolko			6	5	7	5	31
No response			2	4	3	4	17
We don't know			3	3	2	3	15

The above responses can show that the conflict in the area has obliged some settlers to leave their residence and farmlands. As stated in the above discussion, this made the agricultural yield in the *woreda* to be reduced. Moreover, unless the people retreated from their settlement come across other opportunities to lead their life, they will definitely be forced to be dependent on others, and this would increase the number of unemployment in the *woreda*, and aggravates the ongoing vulnerability of the community as well.

## CHAPTER V

### Summary and conclusion

#### 5.1 Summary

The Argoba special *woreda* was established to grant the freedom of the Argoba ethnic group to administer their localities. The establishment of the new special *woreda* has resulted in the construction of new residence houses, government buildings, and social services, like health, education, and pure water supply. The construction of schools in the *woreda* has enabled children to get educational opportunities.

Like other places in the country, there is a scarcity of resources like pasture and water in the target area. The primary reasons according to the opinions of the respondents for the scarcity of land and pasture are high population growth, drought and problem of insecurity. Participants pointed out that the current conflict between the Afar and the Argoba has forced some Argoba ethnic groups to leave their farmland.

Different measures have been taken by ethnic groups in the area to overcome the shortage of agricultural land and water. Most of the Amhara in the neighboring *kebeles* of the Ankober *woreda* (Aliyuamba) go to Argoba special *woreda* to rent agricultural land from the Argoba on contractual basis. In very rare cases a handful of the Amhara group tend to use force to cultivate the land which belongs to the Argoba; and the Afar in Dulecha *woreda* during the drought season take their cattle to Argoba and other *woreda* in search of pasture and water.

The responses of the Argoba towards the intruders were different. The Argoba used both peaceful and violent measures against the intruders who cross their territory in search of land and pasture.

According to the perceptions of the majority respondents on the frequency of intrusion the Afars occasionally comes to the *woreda* during droughts season to look for pasture and water for their animals.

Concerning the impact of the new arrangement whether it transformed the livelihood of the communities in the special *woreda*, the responses have revealed that the new arrangement has resulted in the generation of employment opportunities for some people in the special *woreda*. And the maintenance of the road that links the special *woreda* with the neighbors has facilitated the trade exchange in the area.

The new arrangement has also helped the people in the special *woreda* to engage in petty trade activities, like construction of rental houses for government employees. And to some extent this has improved their livelihood. Moreover, the new arrangement has helped poor women to get credit from the government to engage in income generating activities.

The participants pointed out that the present political relationship between the Argoba special *woreda* and the Amhara is found to be good and encouraging. However, the political relationships between the two local governments (the Argoba and Dulecha *woredawoch*) have shown some unsteadiness due to the recent conflict that erupted between the two ethnic groups.

The current conflict, which has a long history, has caused serious problems in the area. These are death of people who are economically active, and the abandonment of people from their residence or settlements. Above all, the participants depicted that the conflict in the area has resulted in political insecurity especially in the special *woreda*. Both traditional and modern methods were used to manage the conflict. However, the interventions taken so far were not effective in bringing about sustainable peace in the area.

Participants also discussed the measures to be taken to surmount the crisis and bring about sustainable peace in the area. The participants agreed that both ethnic groups must hand over offenders from both sides to the government to restore peace

in the area. Moreover, organizing an ongoing awareness raising education program for the ethnic groups involved in the conflict about the harmful effect of killing people would contribute a lot to manage the conflict and bring sustainable peace in the area. The groups also suggested that the federal government has to give special attention to the problem if the security situation of the area is to be changed. According to the responses of the participants the areas where the conflicts often take place are Metekleya, Wondoager, Libargi and Belanto from the special *woreda*.

## 5.2 Conclusion

After the overthrow of the military government, Ethiopia has experienced federal government administration system, and with the new arrangement, ethnic groups have started to administer their regions, promote their cultures, and initiate local development.

The Argoba ethnic group who presently are living in the Afar State has also enjoyed from the new arrangement by establishing their own special *woreda*. The new arrangement has enabled the ethnic group to administer their locality.

The establishment of the special *woreda* has caused the development of some infrastructures in the *woreda* and creation of off-farm activities for some selected community members.

However, the new federal arrangement has worsened the already existing ethnic tensions between the Afar and Argoba. This is because the Afar has the feeling that other ethnic group takes their territory away and the Argoba also have a feeling of insecurity due to the intruders coming both from the Amhara who come in search of agricultural land and the Afar, who occasionally come to look for pasture. This has necessitated some Argoba ethnic groups to buy small arms in the future to defend themselves and their territory. The conflict between the Afar and Argoba groups has consumed the life of people and caused political insecurity in the area.

The effort made so far to mediate the two ethnic groups and bring sustainable peace was not fruitful.

