

**Begging as a Survival Strategy: Conferring with  
the Poor at the Orthodox Religious Ceremonial  
Days in Addis Ababa**

**By: Woubishet Demewozu**

**A Thesis Submitted to the School of  
Graduate Studies, Addis Ababa University, in  
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
Master of Arts Degree in Social Anthropology**

**June 2003**

**Addis Ababa**

**Addis Ababa University**  
**School of Graduate Studies**

**Begging as a Survival Strategy: Conferring with the Poor at the Orthodox  
Religious Ceremonial Days in Addis Ababa**

**By: Woubishet Demewozu**

**College of Social Sciences**

**Approved by Board of Examiners:**

-----  
Advisor

-----  
Signature

-----  
Examiner

-----  
Signature

-----  
Examiner

-----  
Signature

***Dedicate To***

*all the impoverished beggars who have helplessly Littered onto the streets,  
Church or Mosque yards, avenues and other quarters and, to the countless other  
destitute people among us, still haunted perhaps by the 'Ethiopian dream'*

## **Acknowledgements**

I could not have written this thesis without the help and encouragement of many people. First and for most, I express my sincere gratitude to the destitute beggars whose trust and cooperation made this study possible. And I would like to take this opportunity to wish all the downward destitute to get relieved of the multifaceted impoverishment bestowed up on them. I am also particularly indebted to Dr. Tadesse Berisso, my thesis advisor, whose scholarly comments and genuine suggestions were invaluable to the progress of the research work. Most importantly, he has helped me see the possibilities for overcoming the difficulties in dealing with such diverse and complex subject matter through his proper guidance and the application of scientific research practices. As such, his dedications and substantial criticisms deserve tremendous credit.

The results are never perfect, but the process of trying is always exhilarating. That is the central lesson of this thesis, and I hope it comes through. Especial thanks also go to Professor Richard Pankhrust and Dr. Getachew Kassa of the Institute of the Ethiopian Studies and Dr. Yared Amare of the Institute of the Development Research of Addis Ababa University for their treasure in providing me with important advice while I was in due course. They have made it possible to incorporate revisions, corrections and additions.

I am particularly grateful to Dr. Melesse Getu whose encouragement, close supervision and invariable cooperation starting from my undergraduate study all through this day has always been tremendously helpful. It is also a pleasure to express my deep gratitude to all the staff members of the department of sociology and anthropology for their deep interest, dedication and professional skill from which I have benefited a great deal both in my undergraduate as well as graduate studies.

My deepest gratitude goes to my brothers Wodage Demewozu and Kassahun Addisu for their long-lasting moral and financial assistance. Alebachew Merka and Wondaferaw Mulugeta do deserve tremendous credits for their help in computer and computer related services. I would also like to thank Jimma University for sponsoring me to pursue Masters Degree in Social Anthropology for the last three solid years. Most of all, my father, Ato Demewozu Tebeje and my mother, W/ro. Alemnesh Reda deserve due credit for their all rounded help in the whole my school carrier from early childhood.

Last but not least, I take this opportunity to extend my appreciation to all my classmates with whom I had sorts of cordial and sincere relationships, charming memories, enjoyable circumstances and in fact ably surmounted many difficulties during our three years stay studying anthropology at Addis Ababa University.

# *Table of Contents*

	Page
Acknowledgements-----	i
List of Tables-----	v
List of Maps-----	v
List of photographs-----	v
Acronyms-----	vi
Glossary of Amharic terms-----	vii
Abstract-----	viii
<b>Chapter One: Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 . Background to the study .....	1
1.2 . Statement of the problem .....	2
1.3 . Objectives of the study .....	4
1.3.1. General objectives .....	4
1.3.2. Specific objectives .....	5
1.4 Significance of the study .....	5
1.5 Methods .....	6
1.5.1. Secondary data .....	6
1.5.2. Questionnaire .....	6
1.5.3. Observation .....	6
1.5.4. Interview .....	7
1.5.4.1 In depth individual interview .....	7
1.5.4.2 Recording case histories.....	8
1.5.4.3 Focus group interview.....	8
1.6. Research site selection .....	9
1.7. Organization of the fieldwork and field work experiences .....	10
1.8 . Limitations of the study.....	12
<b>Chapter Two: Literature Review</b> .....	<b>14</b>
2.1. Introduction .....	14

