

**AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF PRODUCTION PRACTICES
AMONG THE ARI, SOUTHWEST ETHIOPIA**

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DEDICATED TO

THE PEOPLE OF ARI

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Preface

Despite the large and varied literature on Ethiopian societies, Ari remains one of the few inadequately studied groups. Although some contributions have been made by certain anthropologists and linguists, our knowledge of the society is still far from adequate. This is because detailed accounts of the various aspects of Ari ethnography have not been recorded and presented.

Part of the objective of this thesis, therefore, is to fill this gap thereby contributing to the understanding of Ari culture and way of life. The various cultural practices of the group, with particular focus on the production practices are described. Attempts are also made to present constraints on production and opportunities for promoting and improving the existing production patterns.

The people themselves as well as outsiders recognize that the Ari have their own common ancestors, language, and cultural practices. In this thesis concepts such as cultural group, society, social group, people, linguistic group, and ethnic group are interchangeably used to refer to the Ari.

The thesis is divided into five major chapters other than the introduction, summary and conclusion. The introductory part takes heed of the conventional kind of beginning for M.A papers in Addis Ababa University. All technical questions related to the study, including statement of the problem, objectives and significance of the study, and methods of data collection and analysis are discussed in this section.

A general ethnography of the Ari is presented in chapter one. Besides describing the environment, the cultural practices of the people in relation to their social, economic, political, and religious life, the issue of inter-ethnic relations are highlighted here.

Although it may sound less relevant to the title of the thesis, this chapter serves two important purposes. First, it gives (to those who know little or nothing about the Ari) a general view of the society, which is lacking in almost all literature on Ari. Secondly, it serves as basis for clear understanding of discussions that follow.

In chapter two, the historical and current land use practices and the production of major crops are discussed in detail. Besides describing the various crops, attempts are made to show the contribution of individual crops, the relative importance given to them, and the effect of combining different production strategies.

Division of labour and various forms of indigenous work groups are presented in chapter three. The objective of this chapter is to answer questions related to work assignments at family and society levels, to understand the ways in which different households exchange labour, and the different functions of voluntary work associations. In chapter four attempts are made to overview productive activities other than the production of crops. These are livestock production, craft activities, and apiculture.

Chapter five focuses on problems involved in the production practice and opportunities to solve these problems. The last section includes a summary and conclusion.

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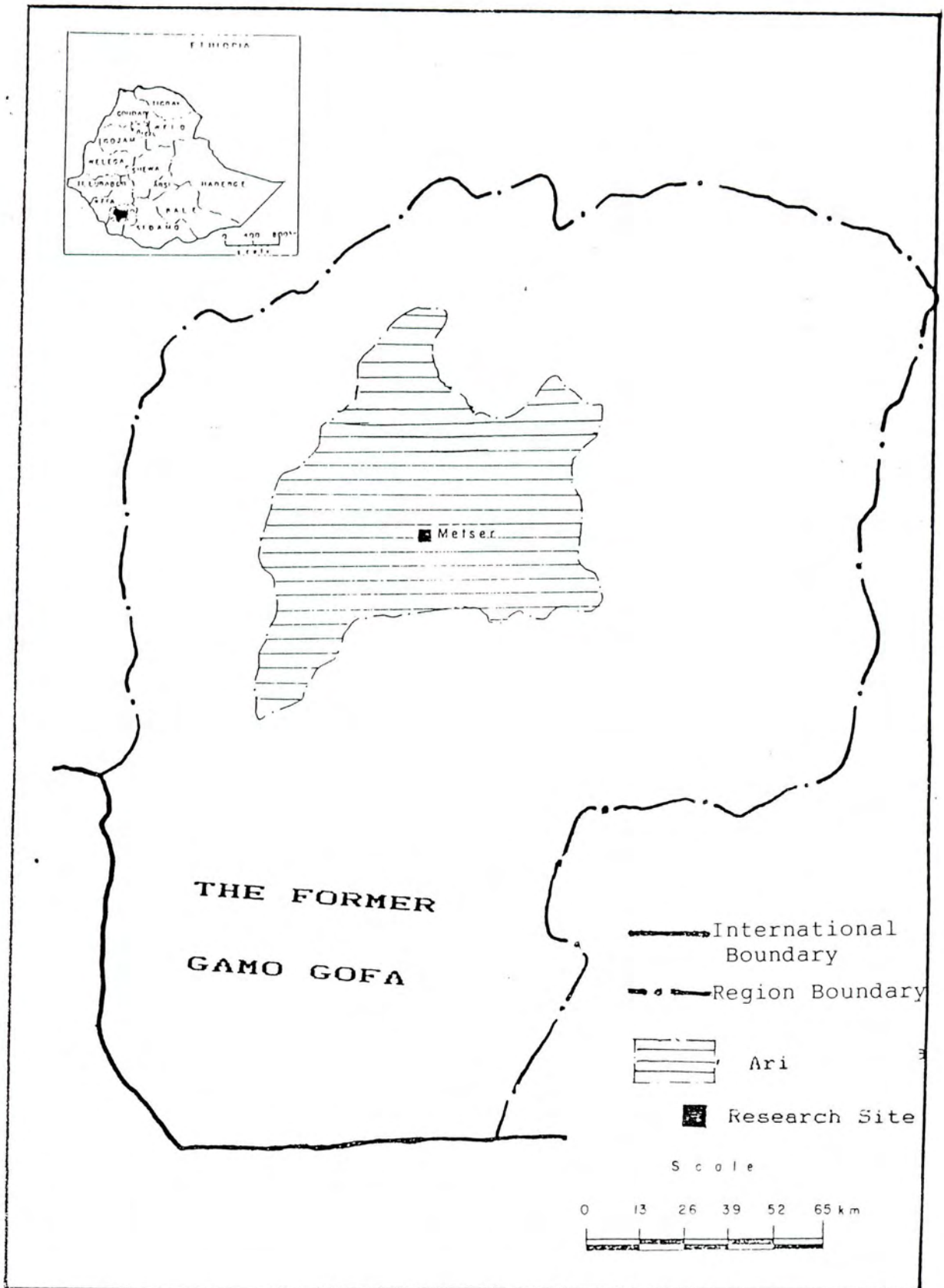
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Glossary

<u>Term</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Aka	ancestor
Aka-wolaq	lineage group
Akema	ancestral shrine
Aldi	small sized work parties
Antsi	bees or honey
Araf	The language of Ari
Ashenda	one of the two moieties of Ari
Awraja	administrative level between region and district
Babi	local and ritual leaders of Ari localities
Babitoid	lineage leader
Babam	land that belonged to the babi
Balabat	the babi , who were intermediaries for administration
Beri	female deity
Boira	pair of digging stick with iron tip
Daman	potter
Dawla	lowland
Dizi	highland
Endi	one of the two moieties of Ari
Ensete	a root crop widely grown in southwest Ethiopia
Fakaman	blacksmith
Fashegans	a person representing "unmarried" members of molla group
Galta	elderly people
Gamam	land that belonged to the landlords
Ganna	village/villages administered by one leader
Gasiman	people with intermediate social position
Godmi	ritual specialist(s)
Gola	local beer
Gosha	a tool used for digging, up-rooting, & weeding

Gult	a form of land tenure which entitles the holder to receive a share of the tax from cultivators and administer the area
Idir	large sized work parties open to adult people
Jolak	an ensete variety used for ritual purposes
Kansa	socially respected and high status group
Keisi	the commoner
Mana	(1) despised and low status group, (2) a man in charge of distributing food/drink to and collecting grain and money contributions from molaa members.
Mata	clan
Molaa	large sized work parties open to any capable
Ragid	any other half of molaa group
Rist	land inheritable by an individual, a family or group of families from a remote ancestor
Sabi	male deity
Tef	one of the local plants brought under cultivation in Ethiopia
Tika	root crops and vegetables
Tikam	a garden on which root crops are planted
Timad	size of land that can be ploughed by pair of oxen in 5 or 6 hours
Tsoiki	a man in charge of gathering and bringing information to the babi
Wali	a tool used for clearing, weeding, etc.
.Wasagach	a person in charge of peace and order in molaa
Wod	loosely organized reciprocal work parties
Womber	assistant molaa-bab
Wonam	farmland on which cereal crops are grown
Woreda	district or the bottom administrative level
Zis/Zia	ganna leader or ragid leader

Fig 1: Location of Study area



Source: Institute for the Study of Ethiopia Nationalities
Map 4.

INTRODUCTION

1. Statement of the Problem

It has been said that Ethiopia is a "museum" of diverse ethnic or cultural groups. According to official reports of the Institute for the Study of Ethiopian Nationalities (1985), the number of ethnic/cultural groups living in Ethiopia are over seventy. Although a great deal of anthropological and sociological studies have been carried out in the country, there are still quite a number of groups as yet unexplored or inadequately studied.

A careful review of the available literature indicates that Ari is one of the least studied groups. Scholars such as Ernesta Cerulli (1956), Donald Levine (1974), Harold Fleming (1973, 1976), have little to say about Ari in their works. In addition, these studies were primarily linguistic in nature. During the last six years Masayoshi Shigeta and Alexander Nati studied the Ari for their Ph.D dissertations. Shigeta wrote his Ph.D dissertation and published couple of articles on *ensete* cultivation practices of the Ari (Shigeta 1990; 1991).

As shall be discussed later in detail, the economy of the people in general and the production system in particular have never been adequately explored. There are a number of other research problems that have not been addressed. The history of the people, the political systems, belief and values, marriage and kinship, and the like are some of the major unexplored areas which need further research. It is therefore important to carry out basic research in Ari society.

There is also a need to undertake applied research in the area. Nowadays, in most countries, particularly in developing countries, the dimension of poverty and hunger expanded with the size of human population. In Ethiopia 60 percent of the total population is believed to be living below the absolute poverty line (Brune 1990:17). Ari is one of the cultural groups with a subsistence economy which, no doubt, falls in the above mentioned category.

Today, there are several problems facing Ari people.¹ Firstly, the levels of production have been showing alarming downward trends in recent years, while the size of the population kept on increasing. One of the aims of the present research is to understand whether or not the above mentioned problem in Ari could be explained in terms of constraints in the production practice. Secondly, the production of food crops has been declining in favour of the production of cash crops. The impact of this shift in the overall production practice in general and in food security in particular needs to be investigated. Thirdly, the traditional labour parties are on the verge of breakdown. Elders often complain that at present work parties do not function as they used to do in the past. Thus, it is of great importance to know the causes and consequences of this new development.

¹ The researcher is aware of the current problems of the Ari because he is a member of the society. Moreover, he has been doing research in the area since 1987.

2. The Objectives of the Study

Generally, the present research is designed to:

1. record and document the cultural practices of the society before they are lost or altered
2. provide baseline information so as to contribute to the understanding of Ari culture
3. understand the strength and weaknesses of the economy in general and the production practices in particular
4. generate village-based data for further research, policy making, and/or development programs

The study has the following specific objectives.

1. To describe the production practices with the aim of understanding:
 - a) factors involved in the process of production
 - b) division of labour and occupational specialization
 - c) the organization of labour for production
 - d) the means by which resources are converted into useable products
 - e) motivation to work hard and the reward system
2. To Study the cultural ethos in relation to economy and production. Here the following questions will be raised.
 - a) How do the Ari conceptualize economy/production?
 - b) How are the different activities understood?
 - c) The relative importance given to various activities?
 - d) beliefs and practices connected with production

3. To explore constraints involved in production processes.

The problems of Africa's economic performance have been differently interpreted. Some try to explain the predicament in terms of physical environment (Dalton 1967), while others see the problem from the point of view of technology (Oluwasanmi 1966; Barker 1989) or market incentives (Fantu 1990). What are the major threats to productivity and continuity of production among the Ari? To answer this question, attempts are made to (a) identify and rank problems, (b) understand the causes and effects of these problems, (c) identify the categories of people who are not affected, and (d) explore the local efforts to deal with problems.

4. To explore potentials for promoting the improvement of production practices.

In the face of rapidly growing population, dynamic processes of change, and increasing involvement of countries in the global economic system, it is difficult to rely on old techniques and practices of production. There is therefore a need to adjust to the changing situation. It is equally important to think of the social, cultural and natural factors while planning for change. With these points in mind, attempts are made to identify natural, human, organizational, and other potentials for strengthening and improving the existing system of production.

5. To investigate the relationship between production practices and other aspects of life.

Production practices are related not only to spheres of economy (such as exchange and consumption) but also to other aspects of life (such as family, kinship, religion, education, health, politics, etc.). So, relationship between production and other aspects of life, the way they affect one another, and cultural patterns governing such relations are studied carefully.

3. Significance of the Research

Besides the academic endeavour, the study is expected to serve some practical purposes. How and in what ways could the study be applicable? Most developing countries are plagued by all sorts of problems, such as widespread poverty, high rates of population growth, high dependency on agriculture, low rates of growth of domestic products, etc. Planners, policy makers, development agents, and academics have been suggesting policy measures for community as well as national development. It has been suggested, for instance, that developing countries must double their food production by the end of the century if they are to cope with the world food crisis and other related problems (Barlett 1980:2). In fact, overall development requires the growth of agricultural production. It is equally vital to note that agricultural productivity alone does not necessarily lead to improved standards of living. Several recent publications emphasize that social and cultural factors should be an integral part of every phase of development planning and implementation (Murphy 1990:17). With these views in mind the research focused on understanding indigenous knowledge and practices; values system and social structure; local production institutions; people's needs and objectives; and their participatory capabilities.

4. Choice of the Research Site

The writer of this thesis carried out the fieldwork in his own society. In fact, this is not a new experience as several anthropologists in Asia, Africa, North America, and Latin America have been doing research on their own societies for decades (Jackson 1987:10). There are different views regarding anthropological fieldwork at home. Some argue that the native anthropologist is likely to take certain things for granted and/or "natural". This tendency is believed to affect the quality of research. Jackson (1987:14) states that the native anthropologist can be successful if he/she has prior experience of field work abroad before turning homewards. On the other hand, several researchers suggest that fieldwork at home is of a great help to obtain a more penetrating insight into culture and society (Dragadze 1987:161; Mascarenhas-Keyes 1987:192).

The writer of this thesis believes that the knowledge of language and a partly shared culture are helpful to those anthropologists working at home. As opposed to a marginally integrated outsider, the native researcher will find it easy to gain access to the people or to develop trust. As regards the present study, given the three months research period, limited research experience, and limited training, it would be difficult for one to study a new culture/society. This is not the only reason for choosing the Ari for the present study. Since Ari is one of the least studied group, as a native the researcher felt responsible for contributing to the understanding of Ari culture. The current economic problems of the society also urged him to study the difficulties and possibilities of tackling them.

The Ari have adopted different types of productive activities in three altitudinal zones (highland, midland, and lowland). In the midland area, however, all sorts of activities are undertaken due to the moderate climatic condition. The researcher studied the production practice in Sida - a locality found in the heart of the midland zone. This locality is chosen with the aim to explore the relationship between the diverse productive activities.

Since Sida is relatively vast, consisting of six Peasant Associations (PA), it was necessary to select a more specific and manageable site. Therefore, a particular place called Metser was chosen for the following three reasons. Firstly, the "basic residence"² of the **babi** (the local chief) and most of the **godmi** (ritual specialists) are found in this place. Secondly, the place has been serving as a centre of six PA since the establishment of People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia in September 1987. Finally, the researcher has already established contacts with some informants during previous studies.

Field-work at home is not easy as it looks outwardly. The researcher encountered certain problems due to his identity as a member of the society. For example, some informants tended to be brief and selective in answering questions assuming that he knows the detail. Some people thought that the researcher has the power to solve their practical problems, while others suspected that he could be on a political mission. Some expected/asked for different forms of favours and gifts. In spite of all these difficulties, the research was carried out successfully. This is because the researcher's knowledge of the people and their language helped him to understand and solve problems as early as possible.

² The **babi** has several group of wives placed in different parts of Sida. But **arki**, his residence in Metser, is said to be the basic one because it is the ancestral shrine where almost all rituals are performed.

5. Scope and Limitations of the Study.

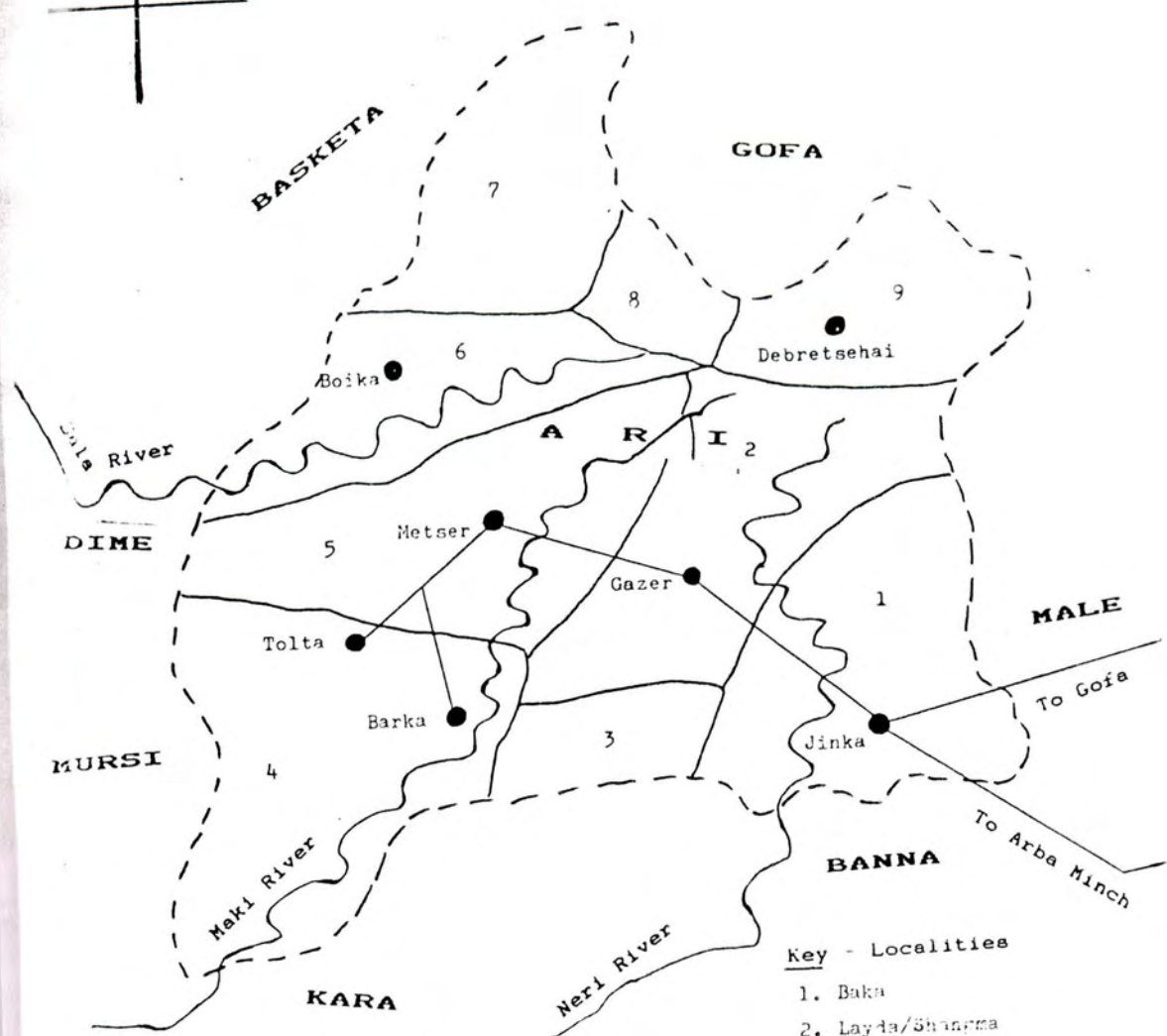
As the title of the thesis indicates the core interest of the study is to explore the indigenous production practices of the Ari. In describing the production practice, one has to (1) identify the economically significant elements of the environment, such as land, animals, forests, and water; (2) observe the inputs and outputs of each element and the ecological consequences of its use; and (3) specify systematic input-output relationships between elements (Gregory and Altman, 1989:69). According to Dalton (1967:62), production of any kind consists of three component sub-processes. These include the allocation of labour and other factors, the process of arranging and transforming resources into products, and the disposition of what is produced.

This study has two basic limitations. First, since Ari is a vast territory with varied climatic zones, it was necessary to choose a manageable site. This makes it quite difficult to claim that what has been discussed here could necessarily be the case throughout Ariland. Second, due to financial and time constraints all aspects of economic organization are not dealt with. The study focused on the exploration of (1) land use and the production of major crops, (2) organization of labour, and (3) constraints and opportunities involved in the production processes. Other productive enterprises, such as livestock production, craft activities, and apiculture are not thoroughly studied. Moreover, the specific input-output relationships between elements of production have not been explored. The other limitation is that cultural practices associated with disposition of surplus and patterns of consumption are marginally covered.

6. Methodology

Data have been collected by employing a combination of different techniques. These include reviewing literature, personal observation, interviews with knowledgeable informants, sample survey, taking pictures, and recording people and events. Twenty five informants have been chosen from different age, sex, and occupational groups. Three informants are **babi** (ritual leaders); two **godmi** (ritual specialists); 17 are engaged in agriculture (15 men and 2 women); and 3 in craft activities (2 smiths and 1 potter). With respect to the age distribution of key informants, 44% are over 50; 40% fall between 40 and 50; and 16% constitutes young people between ages 28 and 39. The study particularly focused on 20 of them. In Metser Peasant Association there are about 1010 households. In 1989/90, the present researcher selected 10% of the households in Metser for survey by employing a systematic sampling procedure. Some relevant data are used from the said survey to enrich the thesis.

The data collected employing the above techniques are organized into categories in such a way that they are amenable to qualitative and quantitative analysis. As regards qualitative data, attempts are made to carefully review and examine field notes and other sources of information, such as pictures and recorded interviews. Simple quantitative methods, such as averages, percentages, and ratios are used to summarize features and relationships.



Key - Localities

1. Baka
2. Layda/Shanema
3. Kure
4. Beya
5. Sida
6. Joba
7. Gayil
8. Barcid
9. Argen/Sayki
- Towns in Ari
- Roads

Figure 2: Neighbouring groups, localities and towns of Ari

CHAPTER I: GENERAL BACKGROUND OF THE ARI SOCIETY

1.1 Location, Population, and the Environment

Location

The Ari are found in the Southwest of present day Ethiopia (see figure 1). The society is located in South Omo³ (formerly Gamo Gofa) Administrative Region. According to the current administrative division of Ethiopia, the group is categorized in Zone 10 (Negarit Gazeta 1992) which is now being merged with other four zones to form a Southern People's Administrative Region. Awassa is the centre of the new region. Ari is bordered by the following peoples: on the east by Male; on the north by Gofa; on the northwest by Basketa; on the west by Dime; on the south by Mursi and Kara; and on the southeast by Banna (see figure 2).

Population Size and Language:

According to the analytical report of the 1984 national census (CSA 1991:44), the population of Ari was 109,124. Of this figure 108,195 people were reported to live in rural areas, while the remaining 929 lived in urban centres. Most Ari live in South

³ The present South Omo Administrative Region or Zone 10 used to be called Gelebna-Hamer-Bako Awraja (Province). There are over 12 ethnic or linguistic groups in this region. The most widely known groups include Ari, Arbore, Banna, Bodi, Gnangatom (Bume), Dassenech (Geleb), Dime, Hamar, Kara, Male, Mursi, and Tsemay. Most of these groups belong to Omotic language family, while others are categorized under Chushtic and Nilotic languages. In 1990 the total population of South Omo was reported to be 248,860 (CSA 1990:12). CSA estimated the total area of the region at about 22,000 Square Kilometre and thus the density of population to land is 11.3.

Omo constituting one **woreda** (district) called Bako-Gazer, while sizable population is believed to live in Gofa **Awraja** (province), Zone 9 (North Omo Administrative Region). In terms of its population size Ari stands first in South Omo followed by Hamar and Dassenech.

The Ari speak **Araf** (the language of the Ari), which is a member of the Omotic language family (Fleming 1976). Before Fleming originated and coined the concept 'Omotic' in 1973, arguments about the classification of Ari were controversial because different writers classified Ari in different language families. For instance, Ernest Cerulli (1956:96) lumped the Ari with various other groups and called them 'Ometo' as different from her Sidama group. Enrico Cerulli and Jensen considered the Ari to be members of the Nilo-Saharan family, while Joseph Greenberg and his followers classified the Ari as west Cushitic related to the traditional Sidama group (Fleming 1976:299-323). According to some scholars, the source of the problem was the linguistic resemblance of **Araf** to Cushitic, Nilotic and Omotic language groups (Bender 1976:48-49).

In Ari there are five dialects, namely the Baka dialect, the Shangma dialect, the Bargid dialect, the Gayil dialect, and a dialect spoken in Sida, Layda, Kure, Beya, and parts of Woba areas. **Araf** elaborately describes activities and experiences of the people. The Ari have rich heritage of songs, stories, proverbs, and riddles.

Altitudinal Zones:

According to local classification, there are three climatic zones: hot lowland (**dawla**), moderate midland, and cold highland (**dizi**). There is no Ari term for the midland zone where the research was being carried out. According to informants from this zone, they have been considered **Dizi** by the lowlanders and **Dawla** by the highlanders, though they do not feel that they belong to any of the two. It is stated that the altitude of the area range from 800 m to 3,375 m above sea level (Shigeta 1991:11). The above three folk division of altitudinal zones correspond with Shigeta's classification of vegetation: those below 1600, between 1600 and 2200, and above 2200. Because of variation in elevation the annual mean temperature and rainfall size vary from place to place. The average annual temperature at Jinka and Baka is recorded to be 21.5 C and 16.4 C respectively (Butzer 1971, in Shigeta 1991). The average annual rainfall is 1,000 mm at Jinka and 1400 mm at Baka (Daniel 1977:41).

Seasons and Calendar:

In Ari the year is divided into four seasons: **hashin** (Mid November to Mid March), **woli** (Mid March to may), **bergi** (June to August), and **shukli** (September to Mid November). **Hashin** is the dry season of the year, while three months of heavy rain recur in **bergi**. The remaining two seasons are characterized by moderate temperature and rain fall. It can be said that the Ari have a calendar system since rituals and economic activities are scheduled. Moreover, weather is forecast according to the calendar. The Ari calendar is based on observation of the moon. A month starts the day a new moon appears and ends the day before the next new moon is

seen. The average time of a lunar month is about 29.5 days (Cowie 1989:745). A day starts and ends at sunrise. There are 12 named months in a year: **Tora, Maken, Oidi, Dola, La, Tabza, Zeta, Sagla, Tama, Beksa, Somza, and Longa** (approximately January to December). The researcher felt it convenient to start with **Tora**, though no month is particularly recognized as the first or the last month of a year. Although all informants know that a month lasts 28, 29 or 30 days, they were not in a position to tell the exact number of days in each of the above named months.

1.2 Traditions of Origin and Recent History

1.2.1 Traditions of Origin

A review of the existing literature on Ari indicates that different writers have different views regarding the question of Ari origins. According to Fleming (1973:263), the Ari are central Africans who mixed with the Omoto in the course of time. Levine (1974:30-31), on the other hand, considers the Ari to be the intermixture of Sudanic and Omotic peoples.

Knowledgeable informants were asked about the origin of Ari people. Most responses and various folk-tales regarding the question of origin relate to certain **mata** (clan) rather than to the whole of Ari. According to informants, certain clans are believed to have come from some of the neighbouring groups. For example, **aykak** and **denga**, the **babi** (ritual leader) clans of Sida and Beya subdivisions, are believed to have come from Kara and Banna respectively. The researcher interviewed the **babi**

of Sida and Beya about the origins of their respective clans.⁴ The clans of the two **babi** have detailed legends.

The first **aykak** from Kara, known by the name Murs, is said to have found himself in Sida (Ariland) while being on a hunting expedition. After some time, Murs was accepted as a servant by the then **babi**, a man from a **sozim** clan. The legend continues to state that the **babi**, who was too busy eating food and with his private affairs, often sent his servant to settle public problems, particularly disputes and killings over land. Murs managed to do away with problems of land dispute by establishing a boundary or border lines. The legend states that Murs distributed land to households according to the size of family. He used a long bamboo stick to measure the land and planted trees to mark the beginning and end of individual holdings. The people, who were very happy with what Murs did decided to make him their **babi** removing the former. Like in Sida, the first **denga** from Banna was accepted as a cleaner by the then **babi** (from **kulma** clan) of Beya locality. The Banna man often took his meal late because he was too busy removing cow dung. According to the legend, he always shared his meal (often quality meat) with people coming to visit the chief, who was known for being greedy. The people removed the old **babi** and replaced him by the cleaner owing to the latter's generosity and the former's greediness. Although detailed explanations are lacking as to how and when they came, there are still other clans believed to have come from other groups (eg. **gerekos** from Banna; **sozim** from Gofa; & **hatsi** from Dime).

⁴ **Babi** Bamay Garababs, who is now 42, became **babi** of Sida in 1986/87 following the death of his father, **babi** Garababs Diksi. The 48 year old **babi** of Beya subdivision, Sheii Gundeis, assumed the position of **babi** 18 years ago. He succeeded his deceased uncle who acted as a **babi** only for one year following the death of **babi** Gundeis Tuwa, the father of Sheii.

Clans such as **wocha** (the royal clan of Shangma subdivision) and **amen** are said to have come out of the earth. Thus, these clans claim particular right over land and crops produced on it. During rituals, social gatherings, and even in every day life all plant foods but coffee are first served to members of clans whose origins are "linked" with the earth. **Bink** is a clan believed to have come out of water. Members of this clan are said to have the power to control mystical dangers that followed certain wrongs done against special springs or holy water. There are still other clans whose origins are traced from entities outside this world. According to **babi** of Woba⁵, the founder of **gadet** (the royal clan of Woba subdivision) descended from the sun. The story goes on to state that the first **gadet** was born when the spirit of the sun slept with a virgin girl scaring birds. This clan claim exceptional power over weather conditions.

The second sort of response, which was given only by one informant, tries to answer the question of origin in terms of common features. According to Ato Lalta⁶, the Ari came to the present land from the northern fringes of present day Banna or Hamar following fertile lands and river banks.

⁵ Babi Asfin Haisetbais, 65 years old, is the current "chief" of Woba subdivision. Asfin, who is also called Aseffa, succeeded his father 35 years ago.

⁶ Ato Lalta Kassa seems to know the Ari much better than most informants because he had the opportunity to visit all localities and he claims to have talked to several elders throughout Ariland. He served as an evangelist, chairman of Peasant Association at Kebele and Awraja levels, and civil servant.

1.2.2 Recent History

Regarding history, the researcher realized that one could reconstruct the recent history of the people. What happened during the last one hundred years and immediately before appears to be still fresh in the memory of some elderly people. The Ari recognize the conquest of Menelik, the Italian occupation, the land privatization measure of Haile Selassie, and the 1974 Ethiopian revolution as major events and turning-points in their history. The political, economic, religious, history that existed before the incorporation of the area into the Ethiopian empire tends to be explained in terms of general statements. On the contrary, informants described later events, processes, and phenomena more specifically and chronologically as will be shown in the course of the thesis.

1.3 An Overview of Ari Economy



It is difficult to find an exact equivalent Ari word or phrase for the concept "economy". The society understands economic activities (such as production, exchange, etc.) and associated beliefs and practices as working to survive and become better. There is an expression in **araf, a muda nortican angerda**, meaning "all people are toiling in order to fill their stomach (a metaphoric expression of survival).