Therefore, the local and regional governments have to stop the current practice of the fire brigade approach, which has a short-term impact, and look for sustainable solution to the problem. Above all, the federal government has to seriously consider the issue and search alternatives to resolve the conflict and bring sustainable peace in the area and mutual trust between the two ethnic groups.

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## Questionnaire for community members

### I. Background of informants

a) Age \_\_\_\_\_ b) Sex \_\_\_\_\_ c) Marital Status \_\_\_\_\_  
d) Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_ e) Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ f) Educational  
level \_\_\_\_\_ g) Ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_ h) residence \_\_\_\_\_

### II. The Argoba

2.1 Do you know the origin of the Argoba a) yes b) no

2.2 If yes where is their  
origin \_\_\_\_\_ ?

2.3 When did the Argoba start to settle in their present  
area \_\_\_\_\_  
\_?

2.4 Who are the neighbors of the  
Argoba \_\_\_\_\_  
\_?

2.5 When does the Argoba special woreda  
established \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2.6 Why does the special woreda  
established \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2.7 Who initiated the establishment of the special  
woreda \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_?

### III. Economic relation of the Argoba and their neighbor

3.1 What is the economic basis of the

Argoba \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_?

3.2 What is the economic basis of the people neighboring the Argoba( The Amhara, Afar, Oromo, etc) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3.3 What is the basis of the economic relationship between the Argoba and their neighbors \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3.4 Is there scarcity of land and water resource in the Argoba woreda and their neighbors ?

3.5 If yes what are the causes \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3.6 Do the Argoba and their neighbors have trade relationship?

3.7 If yes which products are exchanged by the Argoba and their neighbors?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3.8 Where does the trade exchange takes place \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3.9 What is the impact of the trade relationship on the life of the people \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_?

3.10 Do the Argoba go and work in the neighboring woredas \_\_\_\_\_

3.11 If yes which  
group \_\_\_\_\_

3.12 What is the impact of the new arrangement on the life of the people?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **VI. Social relationship**

4.1 What is the religion of the Argoba and their neighbors \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_?

4.2 Do you know the types of marriage among the Argoba and their neighbors a) yes  
b) no

4.2 If yes Which type of marriage is common to the Argoba and their neighbors \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4.3 Do the Argoba marry to other ethnic group?

4.4 If yes which ethnic  
group \_\_\_\_\_

4.5 Do you know the social structure of the Argoba? \_\_\_\_\_ if no skip to question

4.6

4.6 If yes what is the basis of the structure\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4.7 Do the Argoba have traditional leaders ? \_\_\_\_\_

4.8 If yes who are the leaders\_\_\_\_\_

4.9 What is their roles\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_?

5.0 Do the Argoba and their neighbors share common cultural values\_\_\_\_\_?

5.1 If yes which values are common\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_?

5.2 Which social interaction are common between the Argoba and their neighbors?\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5.3 How do you see the social relationship between the Argoba and their neighbors in historical perspective?\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5.4 How about the current social relationship between the Argoba and their neighbors\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5.5 what are the views of the neighbors towards the Argoba?\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## VII. Political Relationship

6.1 How do you see the political relationship between the Argoba and their neighbors before the establishment of the special woreda?\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6.2 How do you see the political relationship after the establishment of the special woreda\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_?

6.3 How do you see the commitment of the regional and local leaders to bring good governance in the area\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_?

6.4 How do you see the relationship between the local and regional government before and after the establishment of Argoba special woreda?

\_\_\_\_\_

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6.5 What is the impact of the new arrangement in bringing good governance in the area? \_\_\_\_\_

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6.6 Has the change in the political Administration brought a change in the political relationship between the Argoba and their neighbors? \_\_\_\_\_

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6.7 Is there a joint consultation meeting between the political leaders of the Argoba and their neighbors? \_\_\_\_\_

6.8 If yes how often \_\_\_\_\_

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6.9 Are there instance of antagonism between the Argoba and their neighbors? \_\_\_\_\_ a) yes      b) no

7 If yes what are the causes \_\_\_\_\_

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7.1 What are the manifestations of the antagonism \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_?

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7.2 Which groups are often involved in the antagonistic relationship (conflict)

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7.3 when did the conflict started

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7.4 What are the impacts of the conflict

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7.5 So far Which methods were used to resolve and manage the conflict

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What is the involvement of the regional and federal government to resolve the conflict in the area

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7.6 Other than the regional and federal governments which groups are usually involved in conflict management in the

area \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7.7 What is the role of the group in conflict  
management \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_?

7.8 How effective the interventions are to bring sustainable peace in the  
area \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7.9 How do you see the peace in the area before and after the establishment of the  
Argoba special  
woreda \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. What impact has been achieved so far with regard to the relationship between the  
Argoba and their neighbor after the new federal  
arrangement \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_?