2.2. Begging .....	15
2.2.1. The concept, causes, categories and lives of beggars.....	15
2.2.2. Historical development of begging: international, regional and national perspectives .....	20
2.3. Poverty in Ethiopia .....	24
2.4. Urbanization and population mobility: conceptual and theoretical issues.....	27
2.5. Social Networks in the Urban Context.....	33
2.6. The Concept and Theories of Poverty.....	36
2.6.1. Definitions and the nature of poverty .....	36
2.6.2. Approaches to the study of poverty .....	47
<b>Chapter Three: Socio- economic history of Addis Ababa .....</b>	<b>47</b>
3.1. Introduction .....	47
3.2. Spatial structure .....	47
3.3. City function.....	50
3.4. Demographic characteristics .....	51
3.5. Situation of poverty.....	53
3.5.1. Unemployment .....	54
3.5.2. Poverty, housing shortage, housing conditions and facilities .....	56
3.5.3. Poverty, urban population increase and economic growth .....	57
3.6 Estimated number of vulnerable social groups .....	58
<b>Chapter Four: Description of Begging in the context of the Ethiopian Orthodox Religious Ceremonial days-Commemoration of the Saint Days.....</b>	<b>59</b>
4.1. Introduction .....	59
4.2. Socio -demographic and physical aspects of the beggardom.....	60
4.3. Spectacular categories of begging .....	60
4.4. The beggars’ paraphernalia, structure and organization of begging.....	64
4.5. How beggars present themselves to passers- by: means of capturing attention.....	66
4.6. Typical forms of appeals and expressions.....	68
4.7. How passers- by are addressed.....	71
4.8 Reactions: the passers- by reactions to the beggars and the beggars response to alms givers .....	72

<b>Chapter Five: Major Causes for Begging as a Means of Livelihood, the Beggars Overall</b>	
<b>Impoverishment and Future Aspiration.....</b>	77
5.1. Introduction .....	77
5.2. Major causes for begging as a means of livelihood.....	77
5.3. The beggars’ overall impoverishment .....	100
5.4. The beggars’ future aspirations .....	104
<b>Chapter Six: Modes of Social Interaction.....</b>	107
6.1. Introduction .....	107
6.2. Interpersonal relations.....	107
6.2.1. Ethnic background.....	108
6.2.2. Gender and age .....	117
6.2.3. Conflict and its settlement.....	121
6.3. Relations through voluntary associations.....	123
6.4. Social interaction outside group boundary .....	134
6.4.1. Ethnicity .....	135
6.4.2. Marital and Love life .....	137
6.4.3. Leisure and Recreation .....	138
<b>Chapter Seven: Summary and Conclusion .....</b>	142

*Bibliography*

**Annexes**



## **List of Tables**

Table 1. Percentage distribution of migrants by sex for three consecutive census years, Addis Ababa

Table 2. Estimates of unemployment for 1992 and 1995, Addis Ababa

Table 3. Estimated number of vulnerable by social group in 1993, Addis Ababa

## **Maps**

Map i. General Map of Central Addis Ababa

Map ii. Map showing the specific Study Sites

## **Photographs**

- i. A group of small children sitting on a sidewalk and asking alms from passers-by
- ii. Two itinerant blind beggars around Arat Killo
- iii. An elderly and silent beggar close to a garbage can around Sidist Killo
- iv. Youth team beggars
- v. An advocacy beggar asking for alms in favour of a woman who recently gave birth to a child and who slept in front of him embracing an infant.
- vi. A woman with a child, a disabled man and a religious personnel (a woman and a child) begging close to one another.
- vii. Beggars huddled in the churchyard of the Savior of the World-one Sunday afternoon in the open forum.
- viii. Beggars congregated at a churchyard asking for alms during a saint day.

## **Acronyms**

<b>AAA</b>	American Anthropological Association
<b>AAMPPO</b>	Addis Ababa Master Plan Project Office
<b>AAU</b>	Addis Ababa University
<b>ADLI</b>	Agricultural Development Lead Industrialization
<b>AMC</b>	Agricultural Marketing Corporation
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>AIDS</b>	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
<b>EEA</b>	Ethiopian Economic Association
<b>EPRDF</b>	Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GNP</b>	Gross National Product
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immune Virus
<b>IES</b>	Institute of Ethiopian Studies
<b>IEG</b>	Imperial Ethiopian Government
<b>LDCs</b>	Less Developing Countries
<b>MOLSA</b>	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
<b>MPRP</b>	Master Plan Revision Project
<b>OAU</b>	Organization of African Union
<b>PPP</b>	Purchasing Power Parity
<b>PRSP</b>	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Program
<b>USA</b>	United States of America
<b>WB</b>	World Bank
<b>WLRA</b>	World Leisure and Recreation Association