The Ari are predominantly agriculturalists living in permanent villages. There are different kinds of subsistence crops including cereals (wheat, barley, sorghum, maize, **tef**, and millet), pulses (broad beans, beans and peas), and root crops (taro, **ensete**, yam, cassava and potato). Moreover, the two principal cash crops (coffee and cardamon), fruits and vegetables are widely grown in the area. Animal husbandry is

the second major productive activity in the area. Livestock raised include cattle, sheep, goats, mules, horses, donkeys and poultry. Income from all these sources is supplemented by sideline activities such as apiculture, crafts, and trade. Of the 101 sample households that heavily rely on agriculture, 75 (74.3%) families own animals and 47 (46.5%) families supplement their household income by such activities as trade, bee keeping, and some craft work. At different elevations, the people have adopted various types of economic activities. The following table shows the major productive activities carried out at these elevations. All craft activities are carried out in most parts of Ariland.

Table 1: Altitudinal Zones and Productive Activities

Climatic Zone	Plants/Crops Grown	Animals Raised
1. Dizi	barley, wheat, peas, broad beans, ensete, garlic, onion, cabbage, tobacco,	cattle, sheep, chickens, horse, mule, bees
2. Midland	maize, tef, sorghum, ensete, yam, taro, coffee, cardamon, fruits, cassava, aerial yam, cabbage, garlic, ginger, banana tomato, pumpkin, beans, cow pea, onion, banana,	cattle, sheep, horse, chicken, goats, mule, bees
3. Dawla	tef, sorghum, maize, millet, yam, banana, fruits, cassava, taro, coffee, aerial yam	cattle, goats, sheep, mules, donkey, chicken, bees,

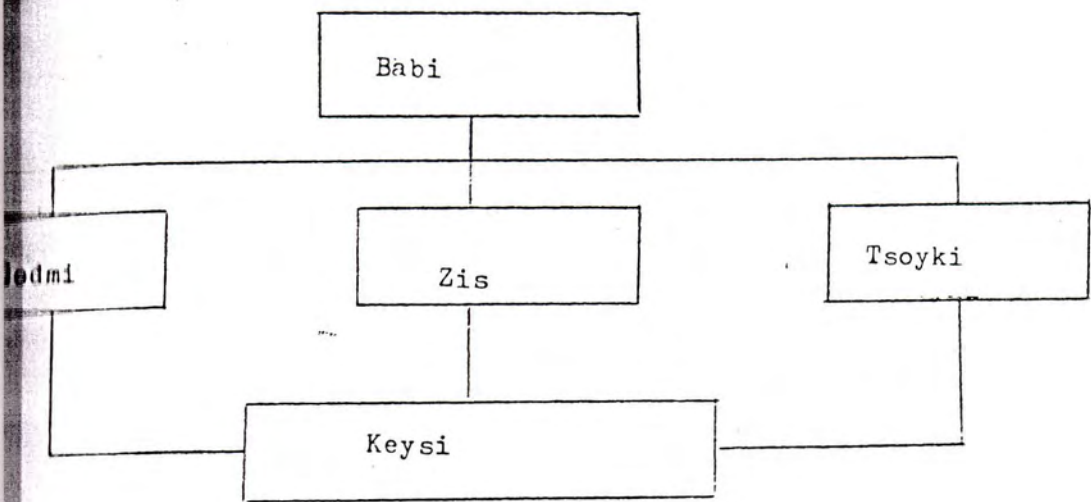
1.4 Social Structure

1.4.1 Territorial Subdivisions and the role of the **babi**

According to the customary division, Ariland used to be divided into nine independent territorial subdivisions (or localities) each with its own hereditary (political, economic, and religious) leader called **babi**. Prior to the incorporation of this part of the country into the Ethiopian empire, each locality was a self-contained unit with no political authority over others. The nine subdivisions are Baka (Bako), Shangma (Shengama), Sida (Sido), Beya (Bio), Woba (Wubhamer), Gayil (Gelila), Bargid (Bergeda), Seyki/Argen (Debretsehai), and Kure (see figure 2). Terms in brackets are those used by outsiders. In each of these localities the traditional power structure involved the **babi** (chief), his **godmi** (ritual specialist), **zis** (*ganna* or village leaders), **tsoiki** ("information agent"⁷), and **keisi** (the commoner). Informants explained the social statuses and the roles expected of position holders as described below.

⁷. The researcher could not find the exact English equivalent for the term **tsoiki**. In each village there used to be one person appointed by the **babi**. They were called **tsoiki** and were supposed to report to the **babi**. The duties of the **tsoiki** were gathering information about public opinion, deviants, and other secret matters often without the knowledge of the community and village leaders.

Figure 5: The Power Structure of Ari Society



The babi

The **babi** was a supreme authority performing judicial, military, administrative, economic, and ritual functions for the well-being of his subjects. It is a hereditary position. Ideally, any member of the **babi** clan who meets the selection criteria can succeed to this position. In practice, however, priority is given to sons of the deceased **babi**. There are different criteria and rules for selection of heirs in different subdivisions of Ari. In Sida, the successor must be a man (1) who is right-handed, (2) whose mother is not from **wocha** clan, (3) whose mother is one of the senior wives of the previous **babi**, and (4) above all, who has support from the public. Public support is expressed as described below.

During the funeral ceremony of the deceased **babi**, different villages or group of villages may bring a successor who may fulfil some or all the criteria. There are two ways of solving this problem. One is negotiation among villages (through their respective leaders/elders) to select one out of the eligible candidates to peacefully climb on the "particular ritual stone" that symbolizes inheritance of the position of **babi**. The other option is to help a heir to climb on the stone by fighting other competing village or group of villages. The fighting involves beating with stick, stabbing with spear, and throwing stones at each other. Once a person manages to climb on the stone in whatever way, he is accepted as a **babi**. Six years ago, the present **babi** of Sida came to power through fighting that caused injury and death of people.

People believe that the **babi** is someone with mystical power to solve (with the help of the ritual specialists) such problems as drought, famine, locust invasion, epidemic disease, bad weather, etc. Prior to incorporation, land and cattle belonged in principle to the **babi** and the people had only the right to use these resources. In order to be able to inherit the right to use land and cattle or to slaughter an ox/cow individuals used to request the approval of the chief. The latter could refuse to grant such requests for various reasons, such as eligibility, competence, and the like. Under such circumstances the property was either retained by the chief himself or kept aside until the right inheritor is identified.

Before the incorporation, the various localities had disputes over boundaries and due to such incidents as murder and elopement. The wars among the various Ari groups is believed to have continued even after incorporation. According to Cerulli (1956:96), at the time of Italian conquest, the Woba were fighting with Sida. Each **babi** had warriors armed with simple weapons (eg. spear and shield) to protect his

territory against possible encroachment by another **babi**. The warriors were recruited from the respective subdivisions either on voluntary basis or through selection. During fighting all male members living around the battle field joined the warrior group to defend or attack the enemy. The villagers supported the families of the warriors by cultivating their field. All serious and major political and legal matters were brought to the attention of the chief. He then called upon all members of the village(s) and presented the case to them for discussion and final decision. He decided on less serious matters having consulted the **galta** (elderly people) and the lower rank officials (such as **zis** and **tsoiki**). Minor issues were dealt with by the **zis** at village level.

The chief places several wives together in different parts of his territory. But there is one major residence called **akemal** (the ancestral shrine) where he performs the rituals and ceremonies. For example, the current **babi** of Sida called **babi** Bamay (see plate 12) has nine wives placed in 4 different villages. **Arki** is the **akemal**. The community builds houses and gives labour services to the "royal house" close to them. Moreover, they contribute money and send animals, particularly sheep for ritual purposes. These are to be shared between the chief and the ritual specialists. Before Menelik's conquest, the **babi** received fines; a portion of the bride-wealth of every first marriage; and a portion or all properties of a deceased person. The **babi** was expected to invite his people (those living close to his residence) to a feast by slaughtering an ox and brewing local beer. Except for this occasional feast, redistribution in its strict sense did not exist.

The godmi

The council of **godmi** is a group of persons (belonging to different **mata**) assisting the **babi** especially in ritual matters. They assume such positions by virtue of their **mata** (clan) category. In other words, individuals from particular clan categories are supposed to perform the various ritual activities for the well-being of the society at large. In Sida there are 4 **godmi** (from **fasha**, **bink**, **gayti**, and **amen** clans) who regularly perform rituals with the **babi**. There are also a number of other **godmi** occasionally consulted by the **babi** for different rituals. The ritual specialists are entitled to receive gifts (in kind or cash) from the **babi**. These gifts come to the **babi** from the commoner through a village leader. They are well-treated and given special food when they are on duty. The **godmi** together with the **galta** also act as a council of advisors in non-ritual affairs.

The zis

Each Ari subdivision was further divided into a number of named **ganna** (villages). A village or group of villages were represented by a **zis**, either appointed by the chief or chosen by the people. As regards the second alternative, villagers formally gathered at a public place (often under a tree) to discuss and elect their leader. There was no voting system. Informants mentioned that participants discussed extensively and argued until the majority consented to elect a particular person. The **babi** delegated some of his judicial and administrative powers to the **zis** so that minor cases could be dealt with by the latter. The responsibilities of the **zis** included organizing labour for the chief's field; collecting contributions for ritual purposes; judging and administering public affairs; and representing his people in the **babi's**

council. A **zis** could retain parts of fines and contributions to be sent to the chief. Moreover, he was exempted of any financial contributions and labour services. The relationship between the **zis** and his subjects was direct.

The tsoiki

In every subdivision the **babi** assigned a scout or an "information agent" called **tsoiki**. It is said that the chief used to request his **godmi** or members of his kin to search for the right man in each locality. Sometimes those individuals frequently visiting the chief and telling him secrets had the chance to be appointed as a **tsoiki**. Holders of this position were responsible for gathering and bringing information regarding public opinion, deviation from societal rules, performance of village leaders, and the like. The **tsoiki** used to perform such activities without the knowledge of village residents and their leader. The **tsoiki** was given occasional gifts of sheep, grain, or cloth (by the **babi**).

The keisi

The **keisi** are commoners who maintained direct relationship with the **zis**. Customarily, the Ari are free to pursue their economic, social, and cultural interests. In the olden days these interests were reinforced by traditions and protected by socially recognized local mechanisms. The Ari are also free to move their residence in or across a locality, within Ari territory. Culturally they are obliged to conform to customary rules; refrain from infringing upon the rights of others; undertake communal obligations; contribute animals, grain and money for ritual purposes; give labour services to the **babi**; and the like. It is the **keisi** who make decisions on major public

matters, such as theft, adultery, and violation of sexual taboos. Upon the death of a **babi**, the commoner selects the new chief from among the eligible members of the royal clan.

After incorporation the various subdivisions continued to function as a local units. However, the position of the **babi** declined to a great extent in that (1) they were no longer the ultimate powers, (2) all lands and cattle no longer belonged to them, and (3) they couldn't exercise their economic, political, and legal powers as they previously did. This does not mean that they were totally dismissed, rather their positions were reduced from supreme chief to a position where they became subjects of government laws and regulations. They were given the title **balabat** and were acting as local representatives reporting to the **woreda** (the lowest government structure). According to Donham (1986:39), in the north of Ethiopia **balabat** were informal leaders through whom local governors had to work since the state never penetrated to the level of local communities. Likewise, in Ari the **balabat** were intermediaries for administration. All **babi** in Ari were given the title of **balabat**, while only the two **babi** of Sida enjoyed additional titles and awards from Emperor Haile Selassie. **Babi** Diksi Urki was given the title **qegnazmach** for his patriotic deeds during the Italian occupation. His son and successor, **babi** Garababs Diksi, was also given the title of **grazmach**, again due to his father's contribution to the patriotic movement.

The responsibilities of the **babi** included collecting tax, work towards creating peaceful conditions, and bringing wrong-doers to justice. For these services the government gave some land to all the **babi**, and those living on **babam** (**babi** land) were supposed to work for them. However, those living on **gamam** (Amhara land, meaning government land) also volunteered to continue, as before, working for the **babi** because of the latter's ritual and religious powers.

During Emperor Haile Selassie's regime the territorial subdivisions were maintained as they used to be before. However, the autonomy and powers of the **babi** further declined as the relationship between the periphery and the centre became more direct. Consequently, the nine chiefs continued to operate with nominal leadership position in their respective localities. Their positions were nominal because most of the political, legal, social, and economic decisions were made by their advisors and clerks, often feudal lords and Northerners appointed by district government officials. Because they provided ritual and religious functions, the common people continued to give the chiefs necessary recognition and services.

After the 1974 Ethiopian revolution a major change (with both positive and negative consequences) took place in the lives of the Ari. As far as the territorial division is concerned, the new government refused to adhere to the old division and to recognize even the nominal position of the chiefs. Thus, having abolished the old divisions, over 50 smaller sections or Peasant Associations were established. Most of the chiefs were imprisoned and were prevented from performing religious and ritual activities. However, owing to an urge from the society and because of their own fear that it is mystically dangerous to ignore customs, most **babi** have been enacting their cultural roles. The current **babi** of Sida, Beya, and Woba subdivisions said that during Mengistu's regime they were secretly performing ritual activities because (1) most people continued to side with them and help them, (2) they are also human beings who need food, health, and general well-being, and (3) it is mystically dangerous to ignore rituals and other cultural practices. Although the government eliminated the nine subdivisions, people still adhere to their old division and the respective **babi** clan for cultural functions.

1.4.2 The Family, Lineages, Clans, and Moiety

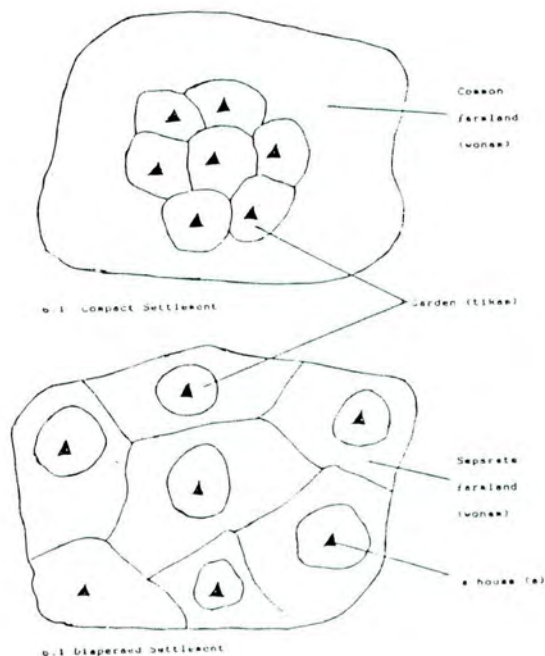
The family is the basic unit of Ari social organizations. Ari culture allows a man to marry as many wives as he wishes so long as he can afford the bride-wealth and other expenses of married life. At the moment, reliable data are lacking to conclude whether or not polygyny is the dominant pattern. A close inquiry into informants' family situation indicates that, of the 19 informants (including the **godmi**), 10 have a single wife, while the remaining 9 have plural wives ranging from 2 to 4. The average number of wives for the 19 informants is 1.7. According to the survey result, the family size of the sample group ranges from one to eleven with an average family size of 3.93 (or 4) persons. As regards the structure of Ari family, both monogamous and polygynous families exist in Ari. It can be said that Ari is a bilineal society with great patrilineal tendency. Although one can inherit property from either parent or both, matrilineality does not show great influence, may be due to patrilocal pattern of residence. Thus, the bilineal descent system should be attributed only to inheritance of moveable property and indication of relatedness, and not to other aspects like the right to claim to share authority.

The authority structure may be described as patriarchal since greater power is vested in the male head of the household. It is the father or the husband who provides a sort of leadership and who decides on major family matters. Like elsewhere, the family in Ari society is responsible for such functions as reproduction, economic co-operation, socialization, and sexual gratification.

Most clusters of Ari settlement are organized around agnatic groupings called **aka-wolaq** (literally people from one or the same ancestor). This concept is equivalent to the concept of lineage, which is defined as a group of kin who trace their descent from a known or actual ancestor (Crapo 1990:142; Oke 1984:112). Members of **aka-**

wolaq trace their descent from a known common founder (**aka**) and most of them can count their genealogy or line of ancestry at least up to five generations. Each lineage has a head known as **babitoid** (the senior) responsible for resource allocation, ritual performance, dispute settlement, etc. The **babitoid** often lives in the **akemal** (the ancestral shrine). Generally speaking, in Ari there are two types of settlements. Some take the form of compact settlement where a number of related or unrelated families live close to each other (figure 6-1). Households living in such an area have their own garden around individual houses and share a big farmland found in the outskirts of the homesteads. Others take the form of "dispersed" settlement where genealogically related and/or unrelated families live together in the same village (figure 6-2). In the second case the homesteads tend to scatter throughout the village and thus individual households have their own separate garden and farmland.

Figure 6: A sketch of typical Ari settlements



Individual lineages are not named, rather addressed by their respective **mata** name. In this paper the concept clan is treated as it is defined by Oke (1984:112) who writes that a **mata** or clan is "a large grouping which includes individuals who may not actually come in contact with each other, but assume that they are all descended from a common ancestor". In Ari quite a large number of genealogically unrelated **aka-wolaq** or lineages belong to one **mata**. So far, 62 different **mata** have been listed. Most informants mentioned between 8 and 15 names of clans, while Ato Metekia Lapiri⁸ gave a list of 34 clans. Some of the clans have got special characteristics and functions. Of the 62 different clans nine are **babi** clans providing leaders to the nine subdivisions discussed earlier. The royal clans of Ari include **aykak** (in Sida), **ayka** (in Seyki), **boka** (in Baka), **denga** (in Beya), **gadet** (in Woba), **gogidar** (in Kure), **kawka** (in Bargid), **sozim** (Gayil), and **wocha** (Shangma). All **babi** in each locality have their respective **godmi** (ritual specialists) coming from particular clans. In Sida, for instance, the major **godmi** clans include **fasha**, **bink**, **gayti**, and **amen**. There are also several **godmi** from other clans for occasional ritual functions. Clans like **ulcha**, **sheki**, and **arta** are believed to have a mystical power of harming those persons who encroach on their rights. There are clans known for their "ability" of making rain (eg. **sozim**, **gadet**, and **lala** of the **arma** clan).

It is widely stated that when clans of a society are organized into two major categories, the two groups are called moieties (Theodorson and Theodorson 1969:262; Oke 1984:112; Crapo 1990:144). The various clans of Ari belong to any one of the two exogamous moieties: **ashenda** and **endi**.⁹ **Ashenda** consists of 36 clans, **endi** of

⁸ Ato Metekia Lapiri, 65, is one of the best informants. He has learnt a lot about the Ari through experience. Like Ato Lalta, he became an evangelist and chairman of Peasant Associations at local, province, and regional levels.

⁹ The main function of the moiety system can be explained in terms of marriage arrangement. Members of most Ari clans look for their spouse in the moiety other than

22, while 4 clans are said to belong to both (see the list below). The **ashenda** are symbolized by animals, while plants are said be to the symbolic representation of the **endi** moiety. Therefore, all animal foods (eg. meat and milk) are first served to the **ashenda** when members of both moieties happen to be together. On the other side, most plant foods and drink except for coffee and honey are first served to the **endi**. Coffee and honey are first given to **ashenda**.

Table 2: The clans of Ari

Ashenda			Endi	
1. Aykak*	19. Zoba	1. Wocha*	19. Baya	
2. Ayka*	20. Duna	2. Sheki**	20. Assa	
3. Boka*	21. Ziga	3. Gayti**	21. Wober	
4. Denga*	22. Wokneks	4. Bink**	22. Ora	
5. Gadet*	23. Gowa	5. Arma/Lala**		
6. Gogidar*	24. Ayideb	6. Goyrash		
7. Kawka*	25. Jab	7. Gerekos		
8. Sozim*	26. Jingi	8. Gesa	Ashenda + End	
9. Fasha**	27. Arfa	9. Hatsi		
10. Hay**	28. Ulcha	10. Arta	1. Amen**	
11. Seer	29. Ayneta	11. Zhocha	2. Ber	
12. Deed	30. Dubri	12. Garra	3. Gadir	
13. Gugin	31. Boyka	13. Midha	4. Moya	
14. Layd	32. Kulma	14. Zee		
15. Duma	33. Ayid	15. Geni		
16. Duri	34. Zelet	16. Maqa		
17. Garshma	35. Massa	17. Gori		
18. Ayshmsha	36. Gata	18. Alli		

* babi clans

** godmi clans

their own. Therefore, moiety is as important as clan background as far as spouse selection is concerned. But there are 4 clans members of which look for mates in any other clan other than their own.

1.4.4 Marriage, Divorce, and Kinship

According to Crapo (1990:154), marriage is defined as a socially accepted sexual and economic union involving a lasting commitment between two or more people who have parental rights and obligations to any children within the union. In defining the marriage, Leach focused on such rights as legitimization of offspring; access to the spouse's sexuality, labour, and property; and the setting-up of affinal alliances between persons and between groups (Barnard & Good 1984:89).

In this thesis attempts are made to describe the ethnographic context of marriage practice among the Ari. For successful and long lasting marriage, choosing partners by the decision of spouse is of great importance. By and large, marriage among the Ari is a function of free choice on the side of the boy and the girl, where parents lack the right to decide over arrangements. A **mard** (young man) who considers himself to be in the marriageable age (16 and above) and who feels that he has enough wealth, and family support looks for a marriageable **anza** (a girl who has reached puberty) in the neighbourhood, in the market, at work places, at ceremonies, etc. He may also ask his relatives and friends to search for a spouse for him. Upon the identification of the appropriate girl, the suitor undertakes an over-all inquiry about her personal character and her parents' background. The girls suitability is judged in terms of her behaviour (aggressive, cool, greedy, generous, kind), her ability in agricultural work, household management, beauty, age, and the like. The suitor searches for a spouse from the opposite moiety but the same status-groupings. It is

not common to see a poor boy trying to choose his mate from a rich family. This is mainly because the groom may find it difficult to afford the bride-wealth which the rich family might demand in accordance with "rich-marriage" standard.

After having sorted out all these, the young man repeatedly asks the girl himself or through somebody else on his behalf. This process is called **sorra**. A girl who wants to avoid her suitor often says that she has already promised to marry someone. This is not to irritate him by saying no. A girl who is interested in the boy tends to give him repeated appointments and at every meeting she provides him with valuable goods (ornaments, clothes, tools, etc.) as a sign of agreement.

Eventually, they either fix the date without the knowledge of their parents or the girl asks her suitor to send elders to her parents. The second is rarely practised. The boy informs his parents about the decision soon after his bride's last promise. The boy's parents may try to refuse the arrangement or postpone the date reasoning that they are not in a position to support him. If the son insists on his first decision, parents will be forced to change their mind and start preparation for the wedding ceremony.

The most common practice is for the two partners to fix the marriage date. When this is the case, the girl's parents are informed about their daughter's marriage a day after the wedding ceremony. Early in the morning, someone is sent to the bride's parents for **muki**. This is a culturally recognized practice of informing the girl's parent about the marriage of their daughter (eg. by calling names, making noise, knocking at the door) without being seen. A person sent for **muki** must go as early as possible so that he can arrive there while the bride's parents are still asleep. This is to minimize the possibility of being beaten by the bride's groups, who pretend to be

irritated by the news. If the engagement is not in line with the interest of the bride's family or social expectations, the bride may be pressurized or forced by her parents/relatives to return home.

When the **galta** come from the side of the bride groom a few days after **muki**, the bride's parents usually accept the **qesh** (marriage negotiation) given that (1) she was not taken by force, and (2) they had no problem with the groom's parents or lineages. The bride's father sooner decides the **dhakma** or **koita** (bride-wealth) that will be paid bit by bit while the bride is with her husband. The size of the bride-wealth (partly refundable on divorce) ranges from 50 to 1,000 birr depending on (1) the economic position of parties involved, and (2) the size of bride's close relatives. Marriage with rich families and/or large relative size involves high bride wealth. Additional items sent together with the money include **buluka** (blanket) for the bride's mother, and two sheep (**chuba** and **chaeta**, ram and ewe respectively).¹⁰ Before birr became the medium of exchange in the area, the Ari used **dunda** (bracelet) and **gai** (ring) made of iron and copper for marriage transactions.

When the marriage payment is completed, the bride's mother calls upon her female friends for **woyi** (visiting daughter). On the way to the bride's house and on return, the women sing a special **woyi** song called **yesho**. On that day, the bride's mother invites the married couple and the groom's family to come to her place for **wochmi** (a big feast and ceremony). Neighbours, relatives and friends are invited to

¹⁰ **Chuba** and **chaeta** are two words used to refer to a ram and an ewe involved only in marriage transactions. Under normal circumstances, ram and ewe are known by concepts **agina/angqol** and **daksha/maqol** respectively.

the **wochmi** arranged by the bride's parents. It is an occasion to recognize (1) the establishment of the new family and (2) the beginning of affinal kinship relationship.

Less frequent and less common is the marriage practice called **kuppisi**. This is a practice where an important man (rich or member of the royal clan) arranges a marriage with the bride's parents while she is still young. Bride-capture (**gochima**) and elopement are occasionally practised. But the union is not legitimized until the bride-price and non-refundable additional compensation (**kassa**, Amharic term) payments have been made.

In Ari divorce (**bulmi**) is not uncommon. Divorce may be initiated either by the man or by the woman for grounds that would appear sufficient at least for one of the spouse. A man may divorce his wife for reasons of infidelity, laziness, abuse of his relatives, continued quarrel, and the like. A woman does so if her husband is persistently cruel, not hard working, disrespectful, etc. Women often go with a lover or marry another husband before the matter is brought to **galta** (the elders court). When marriage terminates at the whim of the wife, the husband claims the return of bride-wealth excluding the sheep, the blanket, and other gifts he made to the wife and her sibling. Basically, both the woman's parents and the new husband (if she has married another) are held responsible for the refund. Some deductions (from the total money claimed) could be made by considering the various services the wife has rendered during her stay, the number of children she got by the husband, and expenses incurred during **wochmi**.

Among the Ari kinship is based on blood relations (**wa-sus**), and affinal ties (**baysi**). The relationship between husband (**kie**) and wife (**ma**) is characterized by inequality of status. Since a man is always of higher status, a wife is expected to be deferential and obedient to her husband. The man has authority not only over his wife

but also over his children (**yinsi**) and dependants living under him. Although the mother (**enndi**) can exert influence on young children, her position in the family is rather subordinate. Both parents are held responsible for bringing up and preparing young children for better life in society.

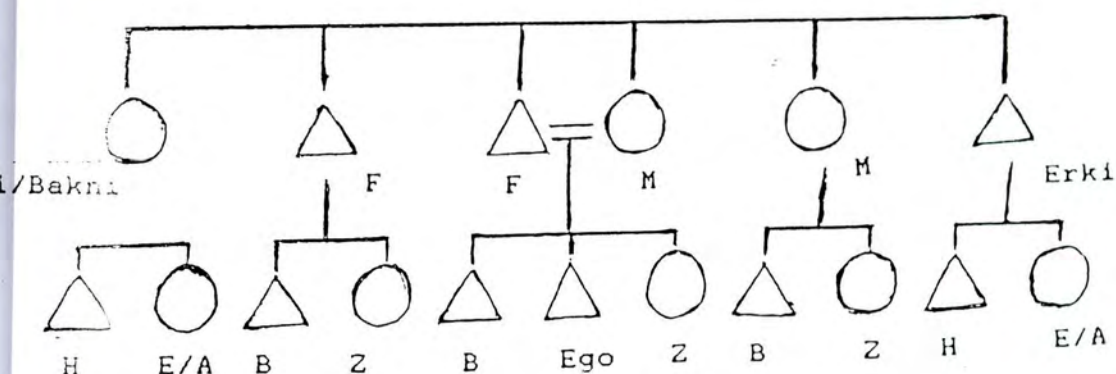
Children are expected to be obedient, respectful, and helpful to their parents. They are expected to be so and serve their parents throughout their life time. There are mutual bonds of assistance, co-operation, and interdependence between brothers (**endefsi**) and sisters (**enani**). A brother is a guardian of his sister and takes full responsibility for her upon the death of their father. Generally, the relationship between blood relatives is characterized by co-operation, mutual aid, and active participation in various ceremonies and rituals. The mutual cooperation of kin groups in Ari is best explained in terms of labour services, gift exchanges, sharing of bride wealth payment, and the sharing of all pains and happiness together.

Regarding kinship terminologies, father's brother is regarded and addressed as father, while father's sister is known by the term **michi** or **bakni**. Similarly, a mother's sister is called mother, while her brother is known by the term **erki**. The children of all these mothers and fathers are brothers and sisters. However, the reference term for cross-cousins are **haksi** and **aaki/enndi** (for male and female respectively). All grand and great-grand parents are called by a common term **aaki**. All relatives in children's (**yinsi**) and grand-children's (**yinsi-yins**) generation are addressed by their personal names.

Like the Omaha, Crow, and the Iroquois systems (Crapo 1990: 147-149), the Ari kinship terminology is an example of what is called a bifurcate merging system. In fact, different terms are assigned for father's sister, mother's brother, and for cross-cousins. On the other hand, the term(s) for (1) father is merged with father's brother,

(2) mother is merged with mother's sister, and (3) parallel cousins are merged with ego's brothers and sisters. It is not only parental relatives or relatives in ego's own generation that are merged. All relatives in grand-parent's and great-grand-parents are addressed by a single term **aki** (aak for male and aaka for female). Similar terms are used for the descendants of ego and of ego's classificatory brothers and sisters. The following diagram shows the Ari kinship terminology.

Figure 7: Ari Kinship Terminology



Key

F - Babi

M - Enndi

B - Endefsi

Z - Ennani

H - Haksi

E/A - Enndi/Aki

Figure 7: Ari Kinship Terminology

ebaysten, while they call him back **ebays** or by his personal name. Brother- and sister-in-laws call each other **wotni**, while a woman and her parents-in-law are **aki** to each other.

1.4.3 Status-Groupings

Occupationally, there are two categories of people in Ari: **kansa** and **mana**. The **kansa** are agriculturalists, socially respected, and form the great majority. They also engage in some craft activities, such as making mats, bee hives, ropes, and non-iron agricultural tools on a part-time basis. The **mana**, who are recognized as **tamayins** (literally means people from down or low position), include **fakaman** or **gitaman** (black smiths), **daman** or **dongerman** (potters), and **gasiman**. The **gasiman** are basically agriculturalists. However, there is a belief that in the olden days they shouldered such tasks as grave digging; carrying corpses; taking care of a woman during her confinement to childbed; carrying out purification ceremonies; and acting as a go-betweens for lovers. In terms of their number and social status the **mana** constitute minority groups.

The **gasiman** look down on the remaining two, while potters despise black smiths. However, they all are looked down on and despised by the **kansa**. Particularly the two **mana** groups (**fakaman** and **daman**) do not identify with the **kansa**, i.e they don't enter each others house, they don't eat together, no marriage takes place between them, and they exhibit very limited interaction and relations in social, ritual, and other cultural affairs. Unlike the other two **mana** groups, the **gasiman** have some ritual and/or ceremonial roles. There are certain **gasiman** clans which perform purification acts for or with particular **kansa** clans.

In the past the **mana-kansa** dichotomy was strict although the **gasiman** were considered "better" and could somehow associate with the **kansa** in certain respects. It is said that there is a clear indication that the position of **gasiman** has improved after the introduction of protestantism and particularly after the 1974 revolution. Ato Afedab (a member of **gasiman**) said that there was a difficulty to associate with many people. After the revolution, he noted, local officials somehow forced the people to equally participate in economic and social affairs. Defenders and followers of old traditions were considered conservatives. According to Ato Metekia, the position of **gasiman** has started changing long ago, particularly after the introduction of Christianity (first Orthodox and then Protestant). Now they eat with **kansa**, they intermarry (although rarely), and they enter each others houses.