8.1 How do you see the relationship between the local government and the regional  
government \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_?

8.2 How do you see the relationship between the local government and the people in  
Argoba special  
woreda \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_?

8.3 What is the involvement of the local and regional government to bring peace and good governance in the area \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_?

8.4 In your opinion what should be done to promote the relationship between the Argoba and their neighbors in the future \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

## Checklists for focus group discussion with Community members

### I. Background of the Informants

- a) Age group\_\_\_\_\_ b) Sex\_\_\_\_\_
- c) Ethnic compositions\_\_\_\_\_
- d) Educational categories\_\_\_\_\_
- e) Place of birth\_\_\_\_\_
- f) Occupation\_\_\_\_\_

### II. The Argoba

- 2.1 Where is the origin of the Argoba?
- 2.2 When did the Argoba start to settle in the area?
- 2.3 What are the views of the neighbors of Argoba (Amhara, Afar and Oromo) towards the Argoba?
- 2.4 When does the Argoba special woreda established?
- 2.5 Why does the special woreda established?
- 2.6 What achievements were made after the establishment of the special?  
Woreda (economically, socially and politically)

### III Economic relationship

- 3.1 What is the economic basis of the Argoba and their neighbor?
- 3.2 What is the economic relationship between the Argoba and their neighbors before and and after the new arrangement
- 3.3 Do the Argoba go and work in the neighboring woreda
- 3.4 If yes which group
- 3.5 Is there scarcity of land and water resource in the Argoba woreda and their Neighbors?
- 3.6 If yes what are the causes
- 3.7 Do the Argoba and their neighbors have trade relationship?
- 3.8 If yes which products are exchanged by the Argoba and their neighbors?
- 3.9 What is the impact of the new arrangement in the economic life of the people?

#### **IV Social relationship**

- 4.1 What is the religion of the Argoba and their neighbors
  - 4.2 Which type of marriage is common between the Argoba and their neighbors?
  - 4.3 Do the Argoba have marriage relationship with their neighbors? If yes with which Ethnic groups
  - 4.4 What is the social structure of the Argoba?
  - 4.5 Do the Argoba and their neighbors share common cultural values?
  - 4.6 If yes which cultural values?
  - 4.7 Which form of social interaction is common between the Argoba and their neighbors?
  - 4.8 How do you see the social relationship between the Argoba and their neighbors in a Historical perspective?
  - 4.9 How do you see the current social relationship between the Argoba and their Neighbors?
5. What is the impact of the new arrangement on the social life of the people?

#### **V Political relationship**

- 5.1 How do you see the historical political relationship between the Argoba and their neighbors?
- 5.2 What is the current political relationship?
- 5.3 What is the effort of the local and regional governments to change the current status of the woreda?
- 5.4 What steps were taken to promote good governance in the area?
- 5.5 Are there instances of antagonism in the area?
- 5.5 If yes between which groups
- 5.5 What are the manifestations of the antagonism in the area?
- 5.6 Which methods are used to manage conflict in the area?
- 5.7 How effective they are
- 5.8 Which groups often involved in the conflict management?

5.8 How do you see the peace in the area before and after the establishment of the special woreda?

6.0 How do you see the relation between the local government and the people?

6.1 In your opinion what measures should be taken to promote the relationship between the Argoba and their neighbors

6.2 How do you see the relationship between the local and regional government before and after the new arrangement

6.3 What is the impact of the new arrangement in bringing good governance in the area?

6.4 Has the new arrangement caused a change in the political relationship between the Argoba and their neighbors?

6.5 What impacts (Socially, economically and politically) were achieved in the woredas after the establishment of the new special woreda.

# ANNEX 1

## Annex 2- Background and responses of focus group participants

### 2.1 Characteristics of focus group participants

Table 2.1.1 Age and sex distribution of respondents

Age category	M	F	Total
15-24	3	3	6
25-34	10	14	24
35-44	12	10	22
45+	11	8	19
Total	36	35	71

Table 2.1.2 Marital status of respondents

Marital status	Number
Single	5
Married	60
Divorced	5
Total=	71

Table 2.1.3 Place of birth of respondents

Place of birth	Total
Aliyuamba (Amhara)	20
Gacheni (Argoba special District)	25
Dulecha	22
Awash (Afar)	4
Total	71

Table 2.1.4 Occupation of respondents

Occupation	Total
Government officials	4
Civil servants	12
Peasants	16
Pastoralists	18
Self-employed	14

Unemployed	7
Total=	71

Table 2. 1.5 Educational status

Education	M	F	Total
Reading and writing	9	11	27
6-10	8	10	32
11-12	7	6	7
12+1	3		3
Diploma	3		2
No response	6	8	
Total	36	35	71