## Glossary of Amharic Terms

<b>Araka Bet</b>	House selling the traditional alcoholic spirits
<b>Awaj</b>	An edit
<b>Awraja</b>	An administrative division which is immediate higher to a <i>woreda</i>
<b>Budda</b>	Evil eye
<b>Chat</b>	Mild plant stimulant which is chewed
<b>Derg</b>	Military government of Ethiopia during the years 1974-1991
<b>Gibbi</b>	A compound
<b>Hamina</b>	A beggar, usually religious student and caste related to traditional belief
<b>Idir</b>	A polyethnic group voluntary association (self help association)
<b>Ikub</b>	A form of rotating savings and/or credit association
<b>Kebele</b>	The smallest administrative unit
<b>Ketema</b>	Town
<b>Lalibela</b>	A beggar, usually a religious student and caste related to traditional belief
<b>Mahiber</b>	Religious (Orthodox) feast association
<b>Qurban</b>	Memorial feast offered by Orthodox Christians on behalf of family members who have been deceased
<b>Ramadan</b>	The ninth month of the year during which the Muslims fast.
<b>Senbete</b>	Religious club (Sabbath association)
<b>Sedeka</b>	Alms given by a Muslim to the needy
<b>Sefer</b>	District
<b>Tej Bet</b>	House selling honey mead
<b>Tella Bet</b>	House selling traditional alcoholic beer called <i>tella</i>
<b>Yager Lij</b>	People who originally come from the same river
<b>Yewenz Lij</b>	People who come from the same region
<b>Wass</b>	Guarantor
<b>Woreda</b>	An administrative division which is immediate higher to a <i>kebele</i>
<b>Zeka</b>	Alms offered by a Muslim to the destitute often during fasting seasons

## Abstract

*In the absence of any means of livelihood, more and more people were driven to begging, some temporarily and some permanently. Today, as a result, begging has assumed enormous proportions and for thousands it is a means of earning livelihood in urban areas in general and in Addis Ababa in particular. It is one of the most conspicuous, readily visible social problems especially in the religious commemorable days of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Like most of the socio-economic problems of this country, Ethiopia, the beggary problem, is of colossal magnitude, and yet we have no much knowledge of its dimensions; little has been done on the problem of beggary. Besides, the Ethiopian literature on poverty and poverty related issues shows that the 'macro' level approach has often been favored by researchers based on statistics and categorizations. These attempts often fail to specify the problems, relationships and processes usefully and adequately. As such, micro sociologists and/or anthropologists of an empirical bent have done little research in Ethiopia on poverty in general and the problem of beggary in particular. The objective of this research is therefore to contribute to the apparent literature gap and to compensate the in balance by utilizing qualitative and ethnographic analysis of the beggary problem in the context of the saint days of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.*

*To this effect, participant observation, individual and focus group interviews and in depth case studies have been composed in an effort to present moving and intimate views of the poor in relation to their past and present in the framework of the dynamics of the socio- economic history of the country at large. This was done amid the complexity of the beggary problem and the diverse nature of the life experiences of each individual beggar considered in the study. As such, attempt has been made to explore matters pertaining to the overall event or scene of the beggary problem in the context of the Orthodox religious ceremonial days, precipitating causes for begging as a way of life, the beggars' multifaceted impoverishment and modes of social interaction among others.*

*The beggary problem has a lot to do with the country's socio-economic and historical aspects characterized by low incomes, high unemployment rates, fast rising cost of living, high rates of population growth, inappropriate public policies and continued rural- urban migration and displacement of mass human beings to the city. Thus, the cardinal reason for most of the different vulnerable categories of beggars to earn a meager living on the streets, churchyards and other collective quarters of the city is poverty precipitated by different factors and events. The beggars, as impoverished underclass, presently find themselves in multifaceted and extreme impoverishment which can generally be characterized by chronic food shortage and insecurity, illiteracy, homelessness or poor housing often on unsuitable land, disease, in sanitary living conditions, death and above all marginalization and exclusion. Presently, there are no committed groups, including the government of course, helping the beggars. Virtually all beggars live through their own efforts and depend on alms givers.*