However, the new developments mentioned above could not remove the sense of segregation and discrimination against smiths and potters. Ato Berhanu (a black smith) stated that the society still despises him, though he has been converted to Protestantism long ago. He said his relationship with Christian **kansa** cannot be considered good as long as the life-old differences are still there. In the past, blacksmiths and potters were not involved in intensive cultivation. Their basic subsistence came from the **kansa** group in exchange of the goods they produced and in the form of gifts. Nowadays, most **mana** partly rely on cultivation (see 4.2 for the detail).

1.5 Beliefs and Rituals

There are different beliefs in Ari. The most common one is the belief in **sabi** and **beri** (male and female deities respectively). These are personalized "gods" believed to have created individual persons. In other words, every Ari is said to have been created and controlled by the combined effort of his/her respective **sabi** and **beri**. A person in distress often calls upon his deities in prayer for remedy. It is believed that sometimes these deities "come to dwell" on their subjects requiring the latter to reserve separate spaces (with trees and bushes) and give regular sacrifice (**ika**). A person (often the **babitoid** or head of the lineage) is informed about his deities' arrival by **sabibab**, individuals believed to have power to understand and interpret the world. Failure to welcome the deities or to stop giving sacrifice is said to be dangerous. Though children have their own **sabi** and **beri**, it is believed that they may be affected by parents' deities.

The Ari also believe in **aka** (ancestors). The underlying belief is that the spirits of the dead exert influence on human affairs. Of all the ancestors, only parents, paternal grand-father, maternal grand-mother, and the apical ancestor are worshipped. Therefore, ancestor-worship in Ari may be described as a practice of begging ancestral assistance in certain emergencies and of appeasing ancestors' anger. The ancestral spirits are invoked for illness, protection against misfortune, and other individual or family level problems. Large-scale societal problems such as famine, epidemic disease, crop failure, and locust invasion are dealt with by the **godmi** and **babi**. The essential manifestation of belief in ancestors' power is through sacrifice of sheep. The **babitoid** is held responsible for setting aside special places and give the sacrifice to the ancestors. It is common to see a person combining the two beliefs discussed above.

Christianity (Orthodox and Protestant) has been introduced in Ari during the last 50 to 80 years. According to Ato Metekia, Orthodox religion came to the area following Menelik's conquest, while Protestant Christianity followed the Italian occupation. Many informants including Ato Metekia stated that in 1946 there was a forced conversion to Orthodox Christianity.¹¹ The sample survey shows that 65.3% of the interviewees were followers of the indigenous beliefs followed by Orthodox (23.8%) and Protestant (10.9%). The majority of people do not follow Christianity because it seems to stand against traditional beliefs. For instance, believers in the new religions are expected to give-up old practices and abandon trees and bushes set aside for these purposes. Some people, however, saw conversion to christianity as a way out of the very complicated traditions, rituals, and sacrifices associated with deities and ancestors.

One important aspect of religion in Ari is that people can switch on-and-off depending on circumstances. An Orthodox or a Protestant convert can switch back to the indigenous beliefs after having performed certain purification acts. Nowadays, people convert to Christianity, among other things, when they face problems and when they think that their *sabi* and *beri* or ancestors could not help them to solve such problems. They switch back when they find it difficult to adjust or when they are not satisfied with the new religion.

The Ari perform different rituals for various purposes. Some of these include fertility rituals; rituals to avoid diseases (human, animal, plant); harvest rituals; and rituals for rain and sun. Different rituals are performed by members of particular

¹¹ According to informants, men, women, and children in Ari were required to come to the church for baptism. Hundreds of people began to visit the church for the said reason and priests could not reach the new converts individually to give them individual Christian names. Rather they gave similar God-names to group of peoples.

clan(s). Some of the rituals are regular in the sense that they are performed seasonally or annually (eg. fertility and harvest rituals). Others are irregular because they are performed only when certain things happen (eg. rituals for disease, famine, locust invasion, etc.).

1.6 Relationships with Neighbouring Groups

As indicated at the beginning, Ari is bounded by seven different ethnic groups. These are Male, Gofa, Basketa, Dime, Mursi, Kara, and Banna (or Bein). Informants said that the Ari have historical relationships with some of these, while new relationships have also been established with others. Linguistically, Ari is closely related to Banna because a large number of vocabularies are shared by both languages. Certain Ari clans are believed to have come from neighbouring groups. Thus, the Ari have a strong feeling of relatedness to Dime, Kara, Hamar, and Banna groups. In line with this is the belief among the Hamar that one of their great ancestor called Banki Maro came from Ari and became their *bitta* (Lydall and Strecker 1979:2). Informants stated that there is a long history of marriage relationship between the Ari, on the one hand, and the Banna, Dime, Basketa, and Gofa, on the other. Moreover, the Ari recently have begun to intermarry with the Kara and Male but this is still very rare.

Historical trade relationships exist between the Ari and some of the surrounding groups, such as Dime, Kara, Banna, and Hamar. In the past the Ari used to provide these groups with coffee, ginger, and other spices, while receiving in exchange iron (from Dime), salty soil and goats (from Kara), cattle, goats, honey, and butter (from Hamar and Banna). Nowadays, there is a constant flow of goods between

the Ari and most of the neighbouring groups. Coffee, cardamon, spices, garlic, ginger, and to some extent grain are major items that the Ari send or sell to these groups. To Lydall and Strecker (1979:4) Baldambe mentioned the fact that coffee comes to Hamar from Ari. Although Ari is not bordered by Hamar, both groups share a feeling of relatedness. Goods brought to Ariland include cloth, grain, animals, butter, honey. In addition to the traditional exchange, money has been playing an important role in the transactions since the time of Emperor Menelik. The relation between Ari and Mursi is characterized by hostility. **Babi Sheii Gundeis**, the ritual leader of Beya, said that his people (Ari) living around Ari-Mursi border have been suffering from continuous encroachment by the Mursi. During peaceful times, however, members the two groups engage in trade.

The relations between Ari and the neighbouring groups are summarized below.

Table 3: Summary of the Relation Between Ari and Other Groups

Group	Relations	Receives from Ari	Sends to Ari
1. Dime	Linguistic, clan, trade, marriage	coffee, grain	cattle, honey, iron (past)
1. Kara	Linguistic, clan, marriage, trade	coffee, grain	honey, salty soil (past)
3. Banna	Linguistic, clan, marriage, trade	coffee, spices	goats, cattle, butter, honey
4. Male	Trade & marriage	coffee, spices	grain, butter, goats,
5. Gofa	Trade & marriage	coffee, cardamon	cloths, butter
6. Basketa	Marriage and trade	grain, spices	koisha(cloth)
7. Mursi	War and Trade	coffee, grain	cattle, honney

CHAPTER II: LAND AND THE PRODUCTION OF MAJOR CROPS

2.1 The Land Use Practice

Land, labour, and other inputs (such as animals, tools, seeds, fertilizers) constitute the major productive resources of most agricultural societies (Dalton 1967:66; Barker 1989:54). Various societies have their own cultural rules or legal provisions regarding the control and use of these resources. One such rule has to do with the question of land tenure system.

In Ethiopia, before the 1975 proclamation to provide for the public ownership of rural lands,¹² there existed different land tenure systems. Some of the past land tenure systems include **rist** (land inherited by a family or a group of families from a remote ancestor); **rist-gult** (land disposed of by the state to a person, family, church, or monastery); **gult** (a form of tenure which entitled the grantee the right to collect land-tax from land-holders and administer the area); **maderia** (state land temporarily given to officials/soldiers); **hudad** (government land worked by the **gebars** and/or district governors); and **semon** - land given to church personnel (Pankhurst 1966; Hoben 1973:5-10; Tadesse 1968:21-24). **Gebars** were tribute-paying peasants.

The southern and southwestern parts of Ethiopia were brought under Emperor Menelik's rule (or into the Ethiopian empire) towards the end of the nineteenth century, notably between 1875 and 1898 (Pankhurst 1966:135). This process of incorporation is said to have been more or less complete by 1900 (Donham 1986:3).

¹² According to proclamation no. 31 of 1975, all rural lands shall be the collective property of the Ethiopian people. The proclamation further noted that no person or business organization or any other organization shall hold rural land in private ownership.

It is difficult to make a generalized statement about the land tenure systems of the said provinces before Menelik's occupation for lack of sufficient data and given the diversity of cultural groups living there. According to informants, in Ari all lands and cattle were owned by the **babi**. In those days people had the right only to use the land they occupied in their life time. Upon the death of an occupant, his heir (preferably the oldest son) had to request the chief to allow him to inherit his father's property and to use the land. Informants noted that since there was no scarcity in land resource and since individuals were free to cultivate unoccupied lands by consulting village leaders, ownership questions were not crucial issues.

The Emperor having incorporated certain provinces in the south and the southwest, confiscated either two-thirds or the three-quarters of the land and distributed it to his generals, often to those who had first occupied the area, on a temporary basis (Pankhurst 1966:136). The remaining third (**sisso**) was left to the local chief permanently as **rist**, or temporarily as **maderia**. Alberto Giaccardi noted that large areas taken over by the state could be reserved for further allocation; could be considered as **hudad**; could be given to officers as **rist**; could be assigned as **gult** to officers/lords; could be distributed as **maderia** to officials/soldiers (quoted in Pankhurst 1966:136).

In this thesis attempts are made to describe the history of land tenure system in Ari, the impact of secular changes in the system on the lives of people in general and on production process in particular, and people's opinion regarding land holding practices. In Ari the whole process of incorporation resulted in the formation of two types of lands (**gamam** and **babam**) with associated obligations. **Gamam** (literally Amhara land) was the lion's share of the land taken away from the **babi** and given (together with the people) to Menelik's favourites on temporary basis. Families living

on such lands had to (1) share their annual harvest with their respective lords, (2) give labour services, and (3) provide their lords with sheep and honey as a gift. On the other hand, **babam** (land that belongs to the **babi**) was part of the land left to the local leader. This is in line with what several authors state that one-third or one-quarter of lands were given to local leaders as rist or hereditary gult (Pankhurst 1966:136; Donham 1986:39). Thus, those who lived on the **babam** were not forced to enter into a new agreement or commitment except for the fact that they continued to give labour services to the local leader. For that matter, even those living on **gamam** volunteered to continue to work for their **babi** because of the latter's ritual powers.

In due course the state monopoly of land ownership was gradually undermined by the grantees (Tadesse 1968:23). In other words, temporary land grants to them, in one or the other way, became hereditary (**rist**). In Ari the new recipients of land became the owners, while the original inhabitants were forced to remain tenants. Tadesse (1968) further noted that the individuals' absolute right of ownership obtained its full recognition with the coming of Haile Selassie to the Ethiopian throne. In other words, Emperor Haile Selassie's attempt to privatize land ownership reinforced ownership rights of the descendants of Menelik's generals, soldiers, and the nobility.

Informants stated that the Ari had a very difficult time during Haile Selassie's regime, particularly after the Italian occupation. The Northern officials and landlords are said to have become merciless evicting natives and confiscating their property. According to Ato Metekia and **Babi** Bamay, except for **babi** Diksi Urki, the then leader of Sida, most Ari **babi** collaborated with the Italians rather than with the

Ethiopian patriots, mainly the landlords. The landlords, who felt betrayed, returned after the victory with feelings of revenge.

The privatization of land was abolished by the 1975 proclamation that made land State property. During President Mengistu Haile Mariam's regime, therefore, individual peasants retained the land they used to till with usufructory rights. Almost all informants stated that they liked this kind of land tenure because it gave them a sense of security. However, they further noted that people suffered a lot due to heavy taxes and frequent financial contributions imposed on them by the then government.

The Ari's actual utilization of land may be best described by focusing on the various categories of land. There are three types of land in Ari. The first type is called **tikam** (literally **tika** means root crops and **hami** is a field). It is an area of land that surrounds homesteads and in which root crops, vegetables, fruits, and coffee are grown. The survey result shows that in Sida the average holding is about five **timad**, nearly half a hectare. One **timad** is a land that can be ploughed by a pair of oxen within five to six hours time. According to an agricultural extension worker in the area, eight to ten **timad** of land is equivalent to one hectare. The other type is a land that is found in the outskirts of **tikam** and which is used for growing cereal crops. It is known by the term **wonam** (work field). According to the survey result, on average, people in Sida hold about 11 **timad** (slightly over a hectare) of **wonam**. The third type, which is rare nowadays, is known by the term **Qosa** (literally means forest). It includes land that has never been cultivated or that has been covered by dense trees or bamboos; bushy hill sides difficult for cultivation; and swampy areas covered by grasses. Regarding the total land holding situation, there is a significant gap between the minimum size (3 **timad**) and the maximum (34 **timad**). The mean value is 15.2 **timad** (about 1.5 hectare).

2.2 Major Crops Grown in Sida

The process of crop production can be described/analyzed by focusing on the types of crops grown; the circumstances (cultural, social, physical, political, economic) under which they are produced; division and organization of labour; and the different techniques and tools used.

In Sida crops grown include: cereal crops (sorghum, maize, **tef**, barley, and wheat); root crops (**ensete**, taro, yam, cassava, potatoes); pulses (broad beans, peas, beans, cow pea); and coffee and cardamon. As mentioned before there are also other plants/crops grown in the area. For the purpose of this thesis two categories of crops are chosen. These are subsistence crops (which include cereals and root crops) and cash crops. Cereals and root crops are produced basically for local consumption, though farmers sell or exchange portion of their produce on the local market. Coffee and cardamon, on the other hand, are principally produced for cash income. But this is not to deny the use of these crops for domestic consumption and rituals. The following discussion attempts to describe (1) the origin of crops, (2) their functions, particularly their contribution to subsistence, (3) the relative importance given to each crop, and (4) the effect of combining different undertakings.

2.2.1 Subsistence Crops

a) Cereal Crops

Sorghum (**ribi/rubi**):

Sorghum, *Sorghum bicolor*, is one of the three cereal crops widely grown in midland Sida. There is a saying in Ari **ribi isin mudet toidi**, meaning "sorghum is the oldest of all the grains". Informants say that most sorghum varieties originated in Ari, while a few varieties and the rest of grains have been acquired from other cultures later in their history (see the list below). In fact, it is quite difficult to come up with a statement that the Ari have domesticated certain varieties of sorghum. This is because archeo-botanical evidence is absolutely lacking at present time. However, there is a general agreement that wild races of sorghum are abundant and wide spread in Ethiopia (Bender 1975:221). People's claims to have brought wild plants into cultivation are partly based on, and evidenced by the existence of the relevant wild varieties. Therefore, it can be speculated that the Ari may have domesticated the locally available wild sorghum. The involvement of sorghum in many cultural and ritual practices indicates the existence of a special relationship between the people and the crop.

In most cases sorghum and other cereal crops are grown on fields found in the outskirts of areas reserved for residence and garden crops, such as root crops, coffee, cardamon, and vegetables. The process of production of sorghum in Ari, particularly in Sida, demands heavy work. Informants mentioned that this was not the case in the past as people used to have far better production, even before the introduction of the plough. In fact, in some parts of Ari (eg. in lower parts of Beya and Layda) sorghum

is simply sown in the grass and then the grass is chopped and left there to decay. People living in these areas can allow land to lie fallow because they have new lands to clear.¹³ Sida used to be one of the leading grain producing localities and had a long history of supporting most of the neighbouring localities at times of food shortage. But nowadays the area is not in a position to support even its inhabitants because the level of grain production (both per unit of household and per unit of field) has kept on declining. The reason for so much toiling today, and the decline in production may be explained in terms of the combination of factors that resulted in land scarcity, deterioration of soil fertility, and the like (see chapter 5 for details).

As regards the method of production in Sida, first the field is cleared using **wali** (a locally made tool) and then it is tilled repeatedly (twice or three times depending on the fertility of the soil) using ploughs which are drawn by a pair of oxen. Usually land is prepared for sorghum in April, while sowing (**masha**) takes place in May. A couple of weeks may be added or reduced from the said months depending on the nature of the soil and the weather condition of the season.

In Sida sorghum needs much weeding until it has matured. Beginning July the first weeding is done using **wali** and sometimes (particularly in the olden days) with **gosha** (a locally made hoe). In most cases, weeds are removed every one or two months by **wali** until the plant becomes strong enough to surpass the weeds. In lower parts of Beya and Layda (according to informants) weeding is carried out only once. The practice of weeding cannot be performed by family labour alone. The family need to join any one or several of the larger work parties (see chapter 3 for details) organized for such purposes. Sorghum is harvested between December and February.

¹³ Ari living around the southern fringes of Beya and Layda are bordered by pastoral
ups. They have been constantly clearing new land (towards the south).

Those who want to move their crop to their homes as soon as possible recruit additional persons, while others rely on family labour to do the harvest. **Wali** are used for harvesting as well as for clearing and weeding.

Although some varieties mature within six or seven months, most sorghum varieties are harvested after ten months. This is a very long time when compared to the three or four months of maturity period witnessed in Banna, Hamar and other neighbouring areas.

There are about 27 varieties of sorghum in Ari, of which 17 are said to be indigenous in Sida. Informants said that there are some new varieties acquired from Banna and other groups during unknown time. These include **decheken**, **gemba**, **laydecais**, and **delget**. Some varieties are highly favoured and valued (eg. **sala**, **zeyaka**, **dimma**, **galkimsa**, **walket**, **endi**, and **tsamak**) mainly for their good taste, durability, and for resistance to weevils. There are other varieties (eg. **zanga**) valued by the society for functions related to custom associated with birth. The "new" varieties like **decheken**, **gemba**, **laydekais**, and **delget** are appreciated for their early maturity, but they are not grown widely because they have only limited economic, social, and ritual functions. Varieties of sorghum are listed in the following table in order of their importance or high value attached to them. Accordingly, the first 12 varieties are the popular ones highly preferred for consumption and gift giving.

Table 4: Varieties of Sorghum in Ari

Name	Meaning	MP(in month)	Main Use
Sala(I)	--	9-10	consumption
Zeyaka(I)	reddish	"	"
Galkimsa(I)	elongated	"	"
Dimma(N)	name of a group (Dim	"	"
Walket(I)	--	"	"
Tsamak(I)	whitish	"	"
Endi(I)	name of a moiety	"	"
Gariniti(I)	name of wild plant	"	"
Motset(I)	--	"	"
Girsha(I)	name of yam variety	8-9	"
Zanga(I)	--	7-8	ritual
Laidekais(I)	--	7-8	consumption
Delget(N)	--	7-8	fermentation
Gemba(N)	--	7-8	fermentation
Decheken (N)	short	7-8	consumption
Dissa(I)	--	8-9	"
Gela(I)	name of wild ensete	8-9	"
Zolet(I)	--	8-9	"
Kusa(I)	--	9-10	"
Tilegies(I)	that breaks a pot	"	"
kuma(I)	to sip	"	"
Kaja(N)	--	"	"
Mola(N)	round shape	"	"
Biret(I)	"	"	"
Mutsi(I)	salty soil	"	"
Manna(N)	low class group	8-9	"
Mitserak(N)	--	"	"

key:- I - Indigenous in Sida; N - Newly acquired;
MP - Maturity period

Some sorghum varieties are known by terms derived from the name of places (eg. **dimma**), while some others are called after their respective colours (eg. **zeyaka** and **tsamak**). A few are also known by the same term used for other crops or plants (eg. **girsha**, **garinti**). Sorghum plays a very important role in the economic life of the Ari. It is used for domestic consumption and nowadays for commercial purposes as well. In Ari, the most important indigenous drink is a local beer called **gola**, and the best type is the one made from sorghum (**ribigol**). **Gola** is brewed for domestic use,

rituals, feasts, to recruit labour for agricultural or other activities. Recently Ari women have begun to sell it on the road, in the market (see plate 3) and at home. Sorghum is also used for food in the form of **shosha** (roasted), **tima** (boiled), **qista/balsh** (baked), and **wocha** (porridge). All families do not use it as frequently as maize for household consumption. It is only the wealthy households who use sorghum most frequently in their meal, while poor families rely heavily on maize and root crops. The latter can not afford to produce more due to shortage of land, plough oxen and other related problems.

Nowadays, sorghum can also be bought or sold for cash (see plate 1 & 2). The price of sorghum has been fluctuating depending on the overall annual production levels. The old or traditional forms of bartering are still practised throughout Ariland.

Maize (**patri/pater**)

Maize, commonly known by the scientific name **Zea mays**, was first domesticated in the New World (Bender 1975:235). Maize, according to informants in Sida, was acquired from other groups late in the history of the Ari. However, none of them mentioned the time and the place of origin. There is no ritual or major customary performances associated with maize planting or harvesting, except for the tradition that the process of sowing and/or harvesting of any seasonal crop must be started (**dom**) by **godmi** in their own fields.

Like sorghum, the process of production of maize requires heavy toiling. Before ploughing the land over and over again (often 2 to 3 times), the field has to be cleared using a **wali**. Maize may, to a limited extent, be planted (**baka**) by hoe or stick in fields where the use of draught animals is difficult. Such fields include hill

sides and those covered by trees and perennial crops. The weeding of maize planted in this way is often done by family members and/or by small sized work groups (See chapter 3). However, maize sown over a large area demands the recruitment of additional labour for weeding purposes.

Unlike sorghum, maize is harvested twice a year: **sila pater** (winter maize) and **bergi pater** (summer maize). **Sila** and **bergi** refer to winter and summer seasons respectively. For the latter fields are prepared between June and July and for the former between January and February. A **bergi pater** sown in August is harvested beginning December, while preparing field for the next production season. **Sila**, which is sown between February and March, also needs five months to mature. However, many people say that **sila** does not give as good a yield since it is sown during the dry season. Hence, Ari hardly rely on it. Frequent weeding is of a great importance if one wants to have a good harvest. Weeds are removed (first by **gosha** and then by **wali**) three to four times in the course of the production season. The Ari recognize only two varieties of maize: **tsami pater** and **zeymi pater**. As there are no Ari terms for these varieties, the corresponding colour of seeds (**tsami** and **zeymi** for white and red respectively) are used as prefixes to the term **patri**.

Maize has several functions. Food is prepared from maize in the form of **atsita** (smoked), **shosha** (roasted), **tima/gueshi** (boiled), **qitsa/balsh** (baked), and **wocha** (porridge). In the meals of many families maize appears frequently than sorghum. Therefore, an absence of maize would definitely make survival very difficult. The local beer is brewed from maize for domestic consumption as well as for recruitment of labour parties. In addition to its use for making **gola**, maize has an exceptional role in the process of making a powerful local alcohol called **arqa** (derived from the Amharic term **areqi**). The Amhara are believed to have introduced **arqa**-making and

drinking traditions. Earlier **gola** and **arqa** used to be sold in local bars, but nowadays they are sold in the open market (see plate 3). Most informants stated that nowadays the Ari sell a part of their harvest of maize for sash (see plate 1 & 2).

Tef (Gachi)

Tef (*Eragrostis abyssinica*) is one of the local plants brought under cultivation in Ethiopia. According to Bender (1975:220) it is not yet known whether the process of domestication of **tef** and other crops, such as finger millet (*Eleusine coracana*), ensete (*Musa ensete*),¹⁴ coffee (*Coffea arabica*), and nug (*Guizotia abyssinica*) preceded or followed Nilotic influences.

Tef is one of the recently introduced food crops in Ari. It is believed that the Amhara brought this plant at the beginning of the twentieth century. There is a saying that some Ari closely related to or those working for the Amhara stole very little amounts of **tef** (which they carried in their hair) from their masters and grew it on their own field for the first time. According to informants, **tef** took several decades to be used/grown by the majority of Ari people.¹⁵ Even today, the Ari's use of **tef** for domestic consumption is not as extensive as it is among the Amhara.

¹⁴ According to Dr. Shigeta, ensete used to be grouped under the genus *Musa*, fruits banana, of *Musaceae*. But now it is considered to be an independent genera with at least six different species under it (see Ph.D. Dissertation).

¹⁵ According to Ato Yijais Geni, Ato Afedab Jiba, Ato Metekia Lapiri, and Ato Wochais Uli (informants), during the times of Menelik and at early stage of Haile Selassie's regime, people used to carry significant portions of their **tef** produce to the landlords. In those days the Ari rarely used **tef** for domestic consumption.

Thus, there are still people who do not grow **tef** at all and there are some who do it sporadically. All Ari in Sida are not involved in the production of this crop because of (1) its limited involvement in Ari diet (2) the heavy toiling it demands, (3) lack of plough animals, and (4) scarcity of land. In 1990/91 and 1992/93, 10 out of the 20 informants did not sow **tef** for reasons mentioned above, while 12 of them managed to sow it in 1991/2. There are six persons who stopped producing **tef**, while the majority continued to grow with interruption.

Tef is the only grain that matures within a short period of time (at most four months), but it is grown only once a year. The process of field preparation takes place between August and September. This process involves clearing the field; burning chopped down trees, bushes and grasses; ploughing the field again and again (3 to 4 times) until it gets soft/fine; and finally removing any remnants (of wood and grass) from the field. Immediately following this step **tef** is sown between mid September and October, while the process of harvesting (by **wali** or with sickles) takes place from mid December to January. Like any other food crops **tef** needs to be weeded at least once.

There are three varieties of **tef**: **tsami gach** (white), **zeymi gach** (red), and **buni** (from the Amharic term **bunign**). The Ari also grow a mixture of white and red **tef** called **sergegna** (again borrowed from Amharic). As in the case of maize the varieties are distinguished by their respective colours as the Ari have not yet developed particular terms for these varieties.

When compared to the production of sorghum and maize, the production of **tef** is oriented much more towards commercial needs. In other words, people grow **tef** mainly for cash income (see plate 1) rather than for household consumption. Unlike the other two principal cash crops (coffee and cardamon), growing and trading **tef** is

not taken as serious business and thus it does not compete with food crop production. Its production is limited to those individuals who have sufficient resources to meet the household's subsistence requirement. Although not frequently, the Ari use **tef** for domestic consumption. It is served as a food in the form of **datssa** (soup), **qitsa** (bread) or **balsh** (**injera** or a large thin circular bread). It is also possible (but expensive and less usual) to use **tef** for **gola**.

Field preparation, sowing, weeding, and harvesting times of the above three crops are summarized in the following table.

Table 5: Production periods of major crops

Crops	Land preparation	Sowing	Weeding	Harvesting
Sorghum	April	May	July to Nov.	Dec. and Feb.
Maize	Jan. and Feb.	Feb. & March	April to June	July and Aug.
Maize	June & July	August	Sept. to Nov.	Dec. and Jan.
Tef	Aug. & Sept.	Sept. & Oct.	November	Dec. and Jan.

Estimate of land used and cereals produced by informants

Twenty informants have been asked about their field size and the estimated amount of harvest obtained from each field during the last three years, i.e from 1990/91 to 1992/93. The unit of measurements for field size and amount of harvest are **timad** and quintal respectively. The following table shows the total size of land cultivated to sow the three major crops and the amount produced. Informants were not in a position to estimate the yield of 1992/93 because most crops were still in the field during the fieldwork time.

Table 6: Size of field and estimated amount of harvest

Year	Sorghum		Maize		Tef	
	Field	Harvest	Field	Harvest	Field	Harvest
1990/91	68	49	88	54	29	18
1991/92	78	63	93	75	37	21
1992/93	83	--	77	--	42	--
Total	229	112	258	129	108	39

There is a slight increase in the size of sorghum field during the last three years. The average sizes of sorghum field for three years were 3.4, 3.9, 4.2 **timad** respectively. This slight increase in the individual field sizes is explained in terms of the continued increase in the price of sorghum during the last four years and the continued decline in the prices of coffee and cardamon. Individual informants have their own answers as to how they increased the farm size. Ato Beralq, one of the informants, managed to increase sorghum field renting land from friends. Ato Hamiso, another informant, said that he stopped producing **tef** (since 1988) in favour of sorghum and maize. Ato Kaysmi cleared a significant part of his cardamon plant to produce cereals and root crops.

The last two years' yield shows positive correlation with the size of field. Accordingly, the year before last the mean harvest obtained by the 20 informants was 2.5 quintal and last year it was 3.2 quintal. This year people are expecting a better harvest. The amount of harvest per unit of field fluctuates due to changes in weather conditions. In 1990/91 the ratio between land and sorghum harvest was 1:72. i.e only 72 kilo gram sorghum was produced on one **timad** of land. Last year, however, the ratio had improved to some extent. It was 1:83. Informants explained that in 1990/91 most farmers did not get a good yield due to climatic change.

In Sida there is a tendency to allocate more land for the production of maize than sorghum. During the last three years, for instance, the 20 informants used a total of 258 **timad** of land for maize and only 229 **timad** for sorghum. In 1990/91, 1991/92, and 1992/93 the average sizes of maize field of these informants were 4.4, 4.7, and 3.9 **timad** respectively. This year both the overall size and the mean value went down because much of the land had been used for the production of sorghum and **tef**. The average harvest of maize for 1990/91 and 1991/92 were 2.7 and 3.8 quintals. Like with sorghum, the level of production fluctuated from year to year depending on climatic conditions prevailing during the year or the season. The land-crop ratios for 1990/91 and 1991/92 were 1:61 and 1:80 respectively. This reinforces the previous explanation that in 1990/91 production was affected due to changes in the climatic conditions.

The main functions of maize are seen in relation to its use for domestic consumption, gift-giving, market values, and arrangement of feast. Its production is dictated by a number of factors. There is no difference among informants regarding the relative emphasis they give to the production of maize. In other words, maize is equally important to all.

It is already said that, unlike sorghum and maize, **tef** is not grown by the overwhelming majority. During the last three years, for instance, nearly half of the 20 informants did not sow **tef** for various reasons, the most important ones being scarcity of land and lack of oxen for ploughing. Regarding the performance of those who continued to grow **tef**, like with sorghum and maize, the average size of field and the average amount of harvest increased. Most informants give price-responsive kind of answer for this increment. Ato Alsa, said that decline in the prices of coffee and cardamon forced him to produce more **tef**. According to Ato Wochais, people's

emphasis on the production of cereal crops is explained in relation to the recent increase in the prices of these crops.

b) Root Crops

Traditionally, the Ari rely heavily on root crops for subsistence. All root crops are collectively called **tika** and are grown in a **tikam**, a garden or land that encircles residence. The concept **tika** as opposed to **isin** (cereal crops) may be extended to include other garden cultivated plants (other than coffee and cardamon), such as cabbage, onion, banana, and aerial yam. All capable members of a household are expected to work in the garden. When compared to the production of grains mentioned above, all root crops require limited effort and attention. Consequently, working in **tikam** is considered as an engagement in a pass-time activity rather than in real work. According to informants, the real agricultural work is performed in fields where cereal crops are grown, and this view is evidenced by the fact that the Ari call such fields **wonam** (labour or work field). Some of the most widely grown and used root crop in Sida (**ensete**, taro, and yam) are described below.

Ensete (aqim)

Ensete, commonly called the African false Banana, is an indigenous plant in Ethiopia. Taxonomically, the species of **ensete** cultivated in Ari and other southwestern parts of Ethiopia is believed to be **Ensete ventricosum** (Shigeta 1991:18). **Ensete** successfully grows in highland Ari, fairly well in the midland zone, and to some extent in lowland areas. It is not sown, but is rather propagated through a bud formation. Different varieties of **ensete** vary in their maturity period and it said that

most ensete varieties reach their full maturity stage between four and eight years.

There are wild races of **ensete** called **gela** in most parts of Ari. Regarding their taxonomic position it has been suggested that **ensete** and **gela** are members of the same species, *E. ventricosum* (Shigeta 1991:22). **Gela** is propagated by seeds under natural condition. It is found in areas not disturbed by routine agricultural activities or other forms of human intervention. Such places include **tsoisi/qaidima** (protected and dangerous ritual sites), **duki** (burial places), **qotsa** (forests), **loqabod** (river banks), and **baz** (swampy areas).