Table 2.1.6 Ethnic background and residence of respondents

Ethnicity	Residence	M	F	Total
Argoba	Argoba special District and Semera	12	12	24
Afar	Dulecha District and Semera	11	11	23
Amhara	Aliyuamba (Ankober District)	12	12	24
Others		-		-
Total=		36	35	71

Table 2.1.7 Duration in the study area

Years	M	F	Total
1-10	2	2	4
11-20	16	15	31
21-30	5	8	13
30+	11	9	20
No response	2	1	3
Total=	36	35	71

Table 2.1.8 History of settlement

Responses	Responses by		
	Men groups	Women groups	Total
No response	4	8	12
I don't know	13	4	17
During Haileselesie II	10	6	16

7-8th Century	5	10	15
During the introduction of Muslim religion to Ethiopia	4	5	9
Their original place is the present special District	-	2	2
Total=	36	35	71

Table 2.1.9 establishing a special District

Responses	Responses by		
	Men groups	Women groups	Total
To establish good governance in the area	1	-	1
To reduce the violation of rights of the Argoba ethnic group	6	-	6
To exercise the right granted for ethnic groups in the constitution of the FDRE	16	12	28
To develop the area and grant the right of the ethnic group in the constitution		7	7
To promote the relationship between the ethnic groups in the study area	8	4	12
No response	5	12	17
Total=	36	35	71

### 3. Economic relationships

Table 3.1 Economic bases of the Argoba and their neighbours

Ethnic group	Economic base
Argoba	Agriculture and trade
Amhara	Mixed farming and trade
Afar	Animal husbandry and farming
All of the Above	71 (100%)
Total=	71(100%)

Table 3.3 Availability of land and water resources in the area

There is shortage of land and water resources in some parts of the Argoba special District (Gacheni)
There is serious shortage of agricultural land in the neighbouring Amhara District (Ankober)
There is shortage of water and pasture in Dulecha District
All of the above 71(100%)

Table 3.4 Reason for scarcity of/shortage of resources (Water and land)

Reasons
High Population growth
Drought
Conflict between the Afar and the Argoba forced settlers in Argoba special District to leave their farm land
All of the above 71(100%)

Table 3.5 Alternatives taken to deal with the shortage of agricultural land and water by ethnic groups in the area

The Amhara rent agricultural land from the Argoba
The Afar during the drought season take their cattle to Argoba and other Districts in search of pasture and water
All of the above 71(100%)

Table 3.6 Opinion of focus group participants on the Response by the Argoba towards the intruders

Responses	Response by		
	Men groups	Women groups	Total
Armed resistance	9	2	11
Tolerance/peaceful response	7	15	22
Taking/withholding the animals	5	-	5
Depends on the approach	11	8	19
Good	1	3	3
No response	3	7	10

Total	36	35	71
-------	----	----	----

Table 3.7 Views of focus group participants on the frequency of intrusion on other territories

Frequency	Men groups	Women groups	Total
Very frequently	3	-	3
Frequently	6	7	13
Occasionally	20	17	37
No response	7	11	18
Total	36	35	71

Table .3.8 Opinions of focus group participants on the trade relationship between the Argoba and their neighbours

The Argoba sell agricultural products and weaving products to the Afar and Amhara
The Afar sell goats, sheep and animal products for their neighbours
The Amhara also sell agricultural products to their neighbours
All of the above 71(100%)

Table 3.9 Opinion of focus group participants on the impact of the new arrangement on the trade relationship between the Argoba and their neighbours

Responses	Men groups	Women groups	Total
The maintenance of the road has facilitated the trade exchange between the groups	10	6	16
Nothing	8	6	14
The change is not significant		7	7
It has enabled some of the people in the District to engage in off-farm activities	11	13	24
No response	7	3	10
Total	36	35	71

Table 3.10 Views of focus group participant's Common types of marriage in the Argoba special District and their neighbours

'Absuma' is common among the Afars
------------------------------------

The Argoba marry both from their ethnic groups and outside their ethnic groups
The Amhara practice traditional marriage based on the Orthodox tradition
All of the above 71(100%)
Total= 71(100%)

#### 4. Shared values, mutual perceptions, conflict of interest

Table 4.1 Cultural values common to the Argoba and their neighbour according to the opinion of the focus group participants

The morning and weeding ceremonies of the Afar and Argoba are similar
The practice of blood price among the Afar and the Argoba are also similar
Trust
Dispute mediation
All of the above 71(100%)
Total= 71(100%)

Table 4.2 Opinions of the focus group participants on the historical social relationship between the Argoba and their neighbours

Responses	Responses		Total
	Men groups	Women groups	
It was on good terms	18	15	33
Was week during the Emperor and the Dergue	4	1	5
The Argoba used to teach Muslim religion to the Afar	4	1	5
There was a problem between Argoba and the Amhara	.	6	6
No response	3	2	5
Don't know	7	10	17
Total	36	35	71