*The actions and reactions of the destitute beggars is largely restricted to their own habitat; in the social milieu in which they are surviving by themselves within the limits of the larger society by which they are surrounded, from which they are, in large part an outcast. Contrary to the hyperbole of the culture of poverty image, however, the poorest of the poor-beggars-are not abysmally disorganized and so hopelessly huddled on the streets. There seems to be a tacitly ongoing social existence among them. They do not lack the basic elements of organization universal among human life ways. Thus, life among these destitute is not with out sharing our culture, or at least with out major elements previously understood as necessary aspects of our culture. Social interactions, lacking depth both in the past and in present, are reflected in terms of support, competition and conflict.*

*Among the beggars, three factors (age, gender and ethnic background) seem to be at the constant interplay in enhancing interpersonal relations. The beggars are at present very marginal to associational ties. Iqub stands out the sole important voluntary association binding the beggars. Even iqub is enjoyed by a few permanent beggars of the churchyards. The beggars go to very limited lengths to interact with the society at large through factors such as ethnic affiliation, love life, leisure and recreation*

*In the long run, lower rates of population growth, improved living conditions in rural and urban areas and above all dealing with the situation of poverty are generally needed to reduce the problem of beggary. With out changes in poverty there will always be begging. To eliminate or at least improve the situation, with out ignoring the immediate plight of the beggars of course, multi pronged but complementary and supplementary strategies should be part of any poverty reduction programme. Nevertheless, such policies and appropriate implementation of them is rarely sufficient. In order to develop rational priorities based on cost-beneficial criteria, data on the number and the needs and conditions of the impoverished are required. The data should combine a marshaling of descriptive facts and statistics into the best comprehensive hard data and case studies on the subject around. Often, such data are scarce. This calls for broad and multi disciplinary research. A sociological and/or anthropological research into poverty needs focus on social change and therefore be a long-term one. It should have both an 'etic' and 'emic' dimension used interactively to improve future conceptual and empirical research.*

# Chapter One

## Introduction

### 1.1. Background to the Study

As one of many developing countries, Ethiopia is facing a variety of differing social and economic problems. Some of the most serious problems are high degree of poverty and unemployment, rampant HIV/ AIDS infection, rapid population growth and migration on a massive scale (Mulat, 2002: 10). During the last three decades, internal conflicts, drought and famine have created many victims resulting in large numbers of displaced children, ex- soldiers, and entire families. This has led to an influx of vulnerable people into urban centers and in particular to the streets of Addis Ababa. People in different vulnerable categories choose different portfolios of strategies. Having no alternative means of survival, many of these vulnerable destitute turn to begging on the streets, around church or mosque compounds, at traffic lights, around commercial areas and rely on the traditional generosity rooted in the Ethiopian culture. Thousands of families are still living in temporary camps, plastic shelters and on the road, obtaining their daily bread from alms givers (MOLSA 1992). Now a days, begging as a form of life and social event has become an inseparable part of the Orthodox religious ceremonial days. No other days and times, one would argue, could so inspire and encourage the indigent to compete for the scarce resources (the alms) from the potential resource owners-the passers-by and alms-givers.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church is one of the dominant religious institutions in the country. The veneration, worship, and performance of ceremonials and rituals in the name of the saintly personages are the principal constituents of the religion. There are numerous recognized such saintly figures in the Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity. The saintly figures include supernatural, divine beings, religious heroes and saints, and angelic personalities. The overwhelming majority of the

saints are masculine, although there are some renowned feminine saints. The achievement of the sainthood of the personages, except for the non-human divine being, is on the basis of some superhuman, heroic attributes. Notable among the human saints are St.Mary, St.Mark, St. John, St. Stephen, St.Abune Gebre Menfes kidus, St. Tekelehaimanot, etc. Among angelic beings, St. Michael, St. Gabriel, St. Urael, etc. are quite revealing. The Savior of the World is both human and divine. It is interesting to note that for a devout Orthodox Christian, every day of a month is a significant one in that there is not a single day, which passes away without a certain saint being commemorated (see annex 5).