The Ari associate themselves to a great extent with **ensete**. The Ari do not say that they have received **ensete** and its culture from other groups. Rather they claim to be the first group to have brought the wild variety into cultivation. Godms Amenak (a ritual specialist in highland Sida) explained the relationship between the Ari and **ensete** as follows. "We (the Ari) and **ensete** have long history of relatedness. We rely on them and they rely on us for survival. This means we can not live without them and they can not live without us. We both are created to support each other."

As Bender (1975:216) states it is very difficult to distinguish between primary centres where the farming practice was an entirely indigenous development, and secondary centres where the knowledge and often the actual plants were externally derived by diffusion. The Ari might have acquired **ensete** from other groups. But it would be difficult to conclude that the locally available plants have never been added to the repertoire. Distribution of the relevant wild species are believed to indicate the potential areas of early cultivation (Bender 1975:89). In view of this fact, the existence of **gela** (wild **ensete**) in Ari may serve as a basis to follow this line of argument. Moreover, the various cultural practices associated with **ensete** (but not with other root crops) imply the existence of particular relationship between the plant and the people.

As far as the process of production is concerned, first a grown **ensete** plant is up-rooted using a **gosha** and **wali**. Having removed the leaves (**qalaa**) and numerous small roots (**chachi**), the plant is cut into two parts: the corm (**tudhi**) and the pseudostem (**gumza**). The corm is then buried (**wodi**) either after being cut into two halves by **halfa** (a locally made big-sized and double-aged knife) or as it is by digging the centre of the cut surface 5 to 10 cm deep. The corm is buried with the cut part facing upwards and thinly covered with fine soil. After six months or so, several new buds called **artsi** emerge. Group of **artsi** are detached from the parental corm and transplanted (**kor**) two or three of them together in a separate nursery garden or within **tikam**. After another six months or more, those put together in groups are separated and re-transplanted independently within or around the fringes of **tikam**. This is an on-going process as **ensete** is not a seasonal crop. Weeds are removed once in five months time until the plant becomes big enough to withstand them.

Of the total number, the researcher obtained a list of 60 named varieties, which is less by 16 varieties than what Shigeta (1991:131) claims to exist. Most informants mentioned between 10 and 25 names and some did not own some of the varieties they know by name. On the other hand, some young informants, such as Ato Baralq and Ato Gebre did not know the number and names of some of the varieties in their field. Here below is the list of **ensete** varieties. Those indicated by "S" in brackets are varieties widely grown in Sida and those indicated by "N" are varieties lately came to Sida either from other Ari localities or from other societies. The rest are those varieties said to be indigenous in Ari but not popularly known and widely grown in Sida. The list starts with the popular and highly valued varieties. The first 12 are listed in order of their popularity and importance.

Table 7: Varieties of Ensete

Name	Meaning	Main Functions
Moset (S)	---	---
Monet (S)	---	consumption
Aleka (S)	---	..
Shuferak(S)	---	..
Arfa (S)	clan & place name	..
Jolak (S)	---	ritual + consumption
Genna (S)	---	..
Qarta (S)	---	..
Golet (S)	---	..
Damet (S)	---	..
Dakay (S)	---	..
Osadi (S)	---	..
Antsa (S)	bee (of bee type)	..
Wobajolak	Jolak from Woba(place)	..
Bubni (S)	restless	..
Guferak (S)	---	..
Kumcha (S)	---	..
Garacha (S)	---	..
Dhibla	---	..
Qaqisa (S)	---	..
Ela (S)	flour	..
Babsul (S)	---	..
Barga (S)	finger millet	..
Dengeken(N)	personal name	..
Bukma	---	..
Tsoferak(S)	---	..
Halfaqums(N)	that breaks knife	..
Harbi (N)	name of a wild plant	..
Salta (S)	---	..
Siqi (S)	---	..
Kachi (N)	cholera	..
Tolla	---	..
Yizdi	---	..
Sula (N)	---	..
Maqa (S)	lizard	..
Achebokm	---	..
Zokma	---	..
Tsala (N)	edible wild plant	..
Gofa (N)	place & group name	..
Asha	name of a tree plant	..
Fatra (S)	maize	..
Ronka	---	..
Worzemach	---	..
Jura (S)	---	..
Zinka	---	..
Baysamatoch	---	..
Anie (S)	name of tree plant	..
Manna (S)	low status group	..
Ersinga (S)	---	..
Duna	---	..
Oisi	bamboo	..
Yintiadha(S)	procreates by itself	..
Nodhikucha	---	..
Gaya (S)	---	..
Eserkimal(S)	---	..
Shoqa (S)	---	..
Mala (N)	place and group name	..
Zergi (S)	wheat	..
Anka	ant	..
Salpri(S)	strong smell	..

As far as naming is concerned, some ensete varieties are given names of other crops/plants (eg. **fatra**, **zergi**, **oisi**, and **barga**). Others are called by the same terms the society uses for animals (eg. **antsa**, **maqa**, and **anka**). Varieties like **gofa**, **mala**, and **wobajolak** are called after names of places, where they are believed to have come from. However, more than 50% of the varieties are identified by distinct terms.

Ensete plays central role in economic and socio-cultural life of the Ari. As far as its economic functions are concerned, **ensete** is used for food in the form of **mossa** (boiled corm mixed with cabbage, beans, etc.), **zuni** (boiled corm), **washi** (bread), and **wocha** (porridge). The mixture of **ensete** and cereals can also be used for purposes of brewing **gola**. When compared to other root crops it is one of the most frequently served main meals in Sida. However, the question how frequent would be difficult to answer because it all depends on the season, availability of supplementary foods, and the size of individual families. Generally speaking, any form of **ensete** food may be served (in a family) 3 to 4 times in a week. Families who do not have enough maize and sorghum tend to use **ensete** more than those with good harvest of crops.

Ensete leaves are used for dressing as women's skirts, shade from sun shine, protection from rain, wrapping and tying purposes, covering pots and dishes, and as a mat/sheet for sitting and sleeping on. The pseudostem is valuable in that the basal part is used for food, while the remainder is used for making strong rope. The pseudostem also serves as an animal fodder. It is important to note that it is not only the corm and the pseudostem that are used, but also the leaves. The exchange or commercial value of **ensete** has been steadily increasing. According to informants, a medium-sized **ensete** which used to be sold for 2 birr twenty years ago, now costs between 10 and 15 birr. Fifteen years ago it was possible to buy a big slice of corm for 10 cents, but now it is unthinkable.

The production of **ensete** is affected by a number of factors. Firstly, **ensete** is affected by an infectious disease called **durqa**, which is caused by **sada** (pests). **Sada** infested plants dry sooner because these insects are believed to excrete certain substances on the leaves of **ensete** that cause the damage. People have been trying to do away with this problem by performing rituals, up-rooting and burying infected

plants, pouring an ash in the field to prevent transmission, and by taking care of tools to avoid contamination. However, such efforts proved to be fruitless. Secondly, the most serious damage is caused by a particular rodent called **ocha**, that feeds on the corm of **ensete**. The usual way to deal with this problem has been to catch the animal in a trap. People also take 3 to 5 hours to dig deep into the ground to catch the animal. They also try to kill the animal by pouring a mixture of water and cow dung into the hole in which it lives. Finally, there are other **ensete** diseases called **sunā** that causes root rotting, and **sola** that causes leaf drying. The causes and solutions to these problems are not known.

Taro (**gabzha**)

Taro, *Colocasia antiquorum*, is believed to have been first domesticated in southeast Asia, possibly in Burma (Bender 1975:225). Taro is another widely grown and used root crop in lowland and midland Ari. Most informants do not have a clear idea about the original source of this plant. However, there is a general tendency to state that taro has been in Ari from time immemorial. There are some individuals (such as Ato Seqis and Ato Hailu) who argue that taro must have come from another society as there are only limited cultural practices associated with it. In most cases it is planted within **tikam** and sometimes along side river banks and swampy areas. Taros planted in river banks and swampy areas are known as **qanagabzh** (taro from the mud) and are used during the summer.

The process of production of taro requires such tools as **wali**, **gosha**, and **boyra** (a locally made digging tool). Like **ensete**, taro is a propagated plant. There are two ways of planting taro. First, having taken the lower part of the root for food, a slice of the upper part called **gutta** is planted again. Second, those roots that are small in

size may be replanted instead of being cooked. A new field is not sought for it, rather the same area is used again and again. However, those who want to expand and have more taro plants can clear and prepare some more fields, still within **tikam** or in river banks. The processes of producing and using taro are on-going activities.

The researcher has managed to get a list of 16 varieties of taro and all are said to be indigenous in Ari. Like the case with **ensete**, the list starts with the most popular and highly valued varieties.

Table 8: Varieties of Taro in Ari

Name	Meaning	Main Functions
Dolka	---	Consumption
Siqekat	---	"
Chulla	---	"
Zhazha	Variety of peas	"
Kussa	---	"
Ari	name of the study group	medicine + consump.
Abba	---	consumption
Dima	name of ethnic group	"
Qolidim	dima named after sheep	"
Tsoqa	---	"
Ringerak	taro named after peas	"
Gada	foolish	"
Qaali	---	"
Azak	---	medicine + consump.
Gara-gabzh	taro of the gara clan	"
Tseda	upwards	"

The main function of taro may be explained in terms of its use for domestic consumption. It plays a crucial role supporting the other food crops throughout the year. Most families, particularly those of large size, tend to focus on taro production for the following reasons. First, it is the only root crop that is neither expensive nor laborious. Second, when compared to other crops, taro hardly needs additional items to mix or eat with. Third, taro is not often attacked by plant disease or consumed by animals. Finally, since it has a high capacity of multiplying itself, the harvest per unit

of land is said to be very high. Not only is the root used but young leaves of certain varieties (eg. **ari**) are taken instead of cabbage. Taro is served as **ushta** (boiled) and **shanq** (boiled and mixed with cabbage). Taro is exchanged with other goods and can also be sold for cash, although the price is still low.

Yam (**asni** and **odi**)

There are different species of yams domesticated in different parts of the world. According to Bender (1975:219 & 225), species like **Dioscorea esculenta** and **Dioscorea cayenensis**, **D. rotunda** are believed to have been first brought into cultivation in southeast Asia and west Africa respectively. Bender further noted that southeast Asia has also contributed **D. alata**, another yam species.

In Ari cultivated yam is a seasonal root crop planted and harvested between the months of July and December. The Ari believe that this crop is one of their ancient food plants brought into cultivation in antiquity. According to Ato Wochayis and Ato Yijais, the origin and history of yam is comparable to that of **ensete** and sorghum. In other words, yam is as old as **ensete** and sorghum. There are some yam varieties believed to have been brought and added to the early domesticated stock from the wild race. Like in **ensete**, there are wild species growing in forests. Nowadays, however, the wild race is disappearing because of continued deforestation. According to folk classification, there are two types (groups) of yam: **asni** and **odi**. This division is based mainly on the nature of growth and appearance of the plants. **Asni**, with help of its pointed tip grows deep into the ground. On the other hand, **odi** swells side-ways and never goes down into the ground. In most cases the shape of **asni** is conical or cylindrical, while **odi** is round. The other difference has to do with the type of supporting trees they need. **Asni** is planted under a big tree because the ropy stems

do not stand by themselves but need support. On the other hand, **odi** is planted in an open space as it needs only shorter branchy wood that can be easily erected. Almost all the varieties of yam mature after one year. In other words, those planted in July are expected to mature the following July, though it can be harvested a couple months later.

As regards the practice of production, like taro, a slice of the upper part (**makla** and **chaa**, the upper part slices of **asni** and **odi** respectively) are used for planting, while the bulk of lower portion goes for domestic consumption. After harvest **makla** and **chaa** are left in the open air for more than a week so that the moisture that would otherwise cause plant decay (if planted too soon) would evaporate. Like most other root crops, yam is planted within the **tikam**.

Tools used for process of producing and harvesting yam include **wali** for clearing and weeding, **gosha** for planting and uprooting, **boira** for digging and uprooting, and **sheer** or **halfa** for cutting.

There are different varieties of yam (25 **asni** & 4 **odi**) and special characteristics are attributed to some of them. They vary in colour, taste, maturity period, size, etc. Varieties, such as **falaa**, **utaa**, **sharma**, and **odi** are popular and are considered to be the best qualities. They are therefore served to the head of the household, elderly people, and honoured guests. Varieties like **kedab**, **della**, and **foders** are regarded as **qotsasin** (wild yam) because they are believed to have been domesticated late in history. The typical feature of these varieties is that they survive and give yields under situations of poor handling. The special feature characterizing **wolla** (of **Aykala** variety) is that it causes vomiting. People who are not used to this variety and those who drink water after eating **wolla** are likely to throw it up. According to most informants, this problem can be minimized through experience and

by avoiding water immediately after the meal. The different varieties of yam are listed in order of their popularity and importance. The first 8 are the most popular and valued varieties and are listed accordingly. On the other hand, the last 7 are the least known and least valued yam varieties.

Table 9: Varieties of Yam in Ari

Name	Meaning	Functions
Falaa	---	consumption
Utta	bride-groom	"
Odi*	---	"
Sharma	grass name	"
Dutsinda	---	"
Oitadutsind	from Oitamer (place)	"
Aykala	---	"
Dima	name of ethnic group	"
Girsha	name of sorghum variety	"
Sirqak	---	"
Sudi	personal name	"
Muqerak	---	"
Antses	---	"
Gossa	---	"
Morsha	broken	"
Sheina	---	"
Turi	liver	"
Shearak	---	"
Yemphla	---	"
Badetsas	that causes vomiting	"
Della	---	"
Kedab	---	"
Foders	---	"
Gabjaqal	taro leaf	"
Toqtoqa	---	"
Baza	debit	"

* There are 4 types of Odi: busha, aynet, ahtsi and gungod.

The Ari plant yam basically for domestic consumption. It can not be said that people subsist on yams because it is used for limited range of time. However, most varieties mature in a season (July to December) during which there is heavy usage of root crops due to shortages of grain. In view of this fact, yam plays an important role in the seasonal agricultural cycle since it ripens when people are about to face serious

food shortage. Yam is a delicious food (from Ari point of view) served in the form of **uush** (bolied), **shanq** (boiled and crushed), and **atsita** (smoked).

2.2.2 Cash Crops

There are two views regarding the necessity of introducing and expanding cash crops in traditional economies. According to the first view, the integration of traditional agriculture into the exchange economy is part of a successful development strategy for developing societies. Oluwasanmi (1966:117) states that farmers in Nigerian communities positively responded to the production of export crops and this resulted in overall material improvements for the farmer and for the country at large. The second view is that the benefits of increased commercialization may be negative when changes in traditional agriculture occur. Ben Wisner (1977:208) mentions that the introduction of coffee in one of the Kenyan districts in 1957 accelerated class stratification, reversed out-migration, increased population, and economically marginalized the majority of the people.

There are still other writers who argue that expansion of cash crop production involves both negative and positive consequences (Webb 1989). Patrick Webb studied the impact of the commercialization of rice on intra-household decision making, resource control, and labour activities in Gambia. The research indicates that although families benefited greatly from increased rice yields, the process resulted in substantial changes in the organization of production. First, control over production and use was transferred from women to men. Secondly, the expanded use of rice increased the work burden, particularly of women. McClenan (1986:184/5) states that

though the expansion of coffee production in Gedeo initially resulted in increased pressure on land and labour, coffee eventually provided greater benefit for Gedeo people.

a) Coffee

Coffee (**buna**) is a seasonal crop harvested between November and Mid February. It is one of the two leading cash crops in midland and lowland Ari. Food crops like sorghum, and maize are also sold for cash in these areas, though the commercial interest is not as strong and pronounced while producing them. Since coffee and cardamon (another cash crop) do not grow in the highland areas, people inhabiting higher altitudes sell surpluses of their food crops such as barley, wheat, peas, and broad beans. **Babi** Asfin stated that coffee as opposed to cardamon has a very long history and a great deal of cultural functions. According to him, coffee has been there as a beverage crop since unknown period. Both the beans and the leaves (**qalaa**) are used for drinking.

Later in their history some Ari began to use coffee as trade item to be exchanged for other goods from neighbouring cultural groups. However, since coffee trading was not taken as a serious business, its production did not compete with food crop production. Before Menelik's conquest, both the production and trading of coffee were limited to few group of persons. The commercial value of coffee gradually increased during the last seventy to eighty years. Ato Afedab, who is now about 80 years old, said that his father told him that few "strange people" started coming to Sida to exchange coffee for salt when he (Afedab's father) was young. According to Ato Gofsa Tsona, who is now deceased, coffee traders came to Ariland much before Menlik's conquest. He said that the earlier traders were rather the scouts of the

Emperor who facilitated conditions for the conquest. These merchants continued to visit the Ari once in a while. However, the responses of most Ari to this new economic development was not positive until the Italian occupation. Afterwards, however, most Ari began to grow more and more coffee for cash income because merchants managed to reach them frequently as the road facility improved. The Bako-Gofa-Addis Ababa road, which the current administration is now trying to renew, was built during the Italian occupation.

Daniel Ayana (1986:47-52), who studied the contribution of production of coffee with food crops towards self-sufficiency, states that in Qellam and Ghimbi of Wollega region the two activities complement each other. According to Daniel, peasants in parts of these areas were self-sufficient in that the average peasant could sustain his family until the next harvest (sometimes with surplus of food crops for sale). In Ari commercially-oriented coffee production attained its highest peak during the last 30 years. In this period, farmers in coffee growing areas are said to have put more effort into cash crop production and less on food crops. The motive behind this change is explained in terms of the presumed contributions of coffee and cardamon. To be specific, people wanted the cash income for the following reasons: to pay government taxes; to buy animals, clothes, agricultural tools, other commodities; to expand agricultural production; and to save some money for emergency situations (grain shortage, death, marriage). During the initial phases of cash crop intensification, people benefited greatly from coffee and were able to increase their herd size, and build houses with corrugated iron roofs.

Guluma Gemedu (1986:92), who wrote about food crop and coffee cultivation in Jimma and Limmu Awraja of Kafa, points out that the expansion of coffee cultivation has partly contributed to the problems of food shortage and made the

coffee farmers victims of mounting food prices. Likewise, in Ari further emphasis on cash crop and continued decline in food crop production combined to militate against food security. Moreover, the contribution of coffee to the economy of the society began to go down following the decline in the prices of cash crops. Later on, coffee ceased to be a powerful crop that could bring positive change in the life of the people.

Several reasons may be cited for this later development. First, the size of coffee production varied from year to year ranging from none to a couple of quintals. Agricultural specialists in the area explain reduction and fluctuation of coffee production in Ariland in terms of management problems and weather conditions.¹⁶ Most of the coffee trees are too old to give a good yield and people are said to be unwilling to stump them down. Secondly, the way the Ari collect and process coffee beans is so old that the quality becomes poor. This practice has limited their bargaining power for better prices. Thirdly, due to infrastructural problems, coffee producers did not have favourable marketing facilities. Thus, people have been selling to middle-men for very cheap prices. Fourthly, most Ari do not sell their coffee in large quantities that would enable them to earn good prices. The usual practice is to sell coffee in small quantities over extended periods. This practice couldn't help them to save and use the income for development. Finally, the Ari have developed a new tradition of drinking alcohol (often *areqi* and *teji*) on market days. Men, women, and children go to the nearby market with some coffee or cardamon or grain, and part of

¹⁶ Ato Ayalew (Diploma holder), is an employee of the Ministry of Agriculture assigned in Metser as an extension worker. He was giving extension services to six Peasant Associations: Metser, Dordora, Pelpa, Arfes, Gomir, and Shishir. The objectives of the extension work include provision of technical assistance, expertise advice, introduction of new techniques, organization of demonstration sites, etc. Ato Ayalew was assigned to establish relationship with a group of farmers (12 in number) from each Peasant Association through whom he planned to contact the majority. However, he was transferred after a brief stay in the area.

the income is spent there.

b) Cardamon (*kororima*)

Informants mentioned that the Ari began to grow cardamon between 50 to 70 years from now. Before this period only few households grew it around their houses, while the majority was using the wild plant. Ato Yijais, who is about 70 years old said that cardamon became an important cultivated plant in his life time. Initially people used it as a spice and later as an exchange item in the trade relation between the Ari and some neighbouring groups. Still its production, use, and trading was confined to certain individuals rather than to Ari society at large. During the last twenty five to thirty years, however, most inhabitants of midland Ari began to grow cardamon by clearing land on which they had grown root crops such as *ensete* and taro. Ato Kaysmi stated that 25 years ago his father and other farmers in their village planted cardamon over a wide areas formerly used for other crops. This happened because (1) unexpectedly cardamon became a cash crop with very high price, (2) it can be harvested three times a year, (3) the production of cardamon does not involve heavy labour but rather requires close attention, and (4) there is a widely shared view that part of the food crops could be bought from the neighbouring groups (eg. from Male) for cheap prices.

Like *ensete* and taro, cardamon is a self-propagating plant. It covers a large area within a short period of time and continues to expand in all directions unless intentionally controlled. Since cardamon needs a wet and shady area, it is often planted in swamps, along-side river banks, under trees, and in *tikam*. It is also possible to plant it in an open field without water and shade. The dry leaves of cardamon are removed every one or two months to enable the plant to expand further

and to harvest the crop as regularly as possible. The regularity of harvesting therefore depends on the frequency of weeding.

The production and commercial value of cardamon reached its peak between 1976 and 1983 and the highest price ever experienced (Birr 5.00 per kilo) was in 1983. During this seven years time those families that grew cardamon definitely benefited and showed a remarkable change in their way of life. For instance, quite a significant number of families replaced their traditional hut with a corrugated iron roofs. Another significant number of families bought cattle, radios, the best clothes available, and other commodities. From 1983 up to present the price of cardamon has remained very low (between Birr 1-2/kilo).

Most informants agree that the emphasis and reliance on cash crop production severely affected the production of subsistence crops. The level of production of grain and root crops gradually went down thereby resulting in seasonal food problems. Particularly between 1984 and 1987, the Ari experienced severe food shortage. The reason for this could be explicable in terms of the climatic condition that prevailed throughout the country, significant reductions in the prices of cash crops, and the tendency to neglect the production of subsistence crops exhibited during the previous years. The situation didn't improve much after 1987. Therefore, during the last three or four years, some farmers exhibited a tendency to emphasize the production of food crops by clearing fields covered by cardamon. Three of the informants, namely, Ato Kaysmi, Ato Woeshi, and Ato Gebre said that they cleared a significant portion of their cardamon plants to grow cereal crops and root crops. At the moment, they said, cardamon is no longer important as it does not help to earn money. The other reasons for this new development are also discussed in chapter five.

The Level of Cash Crop Production by Informants

Of the twenty informants, 18 persons said that they have coffee plants in their fields. The remaining two mentioned private reasons for not having coffee in their fields. Ato Demeaa (a blacksmith) is living on rented land paying 20 birr per year for a person who gave him 3 **timad**. Thus, he does not have the right to plant perennial crops such as coffee. Ato Satena, who was recently released after long time imprisonment is now planning and preparing to plant coffee. Twelve informants mentioned that they currently grow cardamon on their fields and the remaining eight have various reasons for not doing so. Some lost cardamon plants due to plant disease, while others deliberately destroyed it recently. The potter, two of the smiths, and one farmer have never grown cardamon due to shortage of land.

During the last three years, some of the informants did not obtain yields, while others harvested very limited amounts of coffee and cardamon. The following table shows the number of informants (out of the 20) and the size of harvest (in quintal) they obtained.

Table 10: Coffee and cardamon produced by some informants

Year	Coffee		Cardamon	
	Informant	Harvest	Informant	Harvest
1990/91	10	11.4	4	4.0
1991/92	12	13.0	4	4.5
1992/93	6	7.7	---	---
Total	18	32.1	8	8.5

In 1990/91, 8 out of 18 informants did not obtain coffee yield, while 10 of them harvested 1.1 quintals on the average. In 1991/92 the situation was relatively better because the number of people harvested coffee increased from 10 to 12. This year, however, only 6 out of 18 informants harvested about 1.3 quintals of coffee on the average. The experience in cardamon production is rather discouraging. Of the 12 informants growing cardamon, only four managed to harvest 8.5 quintals in 1990/91 and 1991/92 and this year no informant harvested cardamon.

2.3 The Social/Cultural Importance of Crops

The process of production can also be described and analyzed from the point of view of work motivation. In order to survive people must work. If people are said to be working in order to survive, then what motivates them to put more effort than required for survival? There are two views regarding this question. Some argue that profit maximization or the desire to exchange something for more than its cost play the essential role. The profit motive concept implies that material benefit is the sole motivator of economic activities (Crapo 1990:72). The World Bank explains poor performance in African agriculture in terms of lack of sufficient price incentives (Fantu 1990:71). On the other hand, some writers suggest that the power of incentives is not strong in non-capitalist societies (Ember & Ember 1985). Crapo (1990:72) said that the profit motive concept is an extreme view that overlooks the important role of culture in defining values. It is true that commitment (the feeling of obligation to follow a particular course of action) has the power to motivate people to increase production. The bases and sources of commitment could be belief systems, shared values and sentiments, social expectations, intrinsic satisfaction, rather than material

gain alone. With these points in mind it has been attempted to explore the cultural and social importance of crops in Ari society.

2.3.1 Cultural/Social Importance of Cereal Crops

In Ari there are rituals associated with economic activities (eg. fertility and harvest rituals); belief systems (eg. sacrifice for ancestors and deities); and certain unfavourable circumstances (eg. epidemic disease, drought, locust invasion, unusual season, etc.). Likewise, there are different types of ceremonies related to birth, marriage, and death. Almost all rituals and ceremonies involve the use of sorghum (often fermented), coffee, *ensete*, water, and a special grass called *sakta*. The formal ritual and/or ceremonial acts such as *mikis* (prayer), *gofshi* (blessing), and *ash* (cursing) can not be performed without using sorghum mixed with other "ritual items" mentioned above. Like rituals and formal ceremonies reconciliation procedures involve the use of sorghum. It is also the first grain to be given to a newly born baby. Infants are fed on their mothers' breast and *safna* (water squeezed from the *ensete*) before they are given the first grain (a sorghum variety called *zanga*) at the end of the 4th month.

Like in many other societies, there is a gift-giving tradition in Ari. According to Malinowsky (Dalton 1967:78), in the Trobriand Islands the social obligation to provide sisters' husbands with yams dictates the amount of yams to be produced. Likewise, sorghum is one of the typical items that characterizes gift-giving practice in *sida*. Female guests (daughters, sisters, or any other help seekers) are entertained by giving the favoured variety of sorghum, particularly during harvest. It is a common practice for married women to come back to their natal home expecting this kind of

gift. In short, the cultural/social obligation to meet such expectations and other requirements (discussed above) partly dictates the amount of sorghum to be produced.

Attempt has been made to see differences among informants' as regards the relative importance given to sorghum production. During the last three years, the 20 informants sowed sorghum on 229 **timad** (about 22 hectares) of land. Fifty percent of the informants sowed 159 **timad** of sorghum, while the remaining half managed to sow only 70 **timad**. A careful examination of the social background of the first half shows that seven of them are **babitoid** (lineage heads) who often support relatives. Ato Wochayis (one of the **babitoid**) said that as a lineage leader one has to produce more to be able to give gifts to guests. Ato Yijayis, another **babitoid**, mentioned that he has been producing more sorghum because it is not only members of his kin who are coming for help but also needy people to whom he is known.

Like sorghum, maize is also given as a gift to relatives and the poor. Moreover, a good harvest of maize gives relief to a person who is supposed to host big numbers of guests coming to participate in ceremonies associated with death or marriage. Ato Woeshi said that he has enough maize and sorghum to brew **gola** for the last death-anniversary of his brother who died two years ago. Some people postpone such anniversaries when they are not in a position to afford for such an expensive preparation. According to Ato Woeshi, postponing death ceremonies is not good because the spirit of the dead will be unhappy or angry and thus could harm the person who is in charge. Maize can be replaced by other crops (such as sorghum and barley) to arrange death anniversaries. When compared to sorghum, the ritual, cultural, and social motives behind the production of maize are relatively weak. The absence of maize, for instance, does not disturb the cultural and spiritual life of the Ari. More or less the same thing applies for **tef**. But it is equally important to note

that the socio-cultural importance of **tef** has been increasing since its introduction to the area. It has become a crop that is often grown by the rich. In most cases **balsh** (**injera**) is baked to serve kin members and neighbourhood during Christian holidays, such as Epiphany and Easter.

2.3.2 Cultural Importance of Root Crops

Several groups in the southern and southwestern parts of Ethiopia use **ensete** as food. The Gurage have a vital interest in **ensete** because it is used not only for food but also for other purposes such as medicine, compensation payment, and ritual offerings (Shack 1966:52). Likewise, in Ari **ensete** is considered the most important root crop, required not only for subsistence but also for various cultural, social, and ritual functions. A newly born baby is first given **safna** or **bakiloq** (water squeezed from the **ensete** pseudostem) before breast feeding. **Safna** continues to supplement breast feeding until the baby starts taking additional food after four months. Likewise, the first food served to a newly delivered woman and which is to be given for three consecutive days is a special **mossa** called **burbur**. Many Ari sacrifice sheep to their **sabi** and **beri** and the meat is always served with boiled **jolak** (a variety of **ensete**). Participants of the ritual/ceremony, often the **babitoid** and his companion(s) from customarily prescribed clans use the leaves of this particular varieties for sitting, sleeping, and for keeping their food during the ritual. Therefore, those who sacrifice to their deities and ancestors need to have **jolak** in their fields. The pseudostem of **ensete** is used for **cashi** (a special blessing ceremony). A newly bought or acquired

animal must be culturally blessed by the **babitoid** and the relevant companion before it is used. Part of the **cashi** practice is to give pseudostem of **ensete** to the animal.

When a person dies, the culture of Ari requires that several **ensete** plants are to be chopped down to let people step on while performing a funeral dance (see plate 4 & 5). The relatives of the deceased person willingly accept such property destruction for intrinsic satisfaction. Women coming to attend the funeral are supposed to kneel down and sing a funeral song making a circle. In doing so they beat leaves and pseudostem of **ensete** on the ground, while a man with a shield and spear performs the funeral dance in the middle (see plate 5). Relatives coming to attend the funeral from distant places carry with them pseudostems of **ensete** in addition to other funeral gifts (eg. cloth, money) for the family and close relatives of the deceased person.

All distant and close relatives of the deceased person come together to participate in a performance carried out to ratify the continuity of their relationship. This performance involves sharing of foods (**ensete** is one of these) from the same plate. A person failing to participate in this ceremony is excluded from membership. He may be re-included after participating in what may be called a "continuity ratification ceremony" to be held when another death occurs in the group. Female relatives often come to their natal home seeking gifts or simply to visit their relatives. The guest may or may not mention why she paid the visit, because it is up to the host to enquire. A host who fails to give anything to his female guest to take away with her feels ashamed. Any crop could be given as a gift, but to give her one big-sized **ensete** is like slaughtering a sheep in her honour.

Ensete also serves as a status symbol since those with large size are considered to be rich. Particularly in highland areas the wealth of a household is measured partly in terms of the number of **ensete** plants. Ato Satena, a man recently released from

prison, was trying to plant as many **ensete** plants as he can. He said, "if you do not have **ensete** plants around your residence, the house looks "empty" and above all, people call you poor." According to Ato Gagi, none of the households in his neighbourhood are rich because their **ensete** crops are significantly affected by rodents and plant diseases. In short, the production of **ensete**, like that of sorghum, is influenced by the combination of economic, social, and cultural motives.

There are only limited rituals and cultural practices associated with taro. Ritual specialists use the leaves of particular varieties for fetching holy water. Likewise, herbalists often use leaves of taro to carry plant medicine. Having more taro plants in your field or offering it as gift to relatives does not make status differences. Certain varieties of taro have medicinal importance. For example, the stems of **azak** and **ari** are peeled and put on injured parts of human body to stop bleeding and prevent infection.