Table 4.3 Views of focus group participants on the current social relationship between the Argoba and their neighbours

Responses	Responses by		
	Men groups	Women groups	Total
The relationships the Argoba have with the Afar has got problem and occasionally it leads to conflict	20	12	32
Is good with both the Afar and the	6	7	13

Amhara			
Don't know	8	9	17
No response	2	7	9
Total=	36	35	71

Table 4.4 Perception of the neighbours towards the Argoba

Response	Responses by		Total
	Men groups	Women groups	
Presently some of the Afar in Dulecha have got a negative feeling towards the Argoba	7	9	16
Both the Amhara and the Afar have positive feeling towards the Argoba	12	8	20
In the early period the Argoba were not treated properly but now they are recognized like other ethnic groups	10	7	17
Don't know	2	4	6
No response	2	5	7
Don't know	3	2	5
Total	36	35	71

Table 4.5 Reason for the negative views towards the Argoba by the Afar according to the opinion of the focus group participants

Responses
Due to the feeling that the whole region belongs to the Afar
Due to the rights exercised by the Argoba ethnic group by the new arrangement
Due to the conflict between the Afar and Argoba
All of the above 16(100%)
Total=16(100%)

#### 4.6 The political relationships

Table 4.6.1 Political relationships before the new arrangement

Responses	Responses by		
	Men groups	Women groups	Total
The relationship was good and peaceful	14	11	25
The Argoba ethnic group had no political participation	8	-	8

Both the Afar and the Amhara had interest to rule the Argoba		2	2
The relationship was not good	9	3	12
The same as today	1	-	1
No response	2	9	11
Don't know	2	10	12
Total	36	35	71

Table 4.6.2 The political relationship after the new arrangement according to the opinions of the participants

Responses	Responses		
	Male groups	Women groups	Total
The political relation the Argoba currently have with their neighbours is very good	15	11	26
The current relationship with the Afar is good but not satisfactory with the Amhara	4	-	4
The political relationship with the neighbouring District is improving	10	5	15
No response	3	10	13
Don't know	4	9	13
	36	35	71

Table 4.6.3 Instances of Antagonism between the Argoba and their neighbours according to the opinion of the focus group participants

Responses	Responses		
	Male groups	Women groups	Total
Yes there are instances of antagonism in the area	24	15	39
There is no antagonistic relationship in the area	5	3	8
No response	5	9	14
Don't know	2	8	10
Total	36	35	71

Table 4.6.4 Ethnic groups often involved in antagonistic relationship according to the opinions of the key informants

Responses	Responses		
	Male groups	Women groups	Total
Between the Afar and the Argoba	23	19	42
Between the Argoba and the Amhara	5	3	8
Don't know	8	13	21
Total	36	35	71

Table 4.6.5 Views of focus group participants on the causes of the conflict

Response	Responses		
	Male groups	Women groups	Total
Shortage of pasture and the revenge culture practiced in the area	19	9	28
The cultural practices which promotes the killing of one group by the other	8	9	17
Shortage of pasture and water	2	1	3
Disagreement on the use of pasture, revenge and backward tradition	3	7	10
No response	2	9	11
Theft	2	-	2
Total	36	35	71

Table 4.6.6 Manifestations of the Antagonistic relations in the area according to the key informants

Responses	Responses by		
	Men groups	Women groups	Total
The Killing of people both from the Argoba and Afar ethnic groups	24	20	44
Looting of cattle	6	4	10
Conflict	1	-	1
No response	5	11	16
Total	36	35	71

Table 4.6.7 Opinion of participants on the impact of the conflict

Responses	Men groups	Women groups	Total
It has caused the death of people who are in the labour force and insecurity in the area	15	12	27
It has forced some Argoba settlers to evacuate from their agricultural land and settlements	9	13	22
Hatred between the Argoba and the Afar	2	1	3
Death, famine and displacement of the Argoba people	-	-	-
It has created suspicion between the ethnic groups	6	4	10
No response	2	3	5
Don't know	3	2	5
Total	36	35	71

Table 4.6.8 Opinions of participants on the measures taken to manage the conflict

Responses	Men groups	Women groups	Total
Both traditional and modern methods were used to manage the conflict	21	10	31
Bringing offenders before the law	8	10	18
No measures has been taken	1	6	7
No response	-	4	4
Don't know	6	5	11
Total	36	35	71

Table 4.6.9 Views of participants on the degree of involvement of the Federal and regional governments to manage the conflict

Response	Men groups	Women groups	Total
The regional government has involved to manage the conflict through organizing conferences. However, there is no yet any involvement from the federal government	18	14	32

No attention has been given by the regional and the federal government to the problem	7	6	13
The involvement of both the federal and regional government is good	5	7	12
No response	2	4	6
Don't know	4	4	8
Total=	36	35	71