As a seasonal and old crop, yam involves particular ritual performed by the relevant **godmi**. Once the ritual has been performed members of the society can start planting, harvesting, or selling their yam crops. Following this ritual, heads of individual lineages and/or families do the same with their respective **godmi** in their own compounds. Yam is given as a gift to relatives, particularly living in highland areas. In highland Ari yam is not grown. Those who plant the popular and the most favoured varieties such as **falaa**, **utta**, and **odi** are specially recognized.

2.3.3 Cultural Importance of Coffee

In the olden days people used coffee mainly for drinking and rituals, and these functions still continue to be important. As indicated elsewhere, coffee is one of the "ritual items" required for a number of cultural practices. To mention a few, it accompanies performances associated with death, marriage, sacrifice to deities and ancestors, fertility and harvest rituals, and reconciliation procedures. It is an item that can also be offered as a gift to relatives and friends living in highland areas.

To sum up, in this chapter attempts have been made to describe the practice of crop production and functions of various crops. The relative importance given to different crops depends on their relative functions. Sorghum, ensete, yam, and coffee are highly valued crops because they serve double purposes: economic and cultural. At times of food shortage, households with large family size and poor economic conditions tend to emphasize on the production of maize and taro as they can be easily produced in the required quantity (relatively speaking) to feed the family. Cardamon has been considered as one of the most important cash crops until recently. Thus, many farmers gave due attention to its production. But now, many are concentrating on the production of subsistence crops because the prices of the principal cash crops declined. Therefore, it can be said that the relative importance of certain crops changes depending on various circumstances, such as availability of food and market values.

CHAPTER III. DIVISION AND ORGANIZATION OF LABOUR

In most agricultural societies labour, which is an essential production factor, comes from the members of the household, through exchanges, and through wages (Barker 1989). Labour as a production factor may best be explained by focusing on (1) assignment of work at the family level, and (2) recruitment of labour from outside the family circle.

3.1. Division of Labour

Division of labour is an assignment of tasks to people on the basis of sex, age, and/or specialization. In most parts of rural Ethiopia, though farming has traditionally been considered a male activity and the roles of mother and/or housewife as that of women, some scholars and researchers do not agree with this generalization. Hanna Kebede (1990:58) states that women's work in the agricultural sector has been erroneously documented as marginal because in rural Ethiopia women engage in a variety of economic activities, such as cultivation, house construction, food storage, and marketing. According to Helen Pankhurst (1990:145), women in Menz are as involved as men and children in herding, though the level of their participation is limited in crop-production work.

In Ari age and sex seem to determine division of labour in the sense that all adult males perform tasks culturally assigned to males and all adult females are expected to perform tasks assigned to them. The same is true of children since they are supposed to behave in a certain way. Generally, men are responsible for such agricultural activities as clearing, ploughing, weeding, harvesting, and threshing,

winnowing. Moreover, men take the responsibility of looking after cattle and equine. It is the men who are supposed to construct houses, engage in some tool making activities, and practice trading. These activities are not exclusive to them because work assignments at times overlap. Women participate in most agricultural activities mentioned above. They do not take part in oxen-drawn plough, house construction, and tool making. They shoulder such household chores as fetching water, collecting fire wood, cooking, cleaning, and taking care of children. Grown up children bear heavy responsibilities in agriculture, animal raising, and household chores. Part of the labour requirements of individual families are met by work parties (**molaa**) formed by boys and girls. Therefore, it is believed that to have more children is advantageous. For example, out of the 101 respondents 88 persons (87.1%) were in favour of having more children. Children's participation in production practices was the primary reason of most respondents. Other reasons for favouring more children include security in old age, continuity of descendants, respect, and fame. Smaller children between 6 and 12 look after small stock (sheep and goats), take care of babies, and watch compounds.

3.2 Labour Exchange Practices

In most agricultural societies the family is the unit of production where the active members constitute the family's labour force. By and large such a labour force is not sufficient to produce the required goods. Thus, most societies have the tradition of supplementing family labour with outside help, by forming arrangements of labour exchange (Barker 1989:57). This is often called labour organization or work parties (Donham 1978; Barker 1989). Labour organizations vary from society to society in their structures and functions, leadership, criteria of membership, duration of the

organization, and the like. Among some groups in Nigeria, kinship ties are an important basis of labour organization (Oluwasanmi 1966:71; Sterns 1974). Among the Swazi families which want work to be carried out on their field brew beer and/or slaughter animals and then call upon neighbours for help (Marwick 1966:166). The Gwembe Tonga form a labour pool for work party recruitment. Labour is recruited either on reciprocal labour exchange basis (especially among kin members) or through transactions involving cash, food, beer, livestock, and the use of tools (Scudder 1962:77).

Co-operative life is well known among Ethiopian peoples and there exist different forms of labour co-operation in the country (Kebebew 1978). By comparing socialist forms of cooperations with that of indigenous practices, Pausewang (1990:219) commented that the latter are best adapted to local culture and agree with ideals of solidarity, collective responsibility, and equity. Donham (1978:24-25) identified two types of work groups in Male: festivity & reciprocal work groups. The former is a group composed of neighbours requested by a host (as in Swazi), while the latter refers to households that work on each others' fields in rotation.

The Ari have the tradition of exchanging labour for purposes of agricultural activities. Dennis Tully having engaged in anthropological reconnaissances in 1973/74 wrote a kind of general report on the work parties of the Ari. In this report Tully pointed out that there exist a variety of named voluntary associations, all with their explicit purposes, rules, and characteristics. According to him, in Ari work parties are pervasive institutions structuring actual interactions and economic co-operations. Tully did not give specific accounts of the various labour organizations. Nor did he mention

the names and types of these groups. There are four types of work parties: **aldi**, **molaa**, **idir**, and **wod**.¹⁷ They are different from each other in size, structure, functions, rules and regulations, etc. as described below.

3.2.1 Aldi

Aldi is the smallest type of indigenous voluntary work group composed of a group of individuals or families who work for each other in rotation. Informants indicate that **aldi** is the first and the oldest form of labour association in Ari. It is a small sized work party ranging from three to fifteen persons, and members of the group are persons living close to each other.

Aldi is formed for such agricultural activities as clearing (**woksha**), weeding (**manaa** for sorghum and **dirka** for maize), and harvesting (**sudh**, **qatsi**, or **shika**). The group often works twice a day: **gesinti** (early in the morning) and **fachi** (late in the afternoon) for about two hours during each session. The morning session starts before breakfast at about 6:00 am, while people gather for **fachi** at about 4:00 pm. Most people use the time between 9:00 am and 3:00 pm for working with larger labour groupings. Some members of a family may be spending such time working on their private fields.

¹⁷ In 1987 the researcher studied the traditional labour organization of the Ari for his B.A thesis. In the thesis it was stated that there are four multi-purpose voluntary work parties: **aldi**, **molaa**, **idir**, and **wod**. Members of these groups take part not only in agricultural production but also in other non-economic functions, such as recreation, socialization, etc.

During the research period there were 21 different **aldi** groups within Metser.

Aldi is a reciprocal work group that accepts any competent, able bodied, person from the relevant caste group. In other words, members of the **mana** (smiths & potters) are not accepted in **aldi** formed by the **kansa** and vice versa. Since members of the group are supposed to work intensively with their maximum capacity, there is a tendency to exclude very young children and very old men and women. A household with a large family size is in a better position than a family with few members because the former can extend its relation with **aldi** circles through many persons thereby recruiting more labour on its field. Ato Seqis has three wives and two children who formed **aldi** group with other four persons. In every term Ato Seqis' family received five turns. He himself was working in **idir**, while assisting his wives and children whenever he had time.

Aldi is a short-lived association because, since the size of the group is small, every member receives his or her turn within a short period of time. In order to do more work the group keeps on reorganizing at the end of each turn until the work season is over. The difference between **aldi** and other forms of labour organization (to be discussed later) has to do mainly with the size and leadership. The group has a leader (**babi** or **aldi bab**) who is elected by the neighbourhood on the basis of his past leadership experience or the presumed efficiency of leading. Some of the roles of the **aldi bab** include programming work schedule, taking attendance, giving turns to members, settling disputes among members and so on.

As regards social control, the **aldi babi** is empowered to take certain measures in punishing non-conformers. But he has to consult his fellow-men in deciding over serious issues. For instance, admitting and excluding members require the decision of the group at large. But the **aldi bab** can levy a fine (in kind or in cash) on

members who happened to be absent or late. He can give permission to members who cannot participate due to unavoidable circumstances. He has to explain to the rest of the group why he did so and what the circumstances were. Misbehaviour, lateness, absence, and reluctance to work are those factors that subject a person to negative sanctions or punishment. Punishments are of various types, ranging from small fines to exclusion from membership.

The work done for an individual is measured in terms of the number of people engaged in the work, the size of land worked upon, and the nature of work. However, since it is difficult to measure the daily performance of each member, and since the land may not be measurable in terms of obvious units, balancing labour depends upon the subjective judgment of the **babi**. That is why certain households complain that "fair judgment is lacking" or "the leader is biased". In some **aldi** organizations members contribute grain and money once in a while and hand it to the **babi** to organize a party. **Aldi** is the simplest form of association that partly fulfils the labour requirements of individual families.

3.2.2 Molaa

Molaa is another indigenous work party in which people work on each other's fields in rotation. Although the origin of **molaa** is not clear, there is a popular view held by elderly informants that it has evolved from **aldi** (as need arose for larger grouping) later in the history of Ari people. The number of members range from fifteen to sixty, the most convenient size being thirty. The group works throughout the week except on Sundays (holiday). About five to six hours work is carried out every day with or without a break. But if the **babi** thinks that the existing pace would not

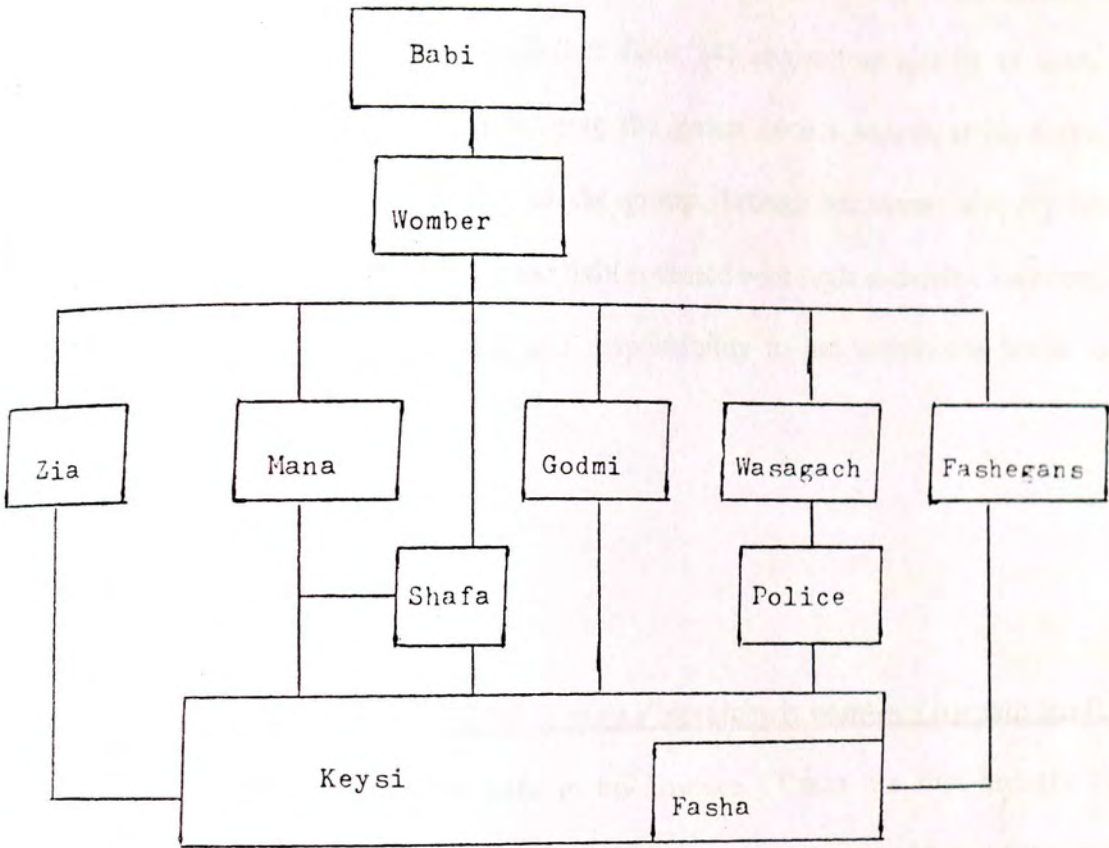
enable the group to work on the land of each participant in a season, then he orders them to work twice a day: **gesinti** and **fachi** for over three hours during each shift. Like in **aldi** the work carried out for an individual is estimated in terms of the size of field, the number of people, and the nature of work.

Ideally, **molaa** is said to be a labour organization of teenagers. In practice, however, membership is open to both sex and almost all age groups. But it is not open to blacksmiths and potters. The following discussion focuses on the organizational structure of **molaa**, practices of social control, and non-economic functions of this particular labour organization.

a) Organizational Structure and Positions:

Molaa is a hierarchically ranked work organization that involves several positions with their corresponding roles. There are 9 different "offices" and 13 "office holders" or individuals with special roles. These include the **babi**, **womber**, **zia**, **mana**, **godmi**, **wasagach**, **fashgans**, "police", and **shafa**. The rest of the group are together called **keys**. Basically, each position holder reports to his immediate superior. Likewise, command comes from the head all ways down to the bottom. The structure is indicated below.

Figure 8: The structure of **molaa** organization



The Molaa Babi:

The first and the most important position is the top **molaa babi**. He is elected by a group of persons on the basis of his experience or presumed ability to lead. Since the criteria that provide an individual with an access to leadership are his skills, **molaa babi** is not an ascribed status handed down from generation to generation. The group which wanted some one as leader requests the person to arrange a party to celebrate the beginning.

The **babi**'s responsibilities include (1) allocating labour turns to individual members, (2) fair distribution of labour among members, (3) negotiation on labour sale on behalf **molaa** members, i.e when a **molaa** member wants to sell his/her turn instead of taking the group to his/her field, (4) controlling quality of work, (5) arranging **molaagol** (party) entertaining the group once a month at his home, (6) ensuring the normal functioning of the group through sanctions, and (7) settling disputes among members. While the **babi** is vested with high authority, lower officials are delegated with some power and responsibility to act within the limits of the authority delegated to them.

The Womber:

The next important official in **molaa** hierarchy is **womber** (assistant **babi**) who performs all functions of the **babi** in his absence. Cases are first brought to the attention of the **Womber** before the **babi**. While minor cases and less serious matters are resolved at the **womber** level, the most serious issues are reported to the **babi**, still through the **Womber**. He works like anyone in the group when the **babi** is around.

The Zia:

Any **molaa** organization is divided into two balanced subgroups called **ragid**, each with its own **zia/zis** (leader). Thus, there are two **zia** in charge of coordinating their respective **ragid** (subgroup) and who report to the **womber** or the **babi** independently. The purpose of dividing the group into two halves is to promote competitive work spirit and let the group work hard. The field they work on is divided

equally between them and the rules of **molaa** provide that the **ragid** that completes its work earlier has the right to insult and shame the other group through special songs. Therefore, all members of the successful **ragid** come in front of the other **ragid** and show their signal and verbal expressions that signify the weakness, laziness and ineffectiveness of the latter. This is called **makna** (see plates 6 & 7). At the same time they sing songs praising themselves, admiring the coordinating capacity of their **zis**, and boasting that their group is exceptionally powerful.

From the point of view of Ari people, to be considered ineffective, and to be insulted on account of laziness is shameful. Hence, in the work place each subgroup tries its best not to lag behind. Since the two **zis** are accountable for any success or failure. They play strong coordination role either by encouraging hard workers or by punishing those who fail to do serious work.

The Mana:

Mana is a parallel position to **zia**. There are two of them from each **ragid** either elected by the group or appointed by the **babi**. Both of them report to and receive commands from the **womber** or the **babi**. The two **mana** play such roles as collecting contributions of money and grain for **molaa gol**, arranging the party, serving members during a party, controlling the quality of food/drink, and coordinating other entertainment programs.

The Godmi:

Like **mana** and **zia**, there are two **godmi** coming from the two **ragid** through election. They are considered "ritual specialists" and thus food and drink are first served to them. Any attempt to start working, to serve oneself, and/or to cross a river before the relevant **godmi**, entitles one to punishment. One of them is in charge of coffee (**bunagodm**), while the other is said to have authority over local beer (**golagodm**). They do not perform real ritual activities except for the fact that they imitate the acts of real ritual specialists while working, drinking, and eating.

In Ari society people do not start sowing or harvesting crops before ritual specialists. During ceremonies and public gatherings it is these people who are first served with food and drink. The ritual specialists perform certain acts, such as blessing, prayer, and pouring some **gola**/coffee or putting some food on the earth, before they start working, eating or drinking. The **godmi** in **molaa** imitate these kinds of acts. Since this function has become one of the **molaa** rules, members of the group are expected to act accordingly. A person who knowingly or unknowingly, starts working or drinking before the **godmi** deserves punishment.

The Wasagach:

The **wasagach** (also called **bazegans**) is an appointed or elected person responsible for order in the group. Two "police men" are elected from each **ragid** to assist him. When the **babi** orders or when the case is presented directly to him, the **wasagach** sends anyone or both of his fellow boys or the "police" to bring the person wanted or accused. The final verdict is made either by the **womber** or by the **babi**.

The wrong-doer may be kept under a tree for a while as an imprisonment; seriously beaten; ordered to pay fines in the form of safety pins; or left free after warning depending on the nature of transgression. In **molaa** organization safety pin is a media of exchange. It used to buy food items and ornaments. While boys gamble with safety pins, girls use several them for making belts to wear round their waist.

The Fashegans:

During early stage of **molaa** organization, the **babi** requests boys and girls to get "married" (mock marriage). Girls are given the chance to choose their partners or "husbands". There are duties and responsibilities expected of the boy as "husband" and of the girl as "wife". These include such duties as helping each other, giving gifts, paying fines or receiving punishment on behalf of the other, etc.

But not all boys and all girls are coupled because a few do not want it, some girls may have no one to choose, and some boys may not be chosen. Moreover, there are small boys and girls who are not allowed to become involved in the nominal marriage practice. Such single boys, girls, and children are together called **fasha**. The **babi** requests or recommends the **fasha** to choose a person (**fashegans**) who will be acting on their behalf. The **fashegans**, thus, argues and negotiates with all the officials regarding the rights & duties of **fasha**.

The Shafa:

Shafa is a cleaner. He regularly cleans the compound of the **babi** for the **molaa** members who often gather there. Volunteers are asked to fill this position and some sick and elderly people want to become **shafa**. The advantage of being **shafa** is that the person is not expected to abide by the rules & regulations of **molaa**. Since the rules do not apply to **shafa**, he may work slowly, come late, be absent, and go early, which would otherwise be serious violations for other members.

The Keysi:

These are the ordinary members of the group. The **keys**i are expected to abide by and conform to the rules and regulations of **molaa**, which they know as an established tradition in Ari. They have the authority to decide over serious issues and to elect most **molaa** officials. Delegations and appointments by the **babi** always need their approval.

b) Social Control in Molaa:

Social control is required to make people behave in a certain way regardless of their own interest. Thus, its main concern is the prevention of the desire to deviate and reinforcement of the desire to conform. In **molaa** work organization there are penalties and rewards directed at individuals in order to discourage or encourage certain types of behaviour. Such sanctions are carried out by recognized procedures depending on the nature of the case under consideration. Obeying rules and

regulations, working hard, patience and good behaviour are some of the considerations that provide an individual with such positive sanctions as honour, applause, and appreciation.

On the other hand, negative sanctions or punishments serve as a device for social control. Punishment in **molaa** could sometimes be an aggressive form of disapproval but socially justified and recognized. Depending on the nature of deviation the type of negative sanction may be the application of physical punishment (beating), "imprisonment," fine, or withdrawal from membership. On the whole, such disapproval and approval of behaviour is administered by those in whom the group has vested authority and responsibility.

c) Socialization Functions in Molaa:

Socialization starts within the family during infancy. Children, as they grow up, learn the basic behavioral patterns not only from family but also from peer groups, work groups, neighbourhoods and the like. It is this education that helps them enact their roles in society in their later life. The situation in Ari can not be an exception. Among the Ari the process of socialization mainly concentrates on inculcating the ideas of work and preparing the individual for a better life in society. Besides this, necessary knowledge is imparted regarding the value system and norms of society. This responsibility is vested in the family and labour organizations with which the person identifies himself or herself from early childhood.

Children too small to stay behind at home accompany their parents to the field where they learn certain things. Most probably this may be taken as the first and initial step in learning group life and the way people work. Skills in farming are

imparted in a gradual fashion starting with the simplest operations. For example, picking coffee is the business of children aged six to twelve. Thus, there is a coffee picking children's organization called **bunna molaa**. This group often includes small children some teenagers (see plate 8). Most Ari parents' send their children to join such groups thereby recruiting labour on their field. Like the case with other labour organizations, the produce goes to family than to individual members participating in the work.

Boys and girls join the **molaa** at the age of ten. Through this circle the youth contribute to, participate in, and benefit from the society in which they are growing up. Even though work is more emphasized in the process of shaping the young for life, other aspects of society are also considered in accord with the need for them. There is an analogy between **molaa** grouping and the larger societal organization. This is evident as regards use of terms for offices and the corresponding roles enacted by officials. For instance, concepts like **babi**, **godmi**, **zis**, and **keysi** are employed in **molaa** organizations. Moreover, there is an analogy in matters related to marital and family life. The term **molaa** is added as a prefix to distinguish roles and positions in work group. The functions or roles attached to these positions tend to imitate those performed in the larger society. It can be said, therefore, that the **molaa** work group educates the youth about societal division, status and role, and rights and duties in society. In other words, it gives an indirect training to those preparing to shoulder responsibilities in later ages. The following table shows analogous relationship between Ari society and **molaa** work party.

Table 11: Analogy between the Ari society and the molaa

Title	Ari Society	Molaa Group
babi	leader of a locality	leader of molaa
godmi	ritual specialists	act as ritual specialists
zis	village administrator	coordinator of agid
keisi	commoner/the public	ordinary workers
teimi	marriage	"nominal marriage"
kie	husband	acts as a husband
ma	wife	acts as a wife

The other aspect of socialization has to do with the mock marriage practised in **molaa**.¹⁸ At the beginning of **molaa** organization, opposite sexes are required to get "married." Each girl is given the right to choose a boy who will be her "husband" until the end of the work season. Once boys and girls are coupled in this way, certain roles are assigned to them. In other words, boys as husbands and girls as wives act in a certain way. For example, the roles of the "husband" include receiving all forms of punishment for offenses his "wife" has committed, giving gifts, entertaining her at times of recreation, etc. On the other hand, the girl entertains her "husband" acting as a wife. She prepares and brings special food for him, arranges his seats, and cleans his agricultural tools. They often use personal names to address each other, while others refer to them as "his **molaa** wife" and "her **molaa** husband".

It is important to note that this is a nominal marriage where the couple assist each other acting as husband and wife. Their roles are socially prescribed and are undertaken while working, in times of recreation and other forms of social gatherings.

¹⁸ The researcher briefly described the nominal marriage practice in Ari in his B.A thesis submitted to the Department of Sociology and Social Administration, 1988. He wrote an article on this topic for Sociology Ethnology Bulletin (SEB) of Addis Ababa University, vol. 1, No. 1, March 1991.

Even though they might fall in love with each other and get married in the long run, sexual intercourse is unthinkable during their stay in the group. In case some are found violating such taboos, they are either punished seriously or expelled from the organization. On the whole, the central aim of bringing up individuals in this way is to enable them to learn roles appropriate to their gender through practical exercise.

d) Recreation and Entertainment:

Traditional recreational patterns of Ari include feasts, songs and dances. These are the happiest moments during which people enjoy themselves within the labour organizations or other forms of public gatherings. On such occasions members of labour organization enjoy opportunities for close contact and intimate interaction in a relaxed atmosphere. At the same time, the nature of such interactions is competitive.

Competition among interacting members is a means of enjoyment and recreation. As has already been indicated earlier, the most common sources of entertainment are dances, songs, joking, tournaments, etc. It is an opportunity through which individuals express their skills and exercise capacities to gain fame. The extent of competition is controlled by the group in such a way that it should not lead to self-centredness. The central aim of recreation is to derive pleasure and hence it has to end by being enjoyable both for audience and participants.

Molaagol (literally means "the beer of the **molaa**") is a periodic entertainment program. It is one of the most enjoyable and exciting programs arranged once a month or every two months. It involves a party sponsored by the **babi** of the group.

Each participant contributes grain, money and other necessary materials for this arrangement. The festival may last for two or three days depending on the extent of preparation.

In addition to this, the weekly "market" program undertaken in the compound of the **babi** is another type of recreational program. Here young girls bring varieties of food items and boys come with certain types of ornaments and safety pins. These goods are either sold or exchanged for other goods. Under such circumstances boy friends are expected to please their girl friends by giving gifts and buying food.

From mid-November to March, when the moon shines **molaa** work groups enjoy themselves overnight in their **babi**'s compound. At the recreational ground the necessary protection is made by the **babi** and other headmen. Even though they take part in many aspects of labour organization, adults are not involved in this kind of recreational program. This seasonal recreation is called **buk** or **goddey** and the recreational ground is known as **goddeymel**. Although the host or the **babi** arranges separate rooms for males and females to sleep, parents want their daughters back home. When compared to other groupings, **Molaa** is the most favoured labour organization because (1) it provides the above additional functions, (2) membership is open to all sexes and all ages, (3) it is not costly as food and drink are not prepared for the guests, (4) the very poor can join the group since it doesn't involve financial contributions, and (5) work is done regularly to help members receive their turn on time.

3.2.3 Idir

Idir is a traditional self-help organization common in most parts of Ethiopia (Kebebew 1978). Kebebew further noted that in most cases it is a financial and burial association usually operating in urban areas. In Ari **idir** is a term borrowed from Amharic but whose meaning has been changed. In Ari **idir** is a large sized labour organization in which, like in **aldi** and **molaa**, people work on each other's field in rotation. The central objective of **idir** in Ari is to pursue agricultural activities and co-operation in non-economic affairs are secondary. It is equally important to note that there are certain **idir** organizations the goals of which are multiple. In addition to the agricultural activities, members may co-operate and assist each other in non-economic affairs. There are other such groups where members contribute money to be given to the host or to be saved as a group capital for future use. Money saved in this way is eventually spent for a big feast arranged at the end of the term. For Ethiopian Epiphany and Easter such groups use part of their saving to buy an ox/cow to be killed. The meat is shared among members.

The size of **idir** ranges from 30 to 150, while the optimum size is considered to be 60 persons. It consists of mainly adult men and sometimes capable single women, and members of **idir** often come from the same local community. Membership is open to those **kansa** people strong enough to work for about eight hours a day with short meal break. The group often works two to three days a week. Because of the large size all members of **idir** can not receive their turn within a given season. Ato Aro (one of the informants) said that it took him ten months to receive his first turn. Like

molaa, **idir** is a hierarchically structured organization involving the **babi** (leader), **womber** (assistant **babi**), **zis** (coordinator of **ragid**), **mana** (a person in charge of serving the group), **bazegans** (treasurer) and **godmi** (mock ritual specialist).

Individuals who hold the above positions shoulder responsibilities quite similar to that of **molaa**. In most **idir** the role of **bazegans** or **wasagach** is to collect and keep fines and contributions. The two work parties somehow differ from each other in size, duration of organization, membership, age distribution, type of punishment, duration of work time, and specific objectives of organizations.

As opposed to **molaa**, most **idir** circles involve the preparation of food and drink, and contribution of money. The sponsor brews local beer and prepares food for guests working on his field. They are served in the field whenever the majority feels like drinking and eating. They are also invited at home at the end of the work. Participants on their part contribute fixed amount of money (Birr 1 to 3) to the host and/or to be kept as a group capital. The other difference is that **idir** may be formed on the agreement that members co-operate and assist each other in burial and other non-economic affairs. The level of participation in **idir** and the number of such groups have been steadily growing during the last 15 or 20 years.

3.2.4 Wod

Wod may be described as a traditional loose self-help association usually organized for construction of houses and such agricultural activities as clearing, ploughing, weeding, harvesting. An individual who wants others' help requests his neighbours and friends to give him a hand on a set day. For such a request the person either has to visit the house of each individual or has to look for an opportunity where

he could find many people together. The sponsor of **wod** brews local beer and sometimes food. The host provides the people with **golla** (the local beer) in the field. Moreover, guests are entertained at home when the work is over. **Wod** is similar to what Donham (1978:24-25) calls festivity in Male and what is commonly known as **debo** and **wonfel** elsewhere in Ethiopia (Kebebew 1978).

Unless there is a conflicting program that makes it difficult for one to show up, everybody is expected to participate. This happens because **wod** is a reciprocal exchange of labour in which an individual invests social credit that will be paid back in the course of time. If two people request for help at the same time, then these conflicting requests are resolved through negotiation. A person who failed to appear on the stated date is expected to apologize.

A person who has not accumulated social credit presents stone and grass to those whom he wanted for help. The help seeker comes with a small stone (of any kind and weight) and some grass in his hand. Such presentations are signs of seeking help, begging for assistance, and request for ones' kindness and forgiveness. Those who have accepted the request, depending on the nature of work, may contribute their labour, draft animals, implements, or all of these. For instance, in house construction they come with rope, grass, wood, and **wali**. Generally, they come with those materials necessary for the particular work. Elders who do not have the strength to work provide advice and expertise.

The break and other spare times during which people drink are times for discussion and entertainment. Personal and public problems are raised and discussed. For example, problems of thieves, weather conditions, the socialization of children, and disciplining erring adults are dealt with on such occasions. **wod** may not involve preparation of food and drink on the grounds that the work is done for the indigent.

Members of a village know the economic position of each other and when the poor seeks help, they do not expect any food or drink. On the other hand, **wod** participants expect more food and drink from rich households. If a rich host fails to provide sufficient food/drink, participants of **wod** may claim for a sheep or some bottles of **areqa** (local alcohol) as a compensation for insufficient preparation.

There are three basic characteristics that distinguish **wod** from other forms of self-help organizations. First, it lacks a structured system of organization and leadership. Secondly, the exchange of labour is not fixed and balanced. Therefore, participants may or may not receive the equivalent labour given to others because the sponsor of **wod** has no right over the labour he/she has recruited. Thirdly, **wod** work parties lack regularity. Since there is no precisely set cycle of rotation, a long time may elapse before a household is paid back for the labour it contributed.

3.3 Similarities & Differences Among Labour Parties

All work parties in Ari are voluntary associations organized basically for agricultural activities, although some of these groupings also perform certain non-economic functions. Some work parties (eg. **aldi**) are short-lived, while others relatively last longer (eg. **idir**). But none of them are enduring. The reason why the Ari developed several work parties is explained in terms of the nature of work. Certain activities such as weeding sorghum and clearing fallow or forest land demand the attention of experienced farmers, large size, and prolonged working hours. **Molaa** and **idir** are best suited to these kinds of activities. **Idir** groupings became important work parties when **molaa** began to lose importance due to unfavourable political

situation. Some activities, like weeding **tef** and working in the garden do not need large size and much skill and time. **Aldi** are best suited for such simple agricultural activities.

Labour parties vary in structure, functions, criteria of membership, degree of reciprocity, and the like. Of the four labour organizations in Ari, **molaa** and **idir** share a number of common features. By and large they have similar organizational structure, leadership patterns, and regulations. Office holders in the two associations perform similar functions. Both serve as a recreational and entertainment centre. When compared to **aldi**, the two work parties are numerous in size and are organized for activities that demand the attention of large group. Thus, people rely much more on these associations than other groupings.