Table 4.7 Opinions of participants on the involvement of the communities

Responses	Men groups	Women groups	Total
The communities were actively involved in the peace conferences	11	10	20
The communities used local elders and tribal leaders for mediation	9	14	23
Offenders were brought before the law	6	6	12
No response	9	5	14
Total	36	35	71

Table 4.7.1 Effectiveness of the interventions made so far to bring sustainable peace in the area

Response	Men groups	Women groups	Total
The interventions made so far were not effective in bringing sustainable peace in the area	20	16	36
The approaches used so far were fire brigade approaches	9	11	20
No response	7	8	15
Total	36	35	71

Table 4.7.2 Views of respondents about the peace in the area before and after the new arrangement

Response	Men groups	Women groups	Total
The problem has slightly improved after the new arrangement, but it has been aggravated in the past two years	16	11	27
The problem has been aggravated after the new arrangement	6	8	14
The problem has not been changed	6	4	10
The problem is not consistent	3	8	11
No response	5	4	9
Total=	36	35	71

## 5. Prospect of Conflict Transformation

Table 5.1 Opinions of the participants about the measures to be taken to improve the peace in the area and bring sustainable peace in the area according to respondents

Response	Men groups	Women groups	Total
Raising the awareness of the two ethnic groups	11	4	15
Establishing infrastructure in the two areas, and assisting the nomad Afar to settle will contribute to solve the problem	2	-	2
Involving the federal government in the issue	10	15	25
Bringing the offenders before the law and strengthening the justice system in the area	7	10	17
No response	5	5	10
Don't know	1	1	2
Total=	36	35	71

Table 5.2 Opinions of focus group participants on the impacts of the new arrangement (the establishment of the Argoba special District) on the development of the District

Response	Men groups	Women groups	Total
After the new arrangement some infrastructures and social services have been established. Moreover, the Argoba ethnic group have started to Administer their area and their affairs	20	24	44
The security of the area has been improved	3	-	3
No change has been recorded	5	6	11
No response	8	5	13
Total=	36	35	71

Table 5.3 Major problems in the special District according to the focus group participants

Response	Men groups	Women groups	Total
Shortage of services like road, pure water supply, health and others	12	9	21
Drought	1	4	5
Political insecurity	9	12	21
No problem	7	3	10
Don't know	8	7	15
Total=	36	35	71

## Interview guide

1. Perception of the neighboring communities towards the Argoba
2. Initiation for the establishment of the special woreda
3. Achievement after the establishment of the special woreda
4. Economic relationships of the Argoba with their neighbors
5. Availability of land in the study area
6. Alternative taken by the neighboring communities to deal shortage of resources
7. Response of the Argoba towards the intruders
8. Community perception on livelihood change
9. Social relationships between the Argoba and their neighbors
10. Impact of the new arrangement on the social life of the people
11. Political relationships of the Argoba with their neighbors
12. Instances of antagonism in the study area
13. Causes and impact of the conflict
14. Interventions taken to resolve the conflict
15. Effectiveness of the intervention
16. Measures taken to resolve the conflict and areas the conflicts have taken place

List of Questionnaires respondents  
Argoba woreda

1. Ato Asar Abdulahi, Afar, Civil servant
2. Ato Zeinu Abdella Civil Servant, Gacheni Town
3. Ato Jemal Mohammed Argoba woreda
4. A to Ahmed Mohammed Team Leader of Policy study, Argoba Woreda
5. Ato Anwar Ahmed Planning and Programming Expert, Argoba Woreda
6. W/o Zulfa Ahmed Merchant, Gacheni Woreda
7. Ato Derso Haji Pastorlaist, Gacheni woreda
8. Ato Abdurahman Ahmed Peasant, Gacheni woreda
9. Ato Nasir Jemal Peasant, Metekleya kebele
10. Ato Ali Hussien Peasant, Cheno Kebele
11. Ato Bedru Hassen Peasant, Cheno Kebele
12. W/o Zeinneba Ali Peasant, Lower Metekleya
13. W/t Fatuma Jemal Peasant, Goze Kebele
14. W/o Fozia Mohammed Peasant, Deborko Kebele
15. W/t Bedriya Idris Peasant, Bilu Kebele
16. W/t Nesra Bedru Peasant , Bilu Kebele
17. W/t Zulfa Idris Peasant, Lower Metekleya Kebele
18. Ato Abduljebar Umer Pastoralist, Chekoamba Kebele
19. W/t Selefia Ahmed Pastoralist, Goze Kebele
20. W/o Jemila Ali Self-employed Gacheni
21. W/t Zehara Mohammed Self-employed, Gacheni
22. W/t Aysha Hussien Self-employed, Gacheni
23. Ato Abdulaziz Mohammed Self-employed Gacheni
24. Ato Hussien Ali Other, Gacheni
25. Ato Mohammed Abdurahman Other, Gacheni