In other respects, **molaa** and **idir** exhibit differences. In the case of the former, membership is open to any person (non-**mana**) who claims to be capable of working. On the contrary, **idir** parties do not accept young children and elderly people. As opposed to **molaa**, **idir** involves the preparation of food and drink for guests, which is sometimes uneconomical. Most **idir** parties also involve regular contribution of money for the host and/or for saving. All these factors tend to limit the participation of some people. In other words, any interested person (group) cannot join **idir** group due to the above limiting factors. Positions in **molaa** like **fashgans**, **shafa**, and "police" as well as practices such as nominal marriage and **molaa** market do not exist in **idir**. The other major difference between the two work parties has to do with size and frequency of work. Since the size is too large and the group do not work daily, all members of **idir** cannot receive their turns in a given season. However, every member of **molaa** receives his/her turn during the same season.

As a smallest forms of labour organizations **aldi** do not involve complex organizational structure. Likewise, the functions of this kind of groupings are confined to limited agricultural activities. The non-economic functions that characterize the two large work parties are not practised in **aldi**. But this grouping is an important sources of labour for activities that would otherwise require longer time to be undertaken by members of individual households. Criteria of membership in **aldi** are not that open and relaxed as in **molaa**. Nor are they that strict and semi-closed as in **idir**. Except for the two extreme ages (too young and too old), membership is open to people who can continuously work for about two hours. Like **molaa**, **aldi** do not involve the preparation of food and contribution of money.

Wod exhibit a form of relationship different from the other three labour organizations. In the first place they are loosely organized parties where explicit organizational structure and regulations are lacking. They represent culturally recognized spontaneous associations formed by calling upon each other. A household which wanted the help of friends and neighbours prepares food/drink and calls upon them to give hands on a set day. The size of labour is determined by the host. But the host does not have any control over its guests in forcing them to come and how much to work.

The extent of involvement of households in one, more or none of the labour organizations depends on the size, wealth, and motivation of individual families. Generally speaking, those with large family size tend to join as many work groups as they can mainly for two reasons. First, such a family has the human resource to expand the extent of its participation in many work groups. Secondly, the necessity to feed large numbers forces such a family to send several of its members. Wealthy families rarely participate in the regular kind of labour parties, such as **molaa** and **idir**.

This is because they can either buy a turn of someone working in such groups or afford to brew the local beer and recruit labour through **wod**. Ato Alsa, one of the richest Ari in Sida, has never worked in any of the work parties during the last 20 years. He did not send his son to **molaa** organizations and nor did his wives joined such groups. His wives, of course, have been working in **aldi** groups and the additional labour requirements have been met through buying turns and through **wod**.

Most Ari families are highly motivated to improve their economic situation, while others limit their efforts to mere subsistence. Thus, the extent of a household's participation in labour organization can also be dictated by the relative importance given to accumulation of wealth.

CHAPTER IV: OVERVIEW OF OTHER PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES

As has been indicated earlier the Ari are predominantly agriculturalists; livestock production is the second major economic activity. It has also been mentioned that there are certain groups involved mainly in craft activities, while significant number of Ari supplement their cash income through apiculture. Trade is also beginning to become an important economic activity. The following discussion focuses on the historical and current accounts of productive activities other than crop production.

4.1 Livestock Production

The Ari raise cattle (**waki**), sheep (**qoli**), goats (**derti**), mules (**ukli**), horses (**para** or **pares**), donkeys (**haya**), and poultry (**bacha**). The distribution and concentration of livestock (**qolma**) vary from place to place depending on the physical environment. In highland Ari the dominant livestock are sheep which are herded in large flocks owned by several farmers. Likewise horses are found in large number in this zone. While donkeys and goats are best adapted to lowland areas, cattle, mules and chicken are evenly distributed throughout Ariland.

With the exception of donkeys all animals are raised in Ari, though their production is predominantly subsistence oriented. Data is lacking on the size of livestock population in all parts of Sida. In 1992/93, however, the total population of animals in six peasant associations of Sida was estimated at 8,182 cattle, 7,500 sheep, 750 goats, 350 horses, 125 mules, and 10,500 chicken. The cattle herd is estimated to include 2960 oxen. The livestock estimation in Sida was made in 1993 by Ato Ayalew,

the agricultural extension worker in the area. The total human population of the six peasant associations was 14, 164 (CSA 1990:84).

Livestock plays a variety of economic, social, cultural, and ritual roles in Ari. Generally speaking, animals, in addition to their social and cultural functions, provide food (meat, milk, milk products); inputs into agricultural production (draught power, manure); other outputs (skin, hide, leather); and energy (transport). The various animals and their respective roles in Ari, particularly in Sida are briefly described below.

4.1.1 Cattle

According to most elderly people, cattle are the favourite animals of Ari that have been herded since time immemorial. In the past, particularly before the incorporation of the area into the Ethiopian empire all cattle belonged to the **babi** (who represented the community) and people had only the right to use the milk. A person who wanted to slaughter, exchange or inherit cattle had to secure the approval of the **babi**. After the conquest of Menelik, due to erosion of the power of the **babi** and change in the land tenure system, people began to own cattle privately, and transfer of the ownership rights from parents to children became possible. After this period, the Ari for the first time in their history began to use oxen for traction. Culturally, cattle can be raised and owned by any Ari.

Although many households in Sida are believed to have cattle, the size of individual holdings remain very low. Of the 20 informants 15 persons owned 66 head of cattle (29 oxen and 37 cows). Six of them have the required two oxen, five persons owned a single ox, and the rest three owned between three and five oxen. There are

five informants without oxen and cows, while one person has only a cow. The size of holdings is partly constrained by the poor state of pasture and high prices of livestock. Unlike the case in the neighbouring pastoral groups, cattle are not kept in large herds. There is no communal grazing land except for river banks and some roadside verges, thus individual households keep their livestock in their private fallow fields. The animal is tied by its horns, neck, or leg with a strong rope (about 7 metres long) with the other end tied on a tree or a stick hammered into the ground so that the animal moves and grazes within a limited radius. Cattle are occasionally given chopped leaves of coffee; pseudostem and leaves of *ensete*; leaves of other wild plants called *gara* and *arkinti*; and crop residues as an additional feed (see plate 9).

Some households accumulate large number of cattle through natural increase, inheritance, or through buying. Households which are not in position to look after all the animals, give some their animals to other related or unrelated households under certain agreement of agistment. There are different agistment agreements, some involving payment in cash. The traditional practice is that the borrower uses the milk or the power of the ox/oxen as a payment for keeping them. The borrower may also be required to plough the field of owner of the ox/oxen. A borrower who wants to keep cattle for cash payment is given Birr 12 per head of cattle every year. The owner of the animal is supposed to provide with salt and ropes occasionally. In this case the borrower has no right to use the milk or the power of oxen for ploughing.

J Economically, socially, and culturally cattle are of great interest to Ari. They provide milk, meat, and other products, such as skins and hides. Above all, oxen are the backbone of Ari agriculture because farmers rely heavily on ox-drawn agriculture. Cow dung is used as manure in the garden and for smearing on walls, floors, and beehives. Cattle can also be seen as invested capital that can generate cash income

whenever needed. The social status of families or individuals alters following changes in the number of cattle they own. A wealthy man is partly defined in terms of his cattle herd. Thus, keeping as many head of cattle as possible helps to gain fame and prestige.

Upon the death of a rich person cattle are slaughtered and the meat is served to neighbours coming to the funeral. The horn is placed on the head of the dead person and carried along to the burial place. The corpse is then buried having been covered with the skin of the ox/cow killed. This is done partly to show that the man was so rich he even owned cattle. It would also mean that the sons or relatives of the deceased person are so rich that they killed cattle to attain the standard of "rich funeral ceremony".

There are several customary rules and taboos associated with the use and handling of cattle. For instance, buying of livestock involve **cashi** (a special blessing ceremony) before the animal is used. A newly bought animal must be blessed by the **babitoid** (the lineage head) and his companion from another relevant clan (as defined culturally). A married woman who bought livestock must take the animal to her natal group for **cashi**. This ceremony is believed to increase the productive and reproductive capacity of animals. The relationship between cattle and women is characterized by several taboos that keep a relative distance between them. Women are not supposed to milk cows; drink milk for the first 3 or 4 months after delivery; cross over ropes used for tying animals; be served meat before men; and reach/touch cattle during menstruation. But all these taboos do not prevent women from owning cattle. Children, should not cause any bleeding to animals. Informants indicated that when taboos associated with cattle are violated, the household has either to get rid of the animal(s) or to sponsor a costly purification ceremony.

4.1.2 Small Stock and Poultry

Raising sheep and goats can be described as a part and parcel of the farming practice in Sida. Poultry production is not an intensively and a seriously conducted enterprise. It seems to be an activity often carried out by the youths. The two ruminant species (sheep and goats) are believed to have been in Ari since unknown time, while much is not said about the origin of chickens. Both ruminants and chickens are owned by any Ari individually or by families. A close examination of the holdings of the 20 informants shows that 18 of them owned a total of 75 sheep. Of the 7 individuals who raised 17 goats, 5 have also sheep, cows and oxen. A total of 149 chickens were raised by 18 informants, i.e including the **babitoid** who do not eat an egg and chicken's meat.

The main feed source for sheep and goats are individual pasture grazing of fallow land and stubble fields. During the day time sheep and goats are grazed on such lands. They are often herded together. At night ruminants are brought home where they are occasionally given some food waste, hay, or straw. While farmers with small flocks keep their sheep and goats with cattle in the same room, those with larger flocks build separate houses for different animals. Poultry can be kept either in the same room where people live or in a special chicken-hatch built outside. Grain and food waste are the main sources of food for poultry. Chickens are eaten only by young people and **tama-yins** (low-caste) because they are considered **dhebi** (culturally unclean or impure animals). Therefore, most Ari, particularly elderly people, ritual specialists, and the **babitoid** do not eat egg and chicken meat. Like any other livestock, poultry provide cash income.

Of the two small ruminants, sheep are the most numerous and are the most important (in all parts of Ari) from economic and cultural points of view. They are the source of investment, security, and cash income. Sheep also provide the farmer's family with meat. They supply manure which the Ari use to fertilize **tikam** (the garden). Sheep have a variety of cultural functions. To mention a few, (1) a ram and one ewe constitute part of the bride-wealth for a first marriage, (2) loyalty to ancestors and deities is expressed by sacrificing sheep, and (3) upon death of a person sheep are killed to read intestines. The intestines are read to know the cause of the death and the fate of the rest the living relatives.

Goats are raised for a variety of economic and widely recognized cultural reasons. Economically they provide meat, manure, and a cash income. As far as their cultural significance is concerned, most purification ceremonies involve the use of goats. Secondly, members of **sheki** clan receive goats as bride-wealth. Goat's meat and blood are believed to serve as a medicine for certain human diseases.

As in the case of cattle, a family with large size of sheep and goats or with limited size of land to keep more animals, gives some ruminants to other households. Ewes and the she-goats are often borrowed on the agistment agreement that every third kid belongs to the borrower. Borrowers who keep rams and male goats are either given some cash (Birr 4 to 6 per head every year) or they receive a share of meat of the animal they have been keeping.

4.1.3 Pack Animals

Mules and horses are the two equine kept for the transportation of goods and people. Like chickens, they are considered to be **dhebi**. The introduction of these pack animals in Ari is traced back to the period of incorporation. Equines are believed to have come to the area with the Amahara at the begging of this century. Many Ari in Sida do not own equine, particularly mules for such reasons as high cost, poor pasture, and health problems. Rich households and people who are engaged in trade tend to raise equine. For example, of the 20 informants only Ato Alsa and Ato Afedab (both are rich) raised two mules (one each). Of the 5 persons who owned horses, 3 are rich, while the rest 2 are young farmers partly engaged in trade activities. Most people do not rely on mules and horses for the transportation of goods and people. When there is a need to carry things to the market, to the mill, and the like, the majority of people walk on foot carrying goods on their heads, shoulders, or backs. Heavy goods are transported by renting pack animals from those who own.

Like cattle and ruminants, pack animals are grazed on fallow fields, along side river banks and roadside verges. While calves, cows, sheep and goats are kept at night in homesteads, oxen and pack animals are left outside in the grazing field. The 20 informants mentioned the type and number of animals they have as summarized below.

Table 12: Type and size of livestock owned by informants

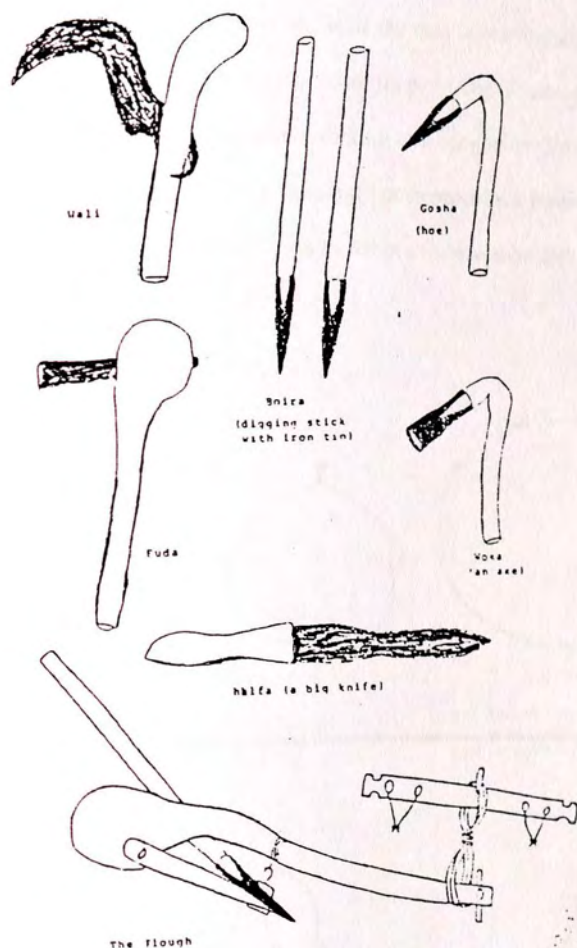
	Oxen	Cows	Sheep	Goats	Mules	Horses	Chicken
No. of Animals	29	37	75	17	2	5	149
No. of Owners	14	15	14	7	2	5	18

4.2 Craft Activities

In Ari there are classes of people that "specialize" in certain artisanal activities, such as iron-work, carpentry, and pottery making. These are craft activities that most Ari are not skilled in. While a section of the population called **fakaman** (blacksmiths) specialize in iron-work and wood-work (see plate 10), the **daman** (potters) produce various types of pots required in the society. The products of their labour are exchanged for things they do not have and/or sold for cash. Membership to these groups is based on biological or blood relationship with the previous occupants of the activity. In Ari the two occupational groups are culturally despised and looked down on by the **kansa**, the majority. But it is not only the **mana** who are engaged in craft activities. The **kansa** also participate in making of certain tools on part time basis. For example, they make mats for sleeping, ropes for tying animals, some agricultural tools, and some other household furniture.

Locally made iron-tools include **wali**, hoe, an axe, plough points, **boira**, various knives, spear-heads, etc. About hundred years ago, Ari blacksmiths used to extract iron from its ore (he ground) using a labour-intensive local technology. First they had to dig deep into the ground to find the ore. The pure iron was extracted from its crude form using heat produced by fire. They gave up this indigenous technology when imported iron became available in the market. Ato Demaa, 75 years old black smith, said that his grand-father extracted iron from its ore to make tools, and it was only in his father's generation that imported iron sheets became available. Iron-workers used to obtain their food from cultivators in exchange for their labour products or in the form of gifts. Nowadays, however, they divide their time between agricultural activities, smithing, and carpentry. The reason for diversifying activities is explained in terms of the high cost of imported iron sheets, low prices of local tools, and the inability of cultivators to provide blacksmiths with sufficient food. It is men who are engaged in smithing and in the making of such wooden materials as tables, chairs, stools, plates, mortars, and handle for various tools. In Ari handles for most agricultural tools are made of wood, while iron are often used as a pointed and sharp tip. The major agricultural tools in Ari are indicated below.

Figure 9: Major agricultural tools



Wali: a typical and multipurpose hand tool made by local smiths. It is used for clearing, weeding, harvesting, etc. **Wali** also serves as a weapon to attack or defend oneself against onslaughts. Most Ari often carry **wali** with them.

Gosha: a hoe-like hand tool with iron tip used for digging, up-rooting, and weeding.

Boira: pair of digging sticks with iron points used for turning the soil upside-down and up-rooting.

Woka: a locally made axe used for used for cutting trees and making/curving tools.

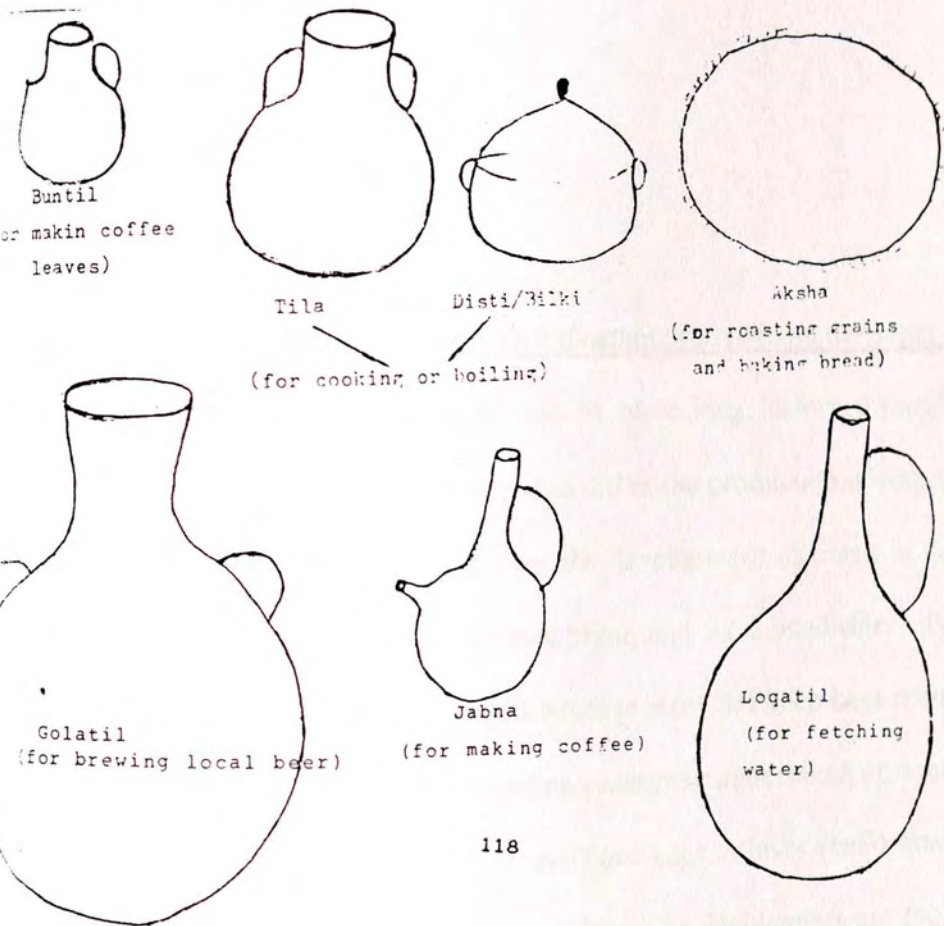
Fuda: an axe-like tools made by lacial blacksmiths for cuting/splitting big trees and for making wooden materials.

Halfa: a big knife used for processing and harvesting **ensete** and yam.

Waki zeeg: a term which literally means "tools of oxen" is used to refer to the plough. The various parts of the plough are known by particular terms borrowed from Amharic.

Like blacksmiths, potters used to depend on their own occupation, i.e pot making, for livelihood. Today, however, they devote part of their time to cultivation because the kansa are not in a position to provide them with sufficient food. The women make pots and searches for old broken pots (a raw material), while the men (often husbands) assist in carrying pots to the market. Men are also responsible for providing labour service and bringing clay as a raw material. Alemitu, a potter working with her younger brother, said that pot making requires the assistance of a man, but not necessarily a husband. The different types of pots made and commonly used in Ari are indicated below.

Figure 10: Different types of pots



As regards the relationship between blacksmiths and potters, the latter tend to degrade the former. According to Alemitu, there are four status groups in Ari: **kansa**, **gasiman**, **daman**, and **fakaman**. She said she belongs in **daman**, which is superior to smiths. This view is not recognized by the smiths. Ato Demeaa said, "We both (smiths & potters) are **mana** and the only high class ever known is the **kansa**. The claim on the side of potters that they are better is unfounded." The two groups do not intermarry. Nor do they enter each other's house, eat together, and participate in common cultural and ritual practices. The ideal place where the two groups meet and exchange goods is the market.

4.3 Apiculture

Apiculture or bee-keeping is an important productive activity that complements farming in Ari. The tradition is said to have long history throughout Ariland. According to informants, this activity is as old as the production of sorghum, yam, and **ensete**. In the past, particularly before the development of towns in Ariland, honey was mainly used for domestic consumption and as a medicine. But today the orientation of apiculture has changed because most Ari keep bees mainly to sell the honey. And yet, the activity remained an enterprise undertaken on a small-scale and part-time basis. In Ari honeybees (**antsi**) are kept in hives (**bezi**) made of bamboo (**oisi**). Even though any Ari can make a bee hive, highlanders are more engaged in this activity as bamboo grow well in these areas. It is men who make bee hives (**bezi qan**).

The outside part of the hive is smeared with cow dung (**chora**) and covered by **pasha** (pseudoleaves of bamboo trees), straw, and **ensete** leaves. Then it is intensively

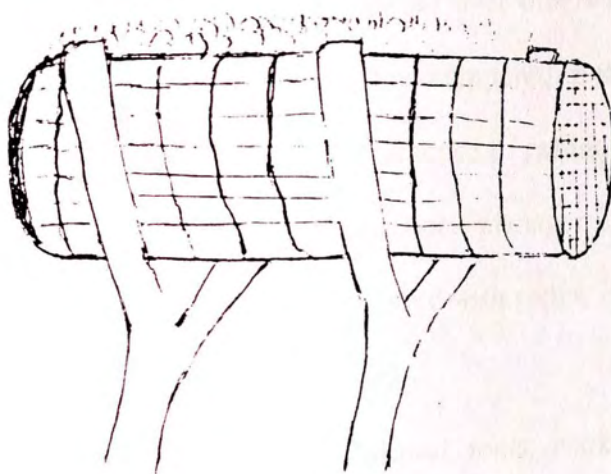
smoked (**bezi uul**) with leaves of a special tree called **getsi** for about four to six continuous days. Moreover, the inside part is completely rubbed with roasted and powdered coffee, leaves of a special plant called **tsisi**, and **dekra** (honey-like liquid material produced by small insect called **dekra**). This is to improve the odour of the bamboo and give it better smell and taste so that the scouting bees are attracted.

Between November and February the Ari prepare their hives and hang them on trees. The head of the household, having prayed to his ancestors and deities and having secured a blessing from his family puts or hangs the hive(s) on trees. Bees may enter the hive within a week or later depending on the quality of the hive, the activities of the scouting bees, and many other circumstances. In Sida bees are permanently kept in a reserved or protected place behind or at the back of homesteads. Every year (between November and January) bees split into two half: **enndi** (mother) and **danez** (young). The **enndi** are said to remain in the old hive, while the "young" are believed to move out (**yir**). If it is not carefully watched, **danez** that move out of the parent hive can easily be lost. Therefore, between November and February adult men are busy watching their bees and arranging and preparing new hives for **danez**. Under normal circumstances about 40 to 50 kilos of honey (per hive) is collected every year. In fact, the amount depends on the size of the hive, type of bee, and the availability of flowers. Beginning Mid-December, the Ari collect honey every two months about three times.

The Ari recognize three kinds of bees. These are: **zhagich** (yellow bee), **dimi** (black bee), and **sireqants** (yellow bee with black stripes on its body). It is not common to find the last one. The difference between the first two types are described as follows. First, the yellow bees are common in lowland areas, while the black ones prevail in highland Ari. In Sida, however, both are common. Secondly, under similar

circumstances yellow bees are believed to produce less of honey when compared to black bees. Third, yellow bees are said to be less numerous, while the opposite holds true for black bees. Fourth, There is a high possibility of losing yellow bees because they often move out of hives. On the other hand, black bees are known for remaining in hives for long time. Finally, yellow bees are said to be very aggressive throughout the year, while the other type becomes aggressive only once a year, i.e during the time reproduction. Occupationally, the Ari recognize three types of bees: the **babi** (queen bee), **antsi** (worker bee), and **ugzi** (drone).

Figure 11: Beehive



4.4 The Relative Importance of Various Activities

According to informants, most Ari would be willing to undertake as many productive activities as possible. A close observation of farming households in Sida indicates that significant proportion of resources and time are allocated for crop production. This is mainly because most Ari derive their livelihood from this enterprise. Moreover, there are a number of cultural practices and social commitments that partly dictate the production of crops. As indicated earlier the relative importance given to certain crops varied over time and to some extent among households.

Livestock make remarkable contributions to the economic and non-economic life of the people. Livestock are a source of draught power, food, cash income, manure, and other outputs such as hides and leather. Certain animals such as cattle, sheep, and goats are highly favoured over others because they provide a variety of cultural and social functions. When compared to the pastoral neighbours, the size of livestock in Ari is small and the practice of raising animals has been conducted on a very limited land resources. Livestock management do not require much time and human effort. Since animals are tied with ropes, herdsman are not required to look after livestock throughout the day.

In Ari important agricultural tools, cooking utensils, and other valuable household furniture are locally made. Most craft products such as iron-tools, pottery, and some wooden materials are not produced by any Ari. There are certain social groups (smiths & potters) which specialize on some craft activities. Smithing and pottery making used to be the main source of livelihood for those who specialized on them. Nowadays, however, craftsmen devote part of their time for the production of

crops because agriculturalists can not provide them with sufficient food as they used to do before. Still their emphasis is on craft activities. Some agriculturalists use their leisure time, holidays, and nights for making or producing certain materials, such as handles for tools, mats, ropes, etc.

Apiculture is an activity that does not demand heavy work. Nor does it require large size of land resources. In a year, a person needs to spare only few days or couple of weeks to deal with bees, to make/prepare beehives, and to collect honey. Honey is highly appreciated for its medicinal as well as commercial values. Thus, many Ari tend to keep bees in their compound.

5.1 The Problem

Ethiopia, like most other developing countries, faces chronic economic problems. The country has been experiencing serious food crises and impediment to overall development due to such factors as natural calamities, physical environment, low level of technological advancement, and man-made adversities. As mentioned in the introduction, sixty percent of the Ethiopian population is believed to be living below the absolute poverty line. The crisis is likely to persist unless appropriate measures are taken (both at community and national levels) to alleviate the situation and lay the basis for sustainable development. This needs a thorough study of (1) constraints to productivity and production continuity and (2) the potential for improving the existing production practices. In this chapter the major threats (other than climatic changes) to productivity and production continuity in Sida are described. Moreover, indigenous responses to survival questions and opportunities for bringing sustainable development to the area are discussed. It has also been attempted to see factors that might act against successful implementation.

Agricultural practices in Ari have undergone only minor changes. Except for the introduction of the oxen-drawn plough, the farming techniques and tools used are believed to have remained the same for centuries. Farmers in the area are more or less subsistence-oriented as the overall objective of production is still geared towards the satisfaction of basic needs. The limited cash income obtained by selling coffee, cardamon, animals, and some other crops, is largely spent on consumable goods. According to informants, the level of agricultural production showed marked decline

during the last two decades due to a combination of factors that will be discussed later. During normal years sufficient cereal crops are produced to fulfil the subsistence requirement. When production fails, people rely heavily on root crops and on sale of livestock to generate cash to buy grain.

In addition to income-generation, domesticated animals serve as a source of high quality food and above all they provide substantial input into production. There is a close interaction and dynamic relationship between productivity of crops and the size of livestock. After a poor agricultural year, for instance, Ari sell/exchange their livestock to obtain grain. On the other hand, they buy additional animals after a good harvest. Most informants said that during the last two decades the size of livestock holding has gradually declined following the general trend in the level of crop production. There is therefore an urgent need to improve the farming practices so as to reverse this trend, ensure food security, and lay the basis for sustainable development.

5.2 Factors Affecting Production and Local Responses

Factors that limit productivity are manifold. The following are some of the problems that have been identified through discussions with informants, field observation, and the researcher's personal experience as a member of the society. It has also been attempted to describe the local understanding and responses to these problems.

5.2.1 Population Growth and Land scarcity

Old records of population size are lacking to compare them against the present ones and see the change through time. Nevertheless, there are a number of indications that the population of Ari has been increasing. For instance, areas covered by forests twenty and thirty years ago are now cleared and inhabited by new people. Arable lands that used to be cultivated by a single person are now divided among several people (descendants, relatives, etc.). According to Ato Woeshi, Wonders (a small village in Sida) which used to be inhabited by about six families during his father's time now consists of over 20 households. The housing units or families of individual villages have shown marked increase through time. Therefore, it is unquestionable that the Ari population has increased. This has gradually resulted in scarcity of land and a reduction of yields per unit of household.

However, the Ari do not perceive population increase as a threat, rather it is taken as an asset. By and large, people value having many children as they provide manpower and security at old age. People have tried to solve the problem of land scarcity by clearing forests. Nowadays, this possibility is over because forests have been almost exhausted. Consequently, people are facing difficulties in coping with the problem of land scarcity.

5.2.2 Decline of Soil Fertility

To provide arable land, pasture, and fuel-wood, trees have been cut down causing environmental degradation through wind and water erosion. In Sida and in its vicinity well known and named forests like **arki, salsal, babi, endi, bafi**, and others have been cleared (some partly and others completely) during the last two or three decades. The loss of soil, deterioration in fertility, and decline in moisture storage capacity greatly affected agricultural productivity. The terrain of midland and highland Ari is characterized by slopes and hillsides. Absence of trees from these escarpments exposed the soil to devastating water and wind erosion in rainy and dry seasons respectively. Population increment not only resulted in land scarcity but also reduced the practice of fallow, which in turn led to continued reduction in soil fertility. On the whole, the rapid population growth led to degradation of environment, diminishing farm size, repeated use of the same field, decline in the fertility of land, and the consequent decline in the size of yields.

In Sida farmers attempt to restore and/or increase soil fertility of **tikam** (garden) by applying manure and through inter-cropping of various crops and trees. They try to maintain the soil fertility of **wonam** practising fallow (though rarely) and crop rotation.

5.2.3 Plant Disease and Pests

Most crops in Ari are affected by insects, rodents, and by plant diseases. Cereal crops like sorghum and maize are affected by birds and pests in the fields, while the most serious destructions are caused by weevils and rats in the stores. The local

response to these problems include bird-scaring, making tight granaries smearing them with dung, and performance of rituals. **Ensete**, coffee, and cardamon are affected by various pests and plant diseases. For example, **durqa**, **sunu**, **sola**, and rodents seriously affect **ensete** plants and the local efforts to deal with some of these problems (discussed in chapter 2) prove to be ineffective. The Ari found it difficult to control diseases that cause rotting and drying of **ensete**, coffee, and cardamon plants.

5.2.4 Imbalance between the Production of Crops

In the preceding sections it has already been indicated that the production of coffee and cardamon intensified during the last three decades. Before this period, the production of cash crops was not undertaken intensively because income generated from this activity was generally insignificant due to low demand. Informants recall that in those days the production of grains was emphasized so that most farmers used to have grains stored for more than two years. Consequently, food was available not only for Ari farmers but also for nearby towns people.

During the last two to three decades, on the contrary, the production of food crops declined partly because of a shift of emphasis from food crops to that of cash generating crops. The said shift is evidenced by the change exhibited in the relative allocation of land and labour to the various activities. Informants testify that they planted more coffee and cardamon trees, clearing part of their root crops, such as **ensete** and taro. They further noted that farmers in coffee and cardamon-growing areas began to devote part of their time to cash-crop production, which meant reduction of labour for food production. On the other hand, the prices of coffee and cardamon remained very low for several years. The other problem is that the meagre

cash income earned from coffee or cardamon is neither saved to use at times of emergency nor invested to expand production.

During the last four or five years some people in Sida are said to have cleared their cardamon plants to grow more food crops. Most informants pointed out the following reasons to justify the increasing tendency to focus on food crop production.

(1) Since the prices of cardamon remained low for several years, it is not worth investing in it any more. (2) Nowadays cash income can be obtained by producing grain and even root crops. (3) Cardamon began to be affected by a plant disease called **durqa** with which the Ari cannot deal. (4) Above all, the emphasis on cash crop production resulted in a decline of food crop production. It is important to note that this does not mean that the people have given up producing cash crops, rather it is a question of shifting emphasis.

5.2.5 Problems Associated with Labour

In the past, traditional labour organizations were effective in their performance, but since the 1974 socialist revolution in Ethiopia things changed markedly. Certain management and organizational problems were observed in the operation of traditional voluntary labour organizations, particularly in **molaa**. These problems seem to have emanated mainly from the hostile attitude of the leaders of peasant associations, local officials, and school administrations towards traditional work parties. In the eyes of political officials **molaa** organizations were traditional and backward practices which needed replacement by new institutions. The motive behind this

negative attitude, might be explained in terms of the government's policy to form co-operative organizations of the socialist type. Leaders of *molaa* have been blamed for preventing the youth from going to school.

Active participation in youth associations and schools gave young people the opportunity to go their own way. Parents and leaders of *molaa* could not control the youth any more. Consequently, enforcing the organizational rules and regulations became rather difficult. Individuals who used to organize and coordinate work parties have lacked political clout, lost interest, and became reluctant to organize *molaa* as in the past. Therefore, the contribution of the youth to agricultural production went down. The society tried to cope with the problem by forming and strengthening as many *idir* groups as possible.

5.2.6 Shortage of Pasture

There is a severe shortage of animal feed because of increasing pressure on land for cultivation. The process of crop production, which heavily depends on oxen, is seriously affected by poor pasture. It is difficult for people to raise as many animals as they wish. Moreover, due to poor pasture the draught oxen are weak and this (1) limits farm size and (2) leads to later sowing. Both in turn affect the quantity of the harvest. The attempt to provide animals with supplementary feed composed of chopped leaves of plants and food waste remains insufficient.

5.2.7 Shortage of Draught Animals (oxen)

Most farmers in Sida do not own the two oxen required for ploughing purposes. Those with no oxen depend on renting (Birr 3 to 4 for one day service) or other exchange agreements to obtain oxen for cultivation. But this is not reliable because no farmer would be willing to rent out his oxen or enter into any agreement before he ploughs his own field. By then it is already late for those depending on rented oxen. Those with one ox need to team up with another in similar circumstances. But it is not easy to find the right pairing. Coupled with a poor state of pasture, lack or shortage of oxen has been a constraint on increasing production.

5.2.8 Lack of Transportation and Marketing Facilities

Although it is said that production in Ari is basically subsistence-oriented, one cannot deny the fact that people sell part of their harvest to obtain other things they need. Moreover, as their involvement in the world economy (through cash crop production and buying of industrial commodities) increased, the needs of people for cash income rose.

Due to lack of transportation, most farmers cannot take their products to places where there are good markets. They rather wait for merchants to come to the local markets not only to sell their crops but also to buy from the latter industrial commodities. The situation has favoured the middle-men and merchants ii that they benefited at the expense of poor peasants. Merchants buy crops for cheaper prices,

while charging farmers high prices for their imported commodities. The whole situation has somehow discouraged the chances of furthering the production of certain crops.

5.2.9 Policy Constraints

During President Mengistu's regime the dissemination of the idea of communal ownership of property and heavy taxes greatly discouraged any effort to increase production and productivity. The Ari have long been individualistic with respect to ownership of cattle, grain, and other property. Since a couple of years after the 1974 revolution, there had been a great tendency to draw people into co-operative organizations. The principles of socialist co-operatives were communicated to people. However, the criterion that people would be contributing their private property to the co-operatives was seen by the people as a serious threat to personal well-being. Farmers lacked the sense of security to invest more and accumulate wealth because there was a fear that the government may collectivize property.

Another factor that discouraged the farming enterprise in Ari was the heavy taxes and all sorts of contributions expected from farmers. At one time they were to pay government taxes in proportion to their estimated annual income and wealth. This had a negative impact on motivation to increase production. There is also institutional problem emanating from the educational curriculum. Both at primary and higher levels students are not educated in such a way that they give equal importance to mental and manual work. In Ari most drop-outs and graduates of grade 12 wish to live in towns looking for white-collar job or sometimes doing nothing. Those who can not afford to live in towns may be forced to go back home. But such groups often

remain unwilling to participate in agricultural activities because there is a tendency to feel that farming is "the job of the uneducated".

5.3 Intr-relationship among Problems

Most of the problems discussed above are interlaced in many respects. Land scarcity, which is caused by population growth, has to do with decline of soil fertility. When land was not scarce, several farmers in Ari used to practice fallow to restore and maintain soil fertility. This practice has long been abandoned by most farmers as the size of land decreased per household due to population pressure. They continued to cultivate crops on the same field repeatedly. This practice undoubtedly resulted in decline of soil fertility. Likewise, shortage of pasture can be explained in terms of population growth and land scarcity. The problem of pasture became serious when pressure on land increased for cultivation. Shortage of pasture in turn constrained livestock production in the sense that it becomes difficult for farmers to raise the required size and quality of animals (eg. oxen) under conditions of poor pasture.

Problems associated with labour and policy constraints had one important thing in common. That is they promoted insecurity of holding and of production. In other words, the socialist principles (eg. co-operative development or collective ownership of property) favourably entertained by Mengistu's regime greatly affected local economic institutions and discouraged the motive to work hard.

At the moment, the most serious and difficult problems (to the most Ari in Sida) include land scarcity, decline of soil fertility, pests and plant diseases, shortage of oxen, and shortage of pasture.

5.4 Opportunities for Improving Production

According to Crapo (1990:65), while horticulturalists expand their population by opening new land to cultivation, agriculturalists can support population growth by increasing the output of their fields. In Ari the possibility to alleviate economic problems and population pressure by clearing new land is next to none. Now it is high time to explore other opportunities and devise strategies that could enable the society to cope with changing situations. Such strategies require a baseline study of local situations including indigenous responses to problems, identification of various potentials, and means of exploiting these potentials. In Ari, applied research of this type is almost non-existent.

The writer of this thesis does not claim to have fully assessed and addressed all constraints and opportunities pertaining to production practices. As much as possible, however, attempts have been made to explore the major problems and possibilities of solving these problems. If the present trend in Ari continues without being checked, no doubt, the society will face serious crises. At the moment, it seems that there are a number of opportunities not only to reverse the present trend but also to lay a basis for sustainable development. Of the possible potential steps the following measures could strengthen and improve the existing production practices.

The natural resources of Ari are the main basis for the development of the area. However, the natural resource base of the society is currently diminishing, leading to low levels of production and deteriorated standard of living. Part of the solution to this problem could be the development of conservation-oriented resource management and farming practices. Increased ground cover, for example, could protect the soil from erosion, improve infiltration of water, and reduce run-off. Conservation schemes should be part of the farming activities so that farmers actively participate with enthusiasm and dedication. To help adoption of the practice over wider areas, schemes must be designed in such a way that they provide farmers with short-term economic benefits. The ground cover could include cereal crops, trees, fodder plants, and the like.

Andrian P. Wood (1990:196-7) stated that crop changes, agro-forestry, inter-cropping, crop rotation, and controlled grazing are of particular importance for conservation measures. In the Ari context, most of these could be successfully tried as some of the practices are not new. Nor do others appear to be difficult to adopt. As regards crop change, in fact, it may not be that easy (for cultural reasons) to shift away from some crops and adopt new ones. However, crops that (1) mature early, (2) increase soil fertility, (3) can be intercropped with indigenous crops, and (4) maintain soil stability are likely to be accepted. The same thing is true of agro-forestry as long as the trees provide multiple benefits, such as fruits, fodder, fuel, fence, increasing soil fertility and/or stability. Inter-cropping of crops with diverse root systems, for example, is another important step to improve soil stability. This practice may help to control weeds. For instance, in Bolosso of Wolaita maize is inter-cropped with

sweet potato which suppresses weeds (Dessalegn 1992:31). Above all, the practice inter-cropping allows simultaneous harvest of different crops from the same field.

It is equally important to note that certain conservation schemes may conflict with immediate interests of the people. Conservation of natural resources through afforestation programs, for instance, would exacerbate the problem of land scarcity and shortage of pasture. Thus, this kind of scheme is likely to be resisted.

5.4.2 Technological Innovation

Constraints on increasing productivity can also be tackled by introducing new technology or by improving the existing methods of farming. Technology is defined as "a segment of culture, including knowledge and tools, that man uses to manipulate his physical environment in order to achieve a desired practical ends" (Theodorson and Theodorson 1969:434). According to Gregory and Altman (1989: 116), technological inputs are of mechanical, biological and chemical kinds including such things as tools, machines, plants, animals, fertilizers, and pesticides. Here technological innovation is discussed within the context of these two definitions.

In rural areas like the Ari, new methods must address priority problems as perceived by the local population. Moreover, such methods have to be low-cost, simple to use, and compatible with indigenous practices and beliefs. ILCA (International Livestock Centre for Africa) has been trying to innovate and introduce improved techniques of farming in Ethiopia.¹⁹ Some of these include the introduction of single-

¹⁹ In a report submitted to ILCA (1988) by group of researchers on the role of livestock on mixed smallholder farms in the Ethiopian highlands, issues relating to the improvement of farming practices are discussed. The report is based on a case study Baso and Worena Wereda near Debre Berhan.

ox drawn plough, the improvement of tools, planting of legumes and fodder plants (Wood 1990:196). There is a view that the introduction of cow-drawn or horse-drawn plough could solve the problem of shortage of draught animals.

In Ari the problem of shortage of oxen could be solved by introducing new methods or by improving the existing ones. For example, the existing two-oxen drawn plough can be strengthened by increasing the size of oxen and improving the condition of pasture. Alternatively, three new methods can also be tried. These are the introduction of (1) single-ox drawn plough practices, (2) horse-drawn plough, and (3) improved cattle breeds. The first method will enable farmers with one ox to cultivate their land with their own resource. It will reduce farmers' dependency on borrowing, renting, or any other agreements. As regards the second method, the diversified use of animals increases farmers' options. Many farmers can afford to buy horses because currently horses are not as expensive as oxen. The introduction of breeds with high growth rate and better reproduction performance could contribute to improved farming enterprise.

The other strategy could be to improve the situation of pasture. The main animal feed resources in Ariland are natural pasture, crop residues, chopped leaves of certain plants. There is the need to increase or at least maintain the existing cattle size to run the farming enterprise in Ari. On the other hand, the carrying capacity of the area is declining due to population pressure and land scarcity. Thus, it is important to introduce high-yielding forage crops. These crops could possibly be produced in rotation with food crops, or on fallow fields.

There are certain factors that might constrain the implementation of the above mentioned strategies. The single-oxen plough practice could be adopted. But the power of an ox may not be that strong to sufficiently break the soil. The attempt to help the adoption and diffusion of horse-drawn or cow-drawn plough practice could be time consuming due to cultural reasons. The introduction of improved breeds may be costly. The idea behind mentioning these problems is not to discourage any intervention efforts, rather to emphasize on the importance of understanding constraints on opportunities.

5.4.3 Balance Resource Allocation

Cereal crops and root crops are complementary to each other in that (1) the production of the two crops do not compete, and (2) both are complementarily used for domestic consumption. The intensification of coffee and cardamon as cash crops disturbed the overall balance among the production of crops, which in turn partly contributed to the seasonal shortage of food and decline in the living conditions.

There is a need therefore to work out how to create a balance among the various productive activities in the area. Such an effort may require thorough study, particularly regarding the allocation of field, labour, and time. In general, however, it can be suggested that land and labour could be spared by strengthening inter-cropping practices both in **tikam** and in **wonam**. Inter-cropping, which proved successful in West Africa, has been considered as an important innovation that can contribute to greater food security for peasants (Richards 1985). Some Ari have started inter-cropping cassava (which is new to the area) with cereals and root crops. Such an attempt deserves encouragement. In addition to inter-cropping practices, any

technique (eg. the use of fertilizers and better seeds) that increases productivity per unit of field could also be employed. In short, these are some of the strategies that can be employed to minimize the use of land and labour resources. So, the idea is that resources spared in these ways could be allocated for those crops given little attention.

5.4.4 Encourage & Re-enforce Indigenous Labour Parties

In Ari the human labour required for farming practice is primarily supplied by the family. All physically capable members of the family participate in farm work. For most households family labour is not sufficient to carry out all agricultural activities. Thus, people have long established a practice of labour exchange for major activities, such as clearing, ploughing, planting, weeding, and harvesting. **Molaa** is the most important work party on which most households of Ari used to rely. For reasons discussed above this work group was not doing well during Mengistu's regime.

Nowadays, however, there is a tendency to form more **molaa** groups in different parts of Sida. In 1987, for instance, the researcher counted only five such groups in Metser and during the field work time there were nine of them.²⁰ This needs encouragement from all concerned parties. Particularly the people, local officials, the school administration, extension workers, and other concerned parties need to discuss the issue of promoting **molaa** in such a way that it doesn't compete with other interests. However, unless it is checked, the tendency to encourage certain indigenous work parties (eg. **molaa**) may compete with educational objectives.

Most informants and leaders of **molaa** explained the increase in the number of groups in terms of absence of influence and intervention by local officials and school administration.

In Ari the provision of social services (eg. education, health) and infrastructural facilities (eg. transportation) has been very poor. The schools have hardly attempted to inculcate in the minds of the youth the value and importance of agricultural work. On the contrary, school administrations exhibited a tendency to work towards the breakdown of indigenous work parties. Many informants complained that some parents and leaders of **molaa** used to be arrested for not sending the youth to school. Generally, the educational institution and production organizations have never been supportive and complementary to each other.

The capacity of health institutions in the area is so limited that they do not provide adequate health services. Thus, the contribution of health institutions to the development of efficient and productive labour force has been limited. Epidemic diseases that often break out in the area not only take the lives of many but also incapacitate significant portion of the labour force. Recently, the SIM (Society of International Mission) has been trying to contribute to the improvement of the health situation in Sida by enhancing the provision of services. SIM has also built a bridge over the **Neri** river and a road from Gazer to Metser, which were commendable contributions to the overall life of the people. However, the vast majority of the people have not been affected by the measures taken due to the limited nature of services.

Another problem in Ari relates to the poor transportation and marketing facilities that always favoured the middle-men and merchants. Improved transportation and favourable marketing facilities are basic conditions that enable farmers to sell their agricultural products on and buy other commodities for reasonable

prices. This is not to pronounce the capitalistic view that only free market stimulates the farmer to increase production. Still, one cannot deny the fact that improvement in agricultural prices somehow encourages investment in farming. For instance, the production of coffee and cardamon intensified in Ari only after the prices of these crops increased. Improving the transportation and market situation has another important advantage of saving the poor farmer from being exploited by money-minded merchants and middle-men.

5.4.6 External Assistance

The business of improving the production situation of the Ari is a difficult task if not impossible. The fact that there exist a number of opportunities does not mean that the people will make use of these opportunities by themselves. To make effective use of locally available development potentials, the intervention of external agent(s) becomes important. Moreover, there are a lot of problems (such as pests and diseases) which the society has failed to solve. Such problems definitely need special attention. Without external assistance, it could be difficult to build roads or bridge in Ariland due to lack of financial resources and technical knowhow. External help could take the form of technical assistance, provision of material, financial aid, and the like. The ideal external aid is an assistance designed to strengthen local capacities, encourage popular participation, and lay the basis for sustainable development. By no means should it create a sense of dependency. Instead it should enhance creativity and the feeling of self-reliance.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

1 Summary

In Ari there are a number of unexplored research areas which need further study. The society has been facing serious economic problems due to natural and man-made adversities in recent years. The combination of these problems necessitates the carrying out of basic as well as applied research in Ari society.

The Omotic speaking Ari inhabit an area consisting of nine subdivisions which used to be independent entities before the incorporation of the area into the Ethiopian empire. Over 60 **mata** (clans), which are grouped into two moieties, make up Ari society. According to most informants and folk-tales, different clans have their own myths of origin. The Ari are also divided into various occupational groupings, namely, **kansa**, **gasiman**, **daman**, and **fakaman**.

Marriages among the Ari are arranged by the free choice of the boy and the girl. A man can marry as many wives as he wishes so long as he can afford the bride-wealth (paid in cash and kind). The bride-prices are partly refundable on divorce. Besides ancestor worship, the Ari believe in personalized deities called **sabi** and **beri** (male and female respectively). During the last 70 or 90 years, protestant and orthodox religions have been introduced.

The people experienced different land tenure systems in the course of their history. At the moment, it seems that what they need is security to use land in their life time and the legal guarantee to hand usufructory right of land down to children. The Ari have adopted different production activities at different elevations ranging from 800 m to 3375 m above sea level. Because of variation in altitude the mean

annual temperature and rain fall vary from place to place. The society schedule economic activities and rituals according to a calendar based on a lunar month.

The Ari combine agriculture, animal husbandry, craft activities, apiculture, and trade. The major categories of crops grown in the area include cereals, root crops, and cash crops. Sorghum, maize, and **tef** are the popular cereal crops. They play central role in the economic, social, and cultural life of the people. They are not only served as a food and drink, but also sold for cash income. Cereals are important gift items. Of all the cereals, sorghum plays particular roles in the ritual and ceremonial activities.

Ensete, taro, and yam are the most widely planted root crops that provide remarkable contributions to the economic and cultural spheres. The Ari rely heavily on root crops, particularly on **ensete** and taro for domestic consumption. **Ensete** is the most important root crop used for various ritual and/or ceremonial activities. Nowadays, coffee and cardamon are grown mainly for cash income, though the former is also needed for drinking and ritual functions. The intensification of cash crop production during the last 30 years was achieved at the expense of the production of subsistence crops. This intensification contributed (at least partly) to the seasonal shortage of crops and deterioration of living conditions.

Though it is said that in Ari division of labour is based on age and sex, certain responsibilities tend to overlap. Since the family labour is not sufficient to carry out most productive activities, the Ari have developed labour exchange practices. There are four kinds of voluntary work parties (**aldi**, **molaa**, **idir**, and **wod**) that provide economic and non-economic functions. They vary in size, duration, structure, functions, leadership, criteria of membership, degree of reciprocity, rules and regulations, etc.

Livestock in Ari include cattle, small ruminants, equine, and poultry. They provide food; input into agricultural production; energy; and other outputs in the form of manure, skins, hides, and leathers. Animals can be seen as invested capital. Such animals as cattle, sheep, and goats are wanted for cultural practices related to death, marriage, illness, and/or purification. Blacksmiths and potters produce tools and utensils required in the society. They used to rely on **kansa** (agriculturalists) for food, but nowadays they devote time for cultivation because the **kansa** are not in a position to provide them with sufficient food. Certain craft works are also carried out by **kansa**. Apiculture is another sideline activity undertaken to obtain cash income.

The living condition of Ari people have been declining due to a number of factors that constrained production. These include rapid population growth, land scarcity, decline of soil fertility, shortage of oxen, shortage of pasture, pests and diseases, infrastructural and policy problems. If the present trend is left unchecked, the society will face serious crises. It is high time to explore and utilize opportunities to reverse the trend. Strategies that can be employed include conservation of natural resources; strengthening indigenous practices; introduction of better farming techniques; balancing resource allocation; adequate provision of relevant facilities/services; and securing external assistance.

2 Conclusion

The Ari combine different productive activities. They are busy throughout the year planting certain crops and harvesting others. They rely heavily on root crops when cereals fail and vice versa. When there is a problem with all food crops, people sell animals to generate cash income and buy food. Money can also be obtained from the sale of cash crops and by engaging in craft activities. It appears that the Ari make effective use of the various altitudinal zones by growing ecologically appropriate crops. Generally speaking, the practice of diversified production may be seen as an indigenous survival strategy that helps the Ari to diversify and balance their nutritional intakes.

It can be stated that the social organization and cultural practices of Ari society have strong bearings on economic activities. Lineage groups living together tend to co-operate. Ari villages are best suited to bring such groups together to form the different work parties discussed earlier. Individuals or groups related to each other through marriage are expected to help each other economically. The value system and cultural practices of the group seem to encourage better economic performance. For instance, the need to prepare oneself to meet gift expectations; sponsor ceremonies and rituals; and gain recognition on account of better economic position are non-economic motives that partly dictate the performance of farmers. Therefore, in Ari crop production and the raising of animals, are dictated by the combination of economic, social, and cultural motives.

Sida is a suitable for both livestock and crop production. At first sight, it appears to be an ideal place where one might expect to find people leading good life.

However, people have been experiencing difficult economic situations due to the production constraints mentioned in chapter five. It can be stated that there is a dynamic relationship between crop production and herding. When crops fail, the Ari sell their animals to buy food, and when there is a boom in crop production they tend to increase the number of livestock. During the last 20 years the number of livestock in Ari is believed to have decreased, and this is explicable in terms of the continued decline in crop production. As indicated in chapter 5, there are opportunities for improving the situation in Ari in general and in Sida in particular. Thus, it is high time to work towards planing to (1) make use of the locally available opportunities, and (2) secure external assistance to help the process of change.

Since independence developing countries have been making repeated attempts to move out of the poverty circle. However, often national plans as well as community level development projects have failed for several reasons. Success stories are are. This does not mean that there is no place for planned change. In fact, whether a proposed change will be successful or not is not easy to anticipate. Some of the strategies discussed in chapter five may encounter difficulties due to resistance on the side of the people. If the people are unaware of the benefits of some of the proposed measures, they are unlikely to participate with full commitment.

There are certain steps that can be taken to increase success possibilities and to minimize (if possible to avoid) failure. Of all the things, the people to whom change is being proposed should be involved in such processes as need assessment, exploration of alternative solutions, mobilization of resources, programming, implementation, and evaluation of methods and outcomes. The people must be asked not only to mention their problems but also to set and prioritize their goals, and to choose alternative solutions for each goal. Instead of thinking of completely new ways

of dealing with problems, it is advisable to start by strengthening local mechanisms and institutional devices by which people often respond to their problems. Investment and budget priorities must be carefully worked out again in line with the interests and priorities set by the people. In short, the whole idea is that if people are involved in planning activities, there will be popular participation in implementing the plan.

Of all problems of planned change the most difficult one is anticipating all the effects that are likely to result from the proposed action. Consequently, certain unforeseen and undesired results may occur no matter how beneficial the plan would be. On the other hand, it is not plausible to consider any planned change as impossible.

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Appendix 1: Notes On Informants

(terms in brackets are village names)

1. Afedab Jiba (Dumtseter)

Age: 80; Sex: Male; Marital status: Married;

No. of wives: 1; No. of children: 6; Family Size: 4

Major Occupation: Farming; Religion: Indigenous beliefs

All Ato Afedab's sons are married and are living close to him. His daughters have married far away. He is living with his wife and grand-children. Ato Afedab used to have over 50 **timad** of land. But now he has only 3 **timad** of **tikam** and 10 **timad** of **monam** because the rest have been divided among his sons. He grows all cereals, root crops, and coffee. He recruits labour mainly through **wod**. Sometimes he buys turns by negotiating with labour parties. Ato Afedab keeps cattle, sheep, goats, a mule, chickens, and bees.

2. Alemitu Ardi (Shishir)

Age: 42; Sex: Female; Marital Status: Divorced;

Family size: 2; Religion: Indigenous beliefs

Major Occupation: Pottery making + agriculture

Alemitu is living with her younger brother. The main source of their income is pottery making. They also grow some sorghum, maize, root crops, and coffee on a small plot of land (about 4 **timad**) they have. Alemitu and her brother carry out agricultural activities mainly by themselves. When there is a need, they call upon relatives and friends for help. They raise only chickens.

3. Alsa Babak (Jagamer)

Age: 45; Sex: Male; Marital status: Married

No. of wives: 3; No. of children: 5; Family size: 11

Major Occupation: Farming + Butcher; Religion: Indigenous

Alsa's only son and two of his daughters are married. His son who became a follower of protestant religion has built a house close to him, while the two daughters have married far away. Ato Alsa has 5 **timad tikam** and 20 **timad wonam**. He grows all the major cereals, root crops, and cash crops. His wives are working in **aldi** labour parties. The additional labour requirement is recruited through **wod** and by buying turns of those working in labour organizations. He himself spends most of his time selling meat. Ato Alsa has all the animals raised in Sida. He also keeps bees.

4. Amenak Bocha (Akamer)

Age: 52; Sex: Male; Marital status: Married

No. of wives: 1; No. of children: 5; Family size: 8

Major occupation: Farming; Religion: Indigenous beliefs

Godms Amenak is a **godmi** (ritual specialist) in Sida. He is believed to have control over rain. During the present field-work, he was arrested by the leaders of Arfes and Metser Peasant Associations for not stopping the unusual rain that recurred in October and December, 1992. Earlier the local people gave him 150 Birr and two sheep to perform the rituals required to stop rain. He performed the ritual but the rain did not stop. He was released having promised to perform the rituals repeatedly until the rain stops.

Godms Amenak is living in highland Ari. Thus, he grows barley, wheat, broad-beans, peas, and ensete. He recruits labour by participating in **idir** and **aldi**, and sponsoring **wod**. He keeps livestock including cattle, sheep, goats, and poultry.

5. Aro Wochais (Metser)

Age: 42; Sex: Male; Marital Status: Married

No. of wives: 1; No. of children: 4; Family size: 7

Major Occupation: Farming; Religion: Indigenous beliefs

Ato Aro, sent his first son (who he understood to be not good in education) to a **molaa** work group. The second son, who appeared to be active to his father is sent to scholl. The two young children are left behind with Ato Aro's elder sister living with them. Aro himself is working with **idir**, while his wife participates in **aldi** work parties. The family engages in the production of the major cereals, root crops, coffee, and cardamon. Ato Aro's family owns cattle and poultry.

6. Asfin Haitsa (Woba)

Age: 75; Sex: Male; Marital status: Married

No. of wives: 3; No. of children: 21; Family size: 8

Major occupation: Farming; Religion: Indigenous beliefs

Asfin is the current **babi** (religious leader) of Woba locality. He is one of the local leaders of Ari who have been victimized and harassed during the past regime. He was imprisoned for a while and lost his gun, land, and cattle. He had to pay 1500 Birr as a fine. Above all, he was prevented from performing ritual and religious

practices. All his children are married. He is living with his wives, grand-children, and other dependants. He grows all the major cereals, root crops, and cash crops. **Babi Asfin** has cattle, sheep, and goats. The grand-children and dependants living in the household are assisting him by joining different work groups. He himself is still strong, working hard with his wives. The people give him money to help him to continue performing ritual activities required for the well-being of the society at large.

7. **Bamay Garababs (Sida)**

Age: 42; Sex: Male; Marital status: Married

No. of wives: 9; No. of children: 5; Family size: 20

Major occupation: Farming; Religion: Indigenous beliefs

Bamay is the current **babi** of **Sida**. He obtained this office six years ago following the death of his father, **babi Garababs Diksi**. Like **bibi Asfin**, his father, besides imprisonment, he lost his guns, some land, and paid a fine of about 2000 Birr. **Bamay's** first daughter has married recently. One of his sons is at school and the rest are young children. He cultivates all the crops grown in **Sida**. He works with his wives and dependants living with them. Part of the labour supply is recruited through **wod** and by negotiating with work parties. **Babi Bamay** owns cattle, sheep, goats, and mule.

8. **Beralq Bilaqsais (Zelet)**

Age: 36; Sex: Male; Marital status: Married

No. of wives: 2; No. of children: 6; Family size: 11

Major occupation: Farming + Trading; Religion: Indigenous

Until recently Ato Beralq has been working as the First Secretary of the Peasant Associations at the Regional level. Now he is back in his home village focusing on agriculture and partly engaging in local trade. Except for the young ones, all his children are sent to school. He works with his wives and dependants living with them. Moreover, his wives brew local beer to recruit additional labour supply. He also pays money for work parties to work on his field. Beralq owns cattle, sheep, goats, and poultry.

9. Berhanu Gaemi (Arfamer)

Age: 36; Sex: Male; Marital status: Separated

Family size: 2; Religion: Protestant christian;

Major occupation: black smith + agriculture

Berhanu is living alone but close to his father and other brothers. He is making iron-tools (such as **wali**, hoe, spear-head, an axe, etc.) and wooden materials (such as stool, handle for tools, and household furniture). Besides, he devotes time to grow crops such as maize, sorghum, coffee, and root crops. He has very small plot of land, less than three **timad**. Berhanu has few a sheep and chickens.

10. Demaa Masais (Jagamer)

Age: 70; Sex: Male; Marital status: Married;

No. of wives: 1; No. of children: 5; Family size: 7

Major occupation: Black smith + agriculture

Religion: Indigenous beliefs

Ato Demaa is living with his wife, the last son, and grand-children. The rest of his children (sons and daughters) are married and are living in places far from Jagamer. Ato Demaa and his family make a living mainly by producing iron-tools and other materials from wood. They also participate in agriculture on a very limited scale because they have only 3 **timad** of land. Ato Demaa's family raises no animal.

11. Garta Ziga (Metsr)

Age: 58; Sex: Female; Marital status: Divorced

No. of children: 4; Family size: 3

Major occupation: Farming; Religion: Indigenous beliefs

Woizero Garta is living with her last son and a grand-daughter. Three of her sons have married and are living in the neighbouring village with their father. They often come to their mother's place to assist her in agricultural activities. She grows cereals, root crops, and coffee on a limited scale due to land scarcity. She has inter-cooped root crops and coffee on 4 **timad** land, while sowing cereals on 3 **timad** of land. Woizero Garta participates in **idir** work party. She owns cattle, sheep, and chickens.

12. Gagi Doka (Wonders)

Age: 50; Sex: Male; Marital status: Married

No. of wives: 1; No. of children: 4; Family size: 5

Major occupation: Farming; Religion: Indigenous beliefs

Two of Gagi's sons have dropped out from school to marry wives. They are living close to their father. Gagi also has small children enrolled in school and staying at home. Gagi has 5 **timad** of **tikam** where he plants root crops, coffee, and cardamon. He grows cereals crops on 5 **timad** of land. He participates in **idir**, while his wife participates in **aldi**. Ato Gagi owns cattle, sheep, and poultry.

13. Gebre Yijmi (Wonders)

Age: 28; Sex: Male; Marital status: Married

No. of wives: 3; No. of children: 6; Family size: 10

Major occupation: Farming; Religion: Indigenous beliefs

Ato Gebre is a young man who is supporting not only his family but also his deceased father's and brother's families. Six of his children are young. Ato Gebre cultivates most crops grown in Sida on 5 **timad tikam** and 10 **timad wonam**. He is working with **idir**, while his wives work in **molaa**. They all participate in **aldi**. The family owns cattle, sheep, goats, a horse, and chickens.