26. Ato Ahmed Yassin	Other, Gacheni
27 Ato Nuru Hassen	Other, Gacheni
28 W/o Ayisha Nuru	Other, Gacheni

### List of questionnaire respondents from Afar

1. Ato Ibrahim Ahmed	Civil servant
2. Ato Hassen Jamal	Civil servant
3. Ato Ali Mahe	Civil servant, Dulecha woreda
4. Ato Mustefa Ali	Pastoralist, Dulecha woreda
5. Ato Seleiman Ali	Pastoralist, Dulecha woreda
6. Ato Mohammed Ismail	Pastoralist, Dulecha woreda
7. Ato Mohammed Mahe	Civil servant, Dulecha woreda
8. Ato Hussien Ali	Civil servant, Semera
9. Ato Elias Tukie	Head of Capacity Building Bureau
10. Ato Ali mahe	Pastoralist
11. Ato Abdu Alo	Pastoralist
12. Ato Jamal Hassen	Pastoralist
13. W/o Fatuma Abdurahman	Pastoralist
14. W/o Aysha Mohamed	Pastoralist
15. W/o Meiru Hassen	Pastoralist
16. W/o Ahadi dota	Pastoralist
17. W/o Ahadi Gebabo	Pastoralist
18. W/o Jemila Ali	Peasant
19. W/o Zeineba Jamal	Peasant
20. W/t Fatuma Hassen	Other
21. W/t Fatuma Jamal	Other
22. W/o Aysha Ali	Other
23. W/o Merima A/kadir	Other

## List of questionnaire respondents from Amhara

1. Ato Nega Nigusu	Civil-servant, Ankober Woreda
2. Ato Abebayehu Nigatu	Self-employed, Ankober woreda
3. W/o Abay Tesfaye	Civil servant, Ankober woreda
4. Ato Desta Niguse	Self-employed, Ankober woreda
5. Ato Mulatu Nega	Peasant, Ankober woreda
6. Ato Endalkachew Lema	Civil servant, Aliyamba kebele
7. Ato Tarekegn Ejigu	Peasant, Aliyuamba
8. W/t Zenebech Nega	Civil servant
9. W/o Banchi Getu	Civil servant
10. W/o Assefash Lema	Civil servant
11. W/o Gete Getahun	peasant, Aliyuamba
12. Ato Lema Kebede	peasant, Wedera Kebele
13. W/o Assefu Nigussie	peasant Aliyuamba
14. W/t Zuriash Assefa	peasant, Aliyuamba
15. Ato Bekele Alemu	peasant, Seberdin Kebele
16. Ato Getu Lema	peasant, Zoma Kebele
17. W/o Almaz Abebe	peasant, Aliyuamba
18. Ato Almaw Ejigu	peasant, Aliyuamba
19. W/o Hirut Belachew	peasant, Aliyuamba
20. W/o Lemlem Kebede	Peasant, Aliyuamba
21. Ato Assefa Nigussie	Peasant, Zoma Kebele
22. W/t Zuriash Assefa	Peasant, Aliyuamba
23. Ato Bekele Alemu	Peasant, Wedera Kebele
24. W/t Gete Lema	Peasant, Seberdin Kebele

## List of focus group participants Argoba woreda

1. Mohammed Abubaker, Metekleya kebele chairperson
2. Mr. Ahmed Kemal, Vice chair of Bilu, Kebele
3. Mrs. Zeineba Ali, Civil servant
4. Mrs. Zubeida Yussuf, Civil servant, Gacheni
5. Mr. Abdi Yussuf, Civil servant
6. Mrs. Halima Ayub, Civil servant
7. Mr. Kemal Hassen, Peasant, Lower metekleya kebele
8. Mr. Ahmed Mohamud, Peasant, Lower metekleya kebele
9. Mrs. Zulfa Ali, Peasant, Uper Metekleya Kebele
10. Mrs. Assna Mohamed, Peasant
11. Mrs. Kassech Amare, Peasant
12. Mr. Abdurahman Habib, peasant
13. Mr. Usman Abdella, Peasant,
14. Mrs. Halima Jemal, Self-employed Gacheni Town
15. Mrs. Fatuma Kedir, Self employed, Gacheni town
16. Mrs. Fatuma Abdi, Self-employed
17. Mr. Jemal Mohammed
18. Mr. Hussien Kedir, Pastoralist
19. Mr. Yahya Jemal, Self employed, Gacheni town
20. Mrs. Bedriya Hussien
21. Mrs. Aysha Abdurahman, Self-employed
22. Mrs. Aysha Abdijebbar, Self-employed
23. Mr. Abdi Mohammed, Pastoralist
24. Mr. Abubakar, Mohammed, peasant