14. Hailu Amendaki (Dumtseter)

Age: 34; Sex: Male; Marital status: Married

No. of wives: 4; No. of children: 6; Family size: 10

Major occupation: Farming; Religion: Protestant

Ato Hailu, his two brothers, and two of his paternal uncles are living together in the same village. He takes care of his old mother. Hailu has a total of 10 **timad** of land and he grows grain crops, root crops, and coffee. He works in **idir** work party,

while his wives participate in **molaa** and **aldi**. His family also recruits labour through **wod**. The family owns cattle and poultry.

15. Hamits Deyta (Bargamer)

Age: 57; Sex: Male; Marital status: Married

No. of wives: 3; No. of children: 10; Family size: 18

Major occupation: Farming; Religion: Indigenous beliefs

Ato Hamits and his married sons live together, while his married daughters are living with their husbands in other villages. He is taking care of his younger children, his elder sister, grand-children, and other dependants. Hamits has 4 **timad** of **tikam** and 22 **timad** of **wonam**. The major crops grown by Ato Hamits include sorghum, maize, root crops, and coffee. He works in **idir** and several members of the family work in **malaa** and **aldi** work parties. He owns cattle, sheep, and poultry.

16. Kareya Yika (Oitamer)

Age: 64; Sex: Female; Marital status: widow

No. of children: 2; Family size: 3

Major occupation: Farming; Religion: Protestant christian

She is living independently close to her married son's residence. Her daughter has married in the same village. Woizero Kara is living with her grand-children. She cultivates sorghum, maize, root crops, and coffee on 8 **timad** **wonam** and 4 **timad** **tikam**. She participates in **aldi** and recruits additional labour through **wod**. She owns cattle, sheep, and chickens.

17. Kaysmi Bansi (Fashamer)

Age: 40; Sex: Male; Marital status: Married

No. of wives: 2; No. of children: 6; Family size: 9

Major occupation: Farming; Religion: Indigenous beliefs

Ato Kaysmi returned from the northern battle field eight years ago. He has inherited the property of his deceased father. He is the only person able to assist his mother and his sisters. Kaysmi has 10 **timad tikam** and 7 **timad wonam**. He cultivates most crops grown in Sida. His family participates in one **idir** and two **aldi** groups. Kaysmi and his wives take turns in participating in these work parties. He has cattle, sheep, horse, and poultry.

18. Lalta Kassa (Aydha)

Age: 46; Sex: Male; Marital status: Married

No. of wives: 1; No. of children: 6; Family size: 2

Major occupation: Farming; Religion: Protestant Christian

Ato Lalta belongs to **lala** of **arma** clan (a sub-clan believed to make or stop rain). He used to be an evangelist, chairman of PA (at local, district, and province levels), and a civil servant. He was released from prison recently after long years of imprisonment. He is living with a new wife in a new place he was given by the Protestant community in Aydha. Three of his children (two sons and a daughter) are married. There remaining three are living with relatives. His old wives have married other husbands. Ato Lalta has a total of 10 to 15 **timad** land and he grows sorghum, maize, ensete, taro, yam, fruits, and coffee. He does not own livestock.

19. Metekia Lapiri (Oitamer)

Age: 65; Sex: Male; Marital status: Married

No. of wives: 1; No. of children: 6; Family size: 5

Major occupation: Farming; Religion: Protestant christian

Like Ato Lalta, Ato Metekia used to be an evangelist and chairman of the PA at local, district, and regional levels. Three of his sons are civil servants working in different places. His first daughter is married and the last two children (a boy and a girl from a new wife) are very young. His old wives have married other husbands. Ato Metekia has 4 **timad tikam** and 10 **timad wonam**. He cultivates most crops grown in Sida except for cardamon. He recruits labour on his field through **wod** and by negotiating with work parties. Both he himself and his wife participate in **aldi**. He raises cattle, sheep, and chicken. He keeps bees too.

20. Satena Tesema (Mester)

Age: 50; Sex: Male; Marital status: Married

No. of wives: 1; No. of children: 4; Family size: 3

Major occupation: farming; Religion: Orthodox christian

Ato Satena was living in highland Ari. He came to the present place with his married son six years ago, when he was released from prison after long years of imprisonment. Ato Satena has 12 **timad** of land and so far he has been growing root crops on 4 **timad** and cereal crops on 8 **timad**. He participates in **idir** and **aldi** work parties. The family also recruits labour through **wod**. Satena keeps sheep, chickens, and bees.

21. Seqis Gara (Jagamer)

Age: 68; Sex: Male; Marital status: Married

No. of wives: 3; No. of children: 7; Family size: 7

Major occupation: Farming; Religion: Indigenous beliefs

Two of his sons and three of his daughters are married, while the rest are still young. He has 6 **timad tikam** and 12 **timad wonam**. He cultivates the major cereals, root crops, and coffee. The family participates in one **idir** and several **aldi** groups. Additional labour is obtained through **wod**. The family raises cattle, sheep, goats, chickens, and keeps bees.

22. Sheii Gundeis (Beya)

Age: 48; Sex: Male; Marital status: Married

No. of wives: 9; No. of children: 18; Family size: 23

Major occupation: Farming; Religion: Indigenous beliefs

Sheii is the **babi** of Beya subdivision. He assumed this position 18 years ago, replacing his paternal uncle. Like any other **babi** in Ari, he was denied the right to perform rituals. Moreover, a significant portion of his land was taken by the various Peasant Associations. He was not arrested. Nor did he pay any fine because by then he was a new **babi** who could not be held responsible for what had been done during Haile Selassie's regime.

Babi Sheii cultivates all crops grown in Beya. He raises cattle, sheep, goats, and poultry. He works with his wife and children in the garden and farm fields.

Additional labour supply is obtained through **wod**. A few of his children are married, while the majority are still young. He sent only one of his sons to school.

23. Wochais Uli (Wulsher)

Age: 65; Sex: Male; Marital status: Married

No. of wives: 1; No. of children: 5; Family size: 5

Major occupation: Farming; Religion: Indigenous beliefs

Ato Wochais' two married sons live close to him, while his daughters have married in another village. He is taking care of his grand-children and other dependant people. He grows cereal crops on 15 **timad** and garden crops on 10 **timad**. Ato Wochais keeps cattle, goats, poultry, and bees. His family recruits labour by participating in **idir** and by organizing **wod**.

24. Woeshi Washak (Wonders)

Age: 45; Sex: Male; Marital status: Married

No. of wives: 2; No. of children: 4; Family size: 5

Major occupation: Farming; Religion: Indigenous beliefs

Ato Woeshi, who is living in a village with his brothers and uncles, grows cereal crops, root crops, and cash crops. Has 14 **timad wonam** and 6 **timad tikam**. His family participates in one **idir** and two **aldi** groups. Ato Woeshi and his wives take turns in participating in these work parties. He raises cattle, sheep, and chickens.

25. Yijais Geni (Binkamer)

Age: 70; Sex: Male; Marital status; married

No. of wives: 2; Family size: 5

Major occupation: Farming; Religion: Indigenous beliefs

Ato Yijais, who belongs to the clan **bink**, lives with his brothers and other paternal relatives in village called Binkamer. He cultivates the major cereal crops, most root crops, and coffee on 8 **timad tikam** and 4 **timad wonam**. He works in **idir** and his wives participate in **aldi**. The family recruits additional labour through **wod**. Ato Yijais keeps cattle, sheep, goats, a horse, and bees.

Appendix 2: Major Themes and Questions

I. Origin, History, and Relations with Other Groups

1. Myths of origin of the Ari
2. Major events in the history of the people
3. The economic, social, political, cultural, religious, etc. history of the Ari people

II. Population, Language, and The Environment

1. Size of Ari population
2. The linguistic position (classification) of Ari language
3. The terrain characteristics, vegetation, and altitudes
4. Temperature, rain fall, humidity, soil, etc.
5. Settlement, garden, and farmlands
6. Seasons and calendar systems
7. List of crops grown and animals raised in the area

III. Social Structure

1. The type, structure, and functions of the family
2. Descent system, pattern of residence, and authority
3. Mate selection, marriage, bride-wealth, and divorce
4. Bases of kinship relations and Ari kinship terminologies
5. territorial groupings and traditional political systems
6. Lineage, clan, and moiety organizations
7. Religious beliefs and ritual activities

IV. The Land Tenure

1. The history of land tenure systems in Ari
2. The impact of secular changes in land tenure systems on the lives of the people
3. People's opinion regarding land use practices

V. The Farming Practice and other Productive Activities

1. The major crops grown in Sida and their history
2. Who produces what, how much, when, how, why, etc.
3. Seasons for cultivation, weeding, harvesting, etc.
4. Tools used for agricultural activities, their origin, development, sophistications and functions
5. Rituals and religious performances associated with production
6. Economic, social, and cultural significance of crops
7. Animals raised in Ariland and in Sida and their history
9. Who raises or not raises which animal and why
10. The ecological situation under which livestock production is carried out.
11. The economic, social, and cultural importance of animals
12. Relation between crop production and livestock raising
13. Types of craft activities and their history in Ari
14. Who are engaged in which kind of craft activities
and the social position of individuals or groups engaged
15. Functions and uses of goods produced by craftsmen
16. The economic, social, or cultural relationships craft work and other productive activities

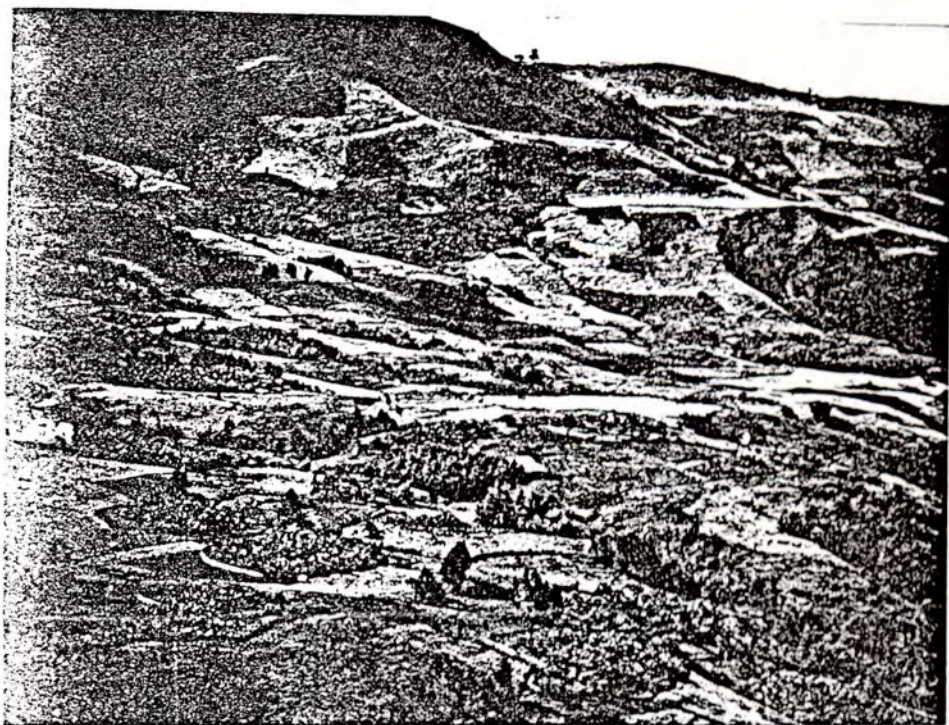
17. description of any other sideline activities in Ari
18. Problems related to the various productive activities

VI. Division of Labour & Organization of Work Parties

1. Division of labour at family and society levels
2. The degree of contribution of family labour in to family subsistence
3. Types and bases of work parties in Ari
4. The structure, functions, regulations, duration, leadership, etc. of work parties
5. Who participates (or not participates) in which type of work parties and why
6. Other practices of recruiting labour to get work done
7. Problems associated with division of labour and organization of work parties

VII. Constraints and opportunities involved in the production

1. The major constraints on production and productivity
2. Causes of the problems and the degree of threat
3. Specific areas affected least or most
4. Local mechanisms and efforts to deal with problems the story of achievement/failure
5. Possibilities or opportunities for solving problems



Source: Masayoshi Shigeta

Plate 1: Topography of highland Ari



Plate 2: Ari men and women selling cereal crops

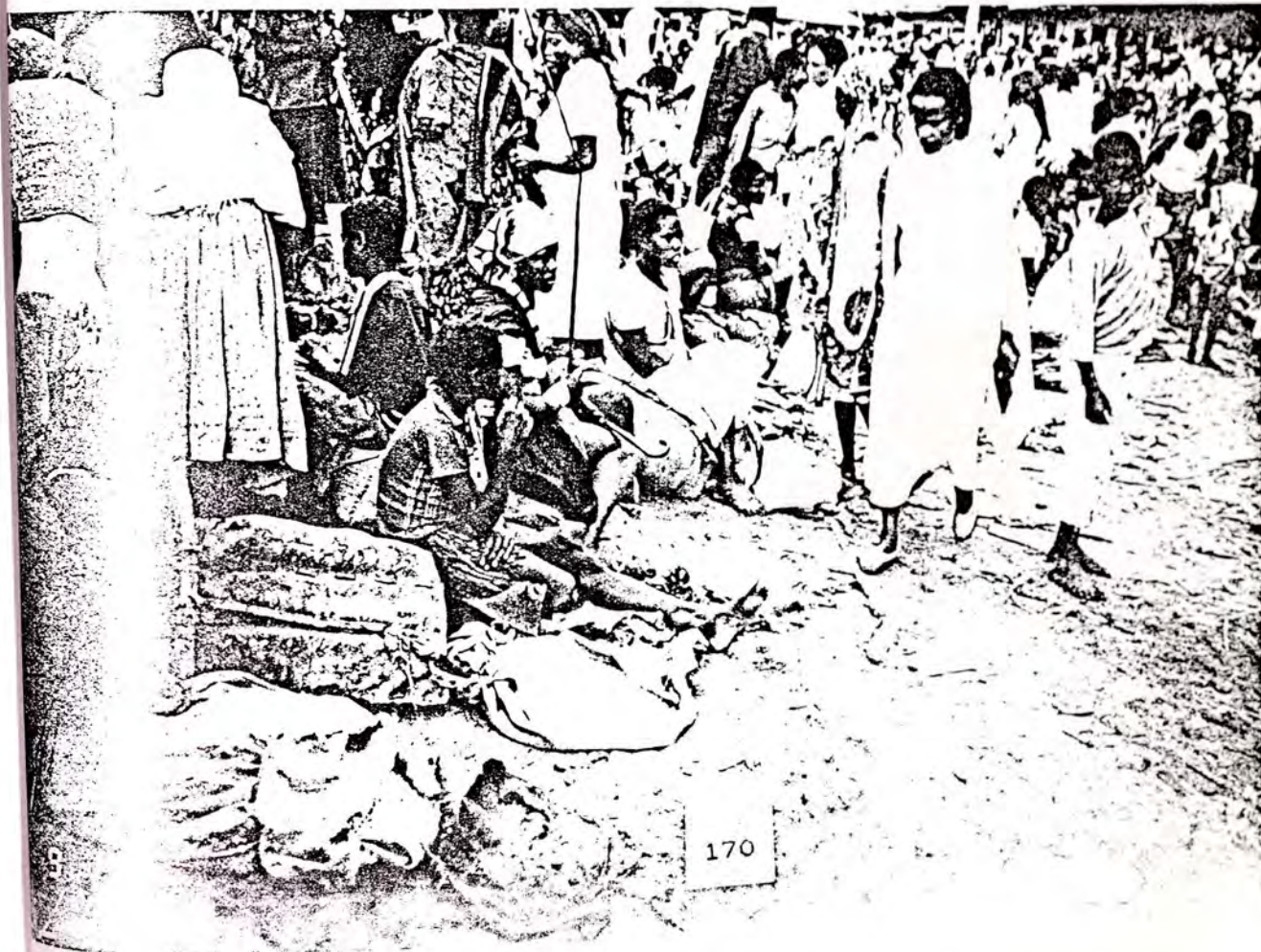




Plate 3: Ari women selling yam and sugar cane

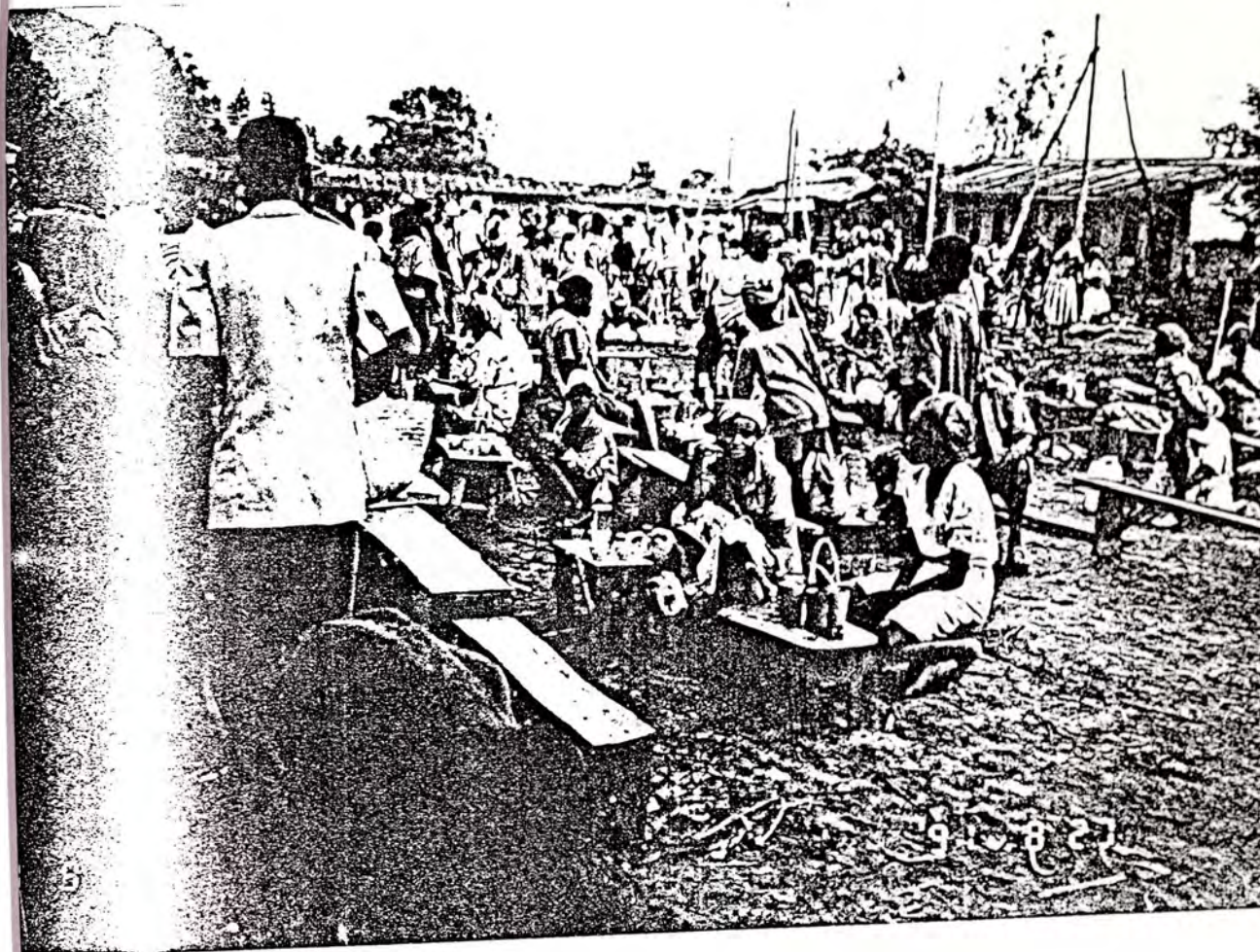


Plate 4: Selling gola and arqa at Jinka market



Plate 5: Funeral dance

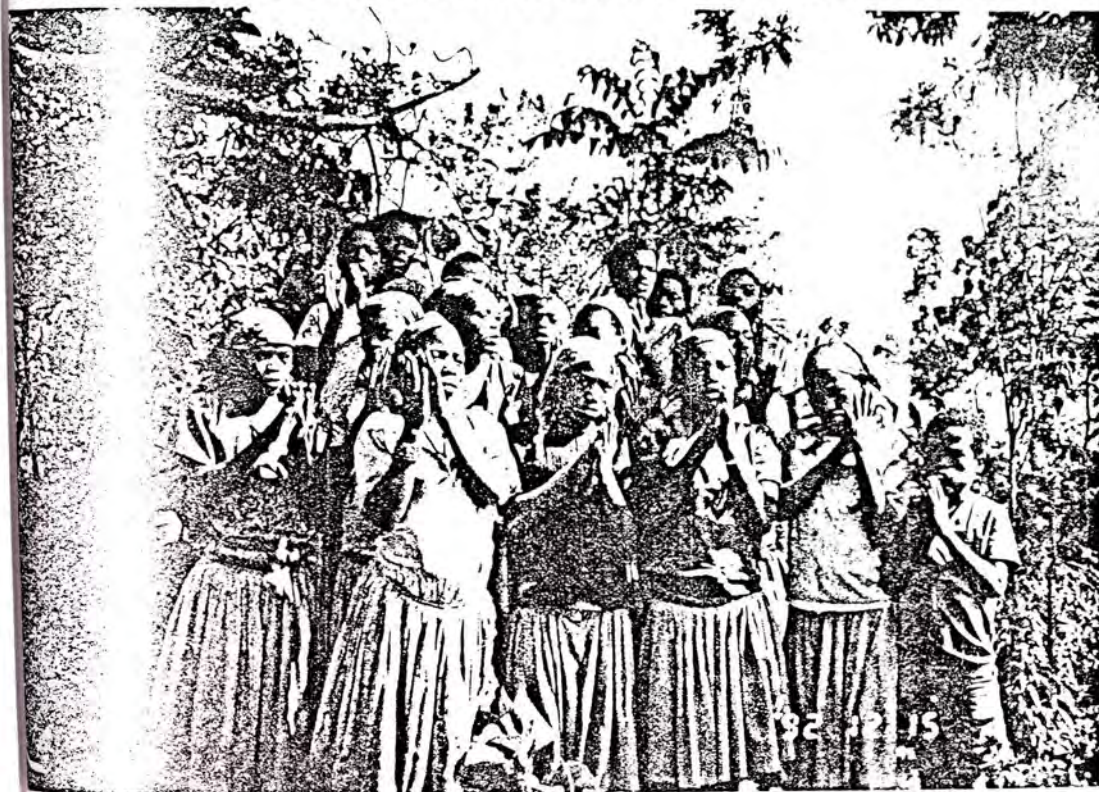
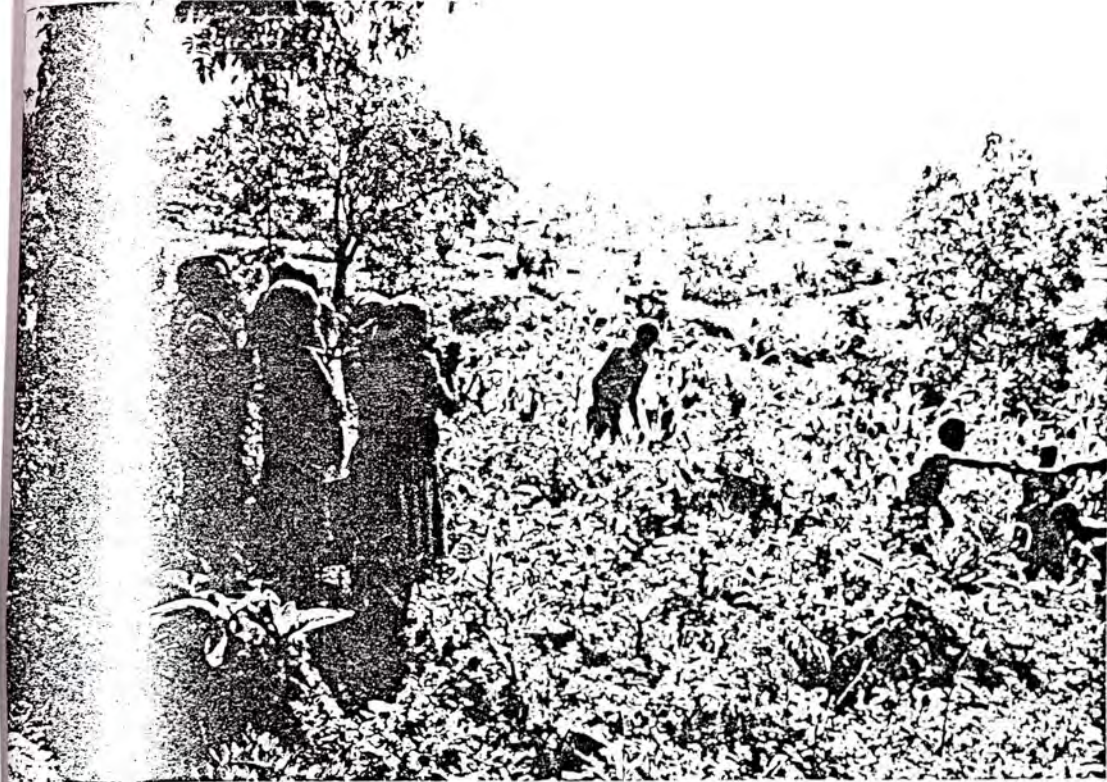


Plate 6: A ragid singing shaming songs

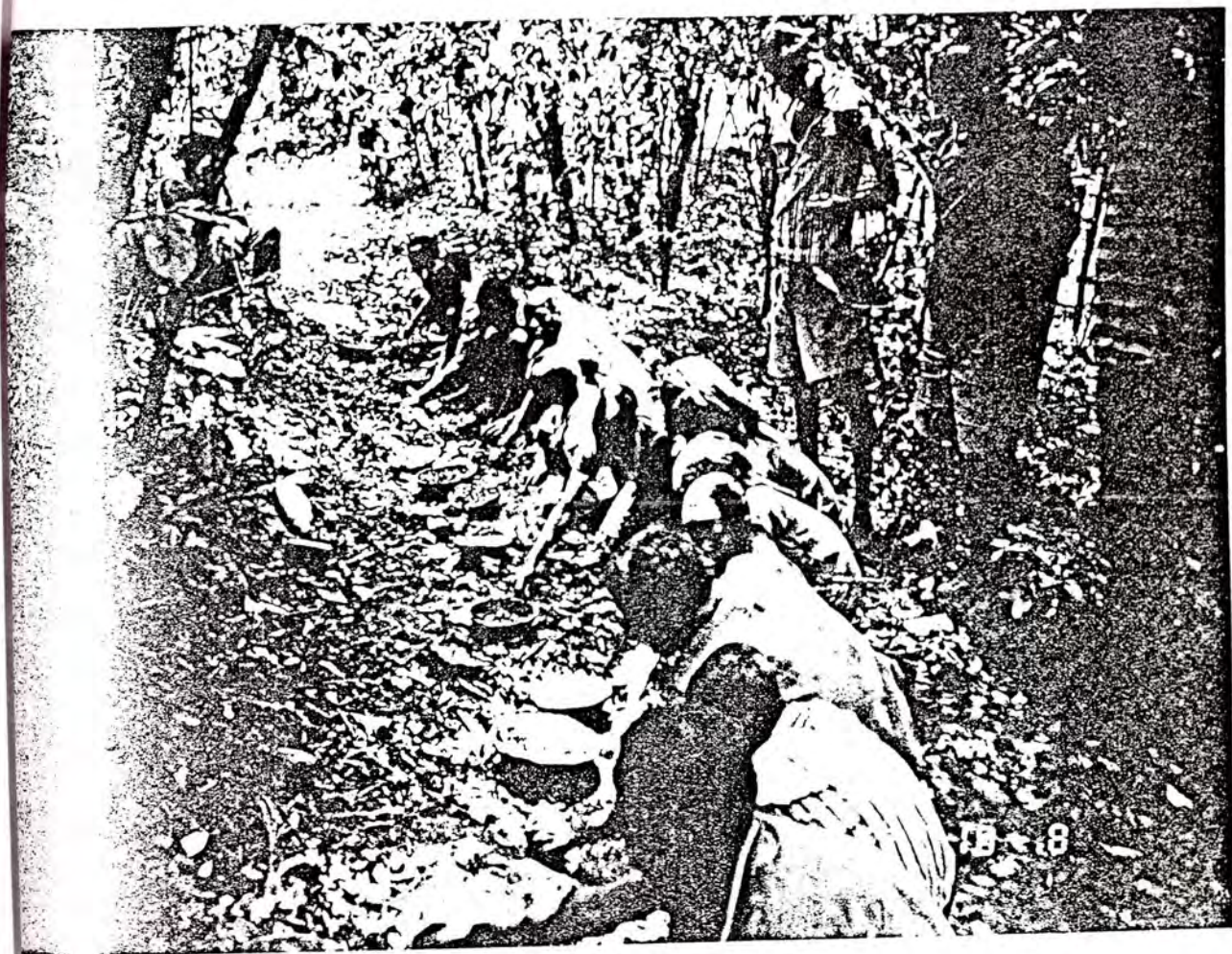


Plate 7: Coffee picking labour party (buna molaa)



Plate 8: Providing additional feed to cattle

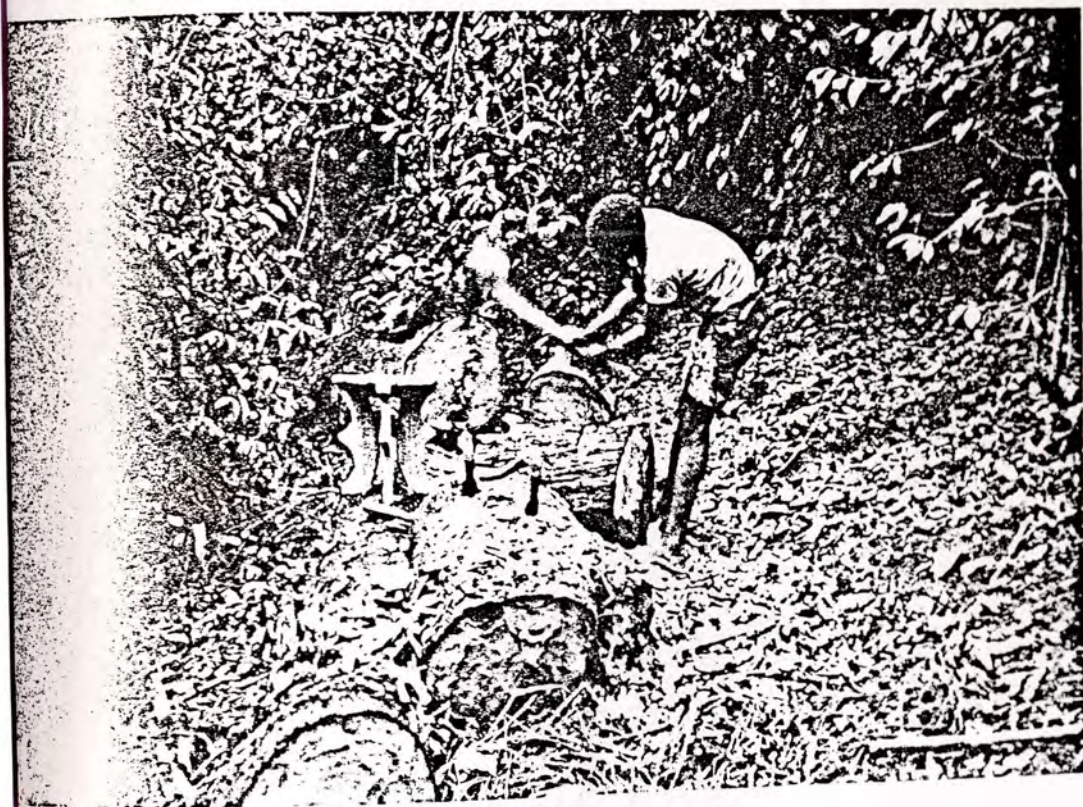


Plate 9: A blacksmith making stools



Plate 10: Babi Bamay and three of his wives at Arki