## Dulecha woreda

1. Mr. Ismail Kedir, Chairperson of Kebele
2. Mr. Amare Alemu, Civil servant, Dulecha Town
3. Mr. Behayilu Yimer, Civil servant, Dulecha Town
4. Mrs. Almaz Kebede, Civil servant, Dulecha Town
5. Mrs. Halima Tukie, Civil servant, Dulecha Town
6. Mr. Sukuna Kedir, Pastoralist, Dulecha town
7. Mr. Ahmed Ali, Pastoralist, Dulecha
8. Mrs. Halima Ali, Pastoralist
9. Mrs. Zeineba Yimer, Pastoralist
10. Mrs. Jemila Mohammed, Pastoralist
11. Mrs. Zeineba Abdu, Pastoralist
12. Mr. Kemal Jemal, Self-employed, Dulecha Town
13. Mr. Ayenew Asefa, Self-employed, Duledcha Town
14. Mr. Begashaw Lemma, Self-employed, Dulecha Town
15. Mrs. Aysha Usman, Self-employed Dulecha Town
16. Mrs. Fatuma Ganibo, Self-employed, Dulecha Town
17. Mrs. Halima Tahir, Unemployed, Dulecha Town
18. Mrs. Asma Hassen, Unemployed Dulecha Town
19. Mrs. Fozia Jemal, Unemployed, Dulecha Town
20. Mr. Ahmed Husiena, Unemployed, Dulecha Town
21. Mr. Mustefa Jemal, Self-employed, Dulecha Town
22. Mr. Abdo Kemal, Pastoralist, rural Kebele
23. Mr. Ismail Hassen, Pastoralist, rural Kebele

## Ankober Woreda

1. Mr. Kebede Begashaw, Vice chair of Aliyuamba rural kebele
2. Ms. Assegedech Assefa, Civil servant, Ankober Town
3. Mrs. Assefash Lemma, Civil servant, Aliyuamba town
4. Mr. Alemu Yihun, Civil servant, Ankober Town
5. Mr. Tasew Ejigu, Civil servant, Aliyuamba town
6. Mr. Yukuno Amare, Peasant, Aliyuamba Kebele
7. Mr. Yaregal Teshome, Peasant
8. Mr. Yilikal Begizew, Peasant
9. Mrs. Burtukan kebede, Peasant
10. Mrs. Lemlem Assefa, Peasant
11. Mrs. Amarech Kassaye, Peasant
12. Mr. Nigusu Teshome, Peasant
13. Mrs. Debitu Altaye, Peasant
14. Mrs. Jemanesh Assefa, Self-employed,
15. Mrs, Tenaye Asegid, Self-employed
16. Mrs. Haregua Kebede, Self-employed
17. Mr. Girum Hailu, Self-employed
18. Mr. Maeregu Sebsibu, Self-employed
19. Mr. Gobeze Aychiluhum, Self-employed
20. Ms. Zinash Lema, Unemployed
21. Ms. Tizita Bante, Unemployed
22. Mr. Asrat Chanyalew, Peasant
23. Mr. Bogale Belachew, Peasant
24. Mrs. Gemet Hailu, Unemployed

## List of interviewee

### **Afar-Region and Dulecha Woreda**

1. Ato Mustefa Ali, Head of Awash Woreda Capacity Building office
2. Ato Mesfen Tarkegn, Head of Planning Department, Afar Capacity Building Bureau
3. W/o Bedriya Hussien, Merchant, Awash Woreda
4. Ato Ali Yakin Bulu, Argoba woreda police Inspector

### **Amhara-Ankober woreda**

1. Ato Leulseged Amare, Civil servant, Ankober Town
2. Ato Begashaw Egigu, Civil servant, Ankober Town
3. W/o Lemlem Asefa, Aliyuamba Kebele

### **Argoba woreda**

1. Ato Zeinu Mohammed, Head of Argoba woreda Education Office
2. Ato Sultan Abdella, Merchant Gacheni town
3. Ato Abdulaziz Hassen Umer, Civil servant, Semera Town
4. Ato Ali, Head of Argoba Peoples' Democratic Movement
5. Sheik Abdi Suleiman, Gacheni Town

### List of key informants

Sn	Name	Title	Place
1	Ato Abdulkadir Mohammed Semera	Head, water resource devt. Bureau	Afar,
2	Ato Nuru Mohammed woreda	Head, woredas administration	Argoba
3	W/o Zahara Walho woreda	Deputy Speaker	Argoba
4	Ato Ali Mahe	Woreda Cap. Bld. Head	Dubti
5	Ato Ephrem	Vice Kebele chair	Aliyuamba kebele
6	Ato Elias Tukie	Head, Capacity Building	Afar
7	Ato Jemal A/kadir	Head, Afar language institute	Afar
8	Ato Tarekegn Ejigu	Kebele secretary	Ankober