Almost all of the saints (human and angelic) and divine beings, have a church or a temple dedicated in their name and honor. The temples and the environs are one of the most spectacular social settings, their inward compound hosting the priesthood and other religious recluse; their outward environs hosing the 'dregs' and the "out casts" of the-society the beggardom being the number one category. It is to the description and analysis of this cast category that the present study was devoted.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Nowadays, in cities, and particularly in Addis Ababa, poverty and the societal changes resulting from urbanization have produced more poignant and pressing social problems, of which begging is the most serious and visible one. As such, begging, an almost unnoticed social event and problem, has become the means of livelihood for quite a large number of persons. It is a common and day-to-day experience for us to observe beggars of different sorts roaming around the streets, squatting the major church environs, swarming here and there. Nevertheless, with the exception of few studies (e.g.Pankhrust 1927), which restricted themselves to the emergence and historical aspects

of begging, there is little data on the social event and social problem of beggary. Reflecting on this fact, a report by MOLSA (1992:1) argues:

... Studies regarding delinquency, prostitution, divorce, street children, etc. have been conducted. .... However, the problem of begging, which is affecting quite a large number of people, has never been studied previously. Therefore, the necessity of conducting a study particularly in Addis Ababa where the problem is grave became evident.

To this effect, a coordinated effort of concerned organizations was felt important. Accordingly, MOLSA together with the Italian Cooperation undertook a survey study on begging in Addis Ababa. However, the objectives as well as the findings of the survey were basically quantitative, as it has generally been the situation for most urban studies in Ethiopia, that revealed beggars socio-demographic characteristics, educational level, length of time in begging, average income of beggars, etc., providing analysis based on statistics. Such snapshot survey identifies certain people as poor at a particular point in time. However, households and individuals move in and out of economic poverty throughout their lives. Besides, the survey report says little about the salient features and various facets of the life styles of beggars from the viewpoint of the actors themselves. It was with such considerations that I embarked on this research where the inner views were given primary considerations with due emphasis to their dynamic life histories and contemporary socio-economic positions and way of life.

In a nutshell, the condition of the poor in Addis Ababa is a social problem not yet addressed (Solomon 1993) and the phenomena of begging which has become a very serious social problem, especially in Addis Ababa, is an area which has not been touched by researchers (MOLSA 1992) notably by anthropologists. Hence, it is of paramount importance to undertake an anthropological investigation on the issue of begging so as to provide data pertaining to the various facets of the life styles as well as the psychological and emotional status of beggars. It is this gap that this research attempted to fill by providing case studies, views of individuals or focus groups and observed facts.



Utilizing qualitative approaches, this thesis attempts to scrupulously provide an alternative conceptualization of the problem of beggary, which emphasizes situatedness in every day life. In doing so, the thesis attempts to evaluate existing interpretations of poverty; to probe the implications for social policies; and to propose measures for improving our knowledge and understanding of the poor. To these ends, the beggary problem is seen as a social pattern, not as separated isolated phenomena; and as such the links are presented and possible policy recommendations are forwarded.

Begging in the context of religious ceremonial days are the most conducive for a social researcher or ethnographer to obtain a full ethnographic insight on it. All categories of beggars from all walks of life and corners of the city show up and present themselves in the ceremonial days. Unlike the ordinary days, the ceremonial days seem the most cherished, looked forward and dreamt about by the beggars. Hence, the study was undertaken in the context of the ceremonial days of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

### **1.3. Objectives of the Study**

The study has the following general and specific objectives.

#### **1.3.1. General Objectives**

- 1.3.1.1. To write an ethnographic account of begging as a means of livelihood, social event and social problem in the context of the ceremonial days of the commemoration of the saints as observed by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church believers in Addis Ababa.
- 1.3.1.2. To discuss the socio-economic background of beggars, major precipitating causes that lead people to resort to begging and to depict the beggars' multifaceted impoverishment and social interaction of beggars among themselves and with the larger society.

#### **1.3.2. Specific Objectives**

- 1.3.2.1. To observe and describe spectacular categories of beggars, and the structure and organization of begging, the beggars' means of capturing attention, typical forms of appeals and terms of address the beggars often use.
- 1.3.2.3. To identify and scrutinize the events, the factors or the causes that force different vulnerable groups of poor people to resort to begging as a means of livelihood
- 1.3.2.2. To depict the overall impoverishment of the destitute beggars.
- 1.3.2.4. To depict the role-played by factors such as age, gender, ethnic identity, village background and some voluntary associations in the formation of social networks among the destitute beggars in the urban context.
- 1.3.2.5. To identify and discuss the modes and degree of participation and interaction of beggars with the larger society.
- 1.3.2.6. To explore and discuss the inner feelings, values, aspirations, attitudes, meanings, life histories and experiences of destitute beggars.

#### **1.4. Significance of the Study**

The study will have the following contributions.

- 1.4.1. It makes facts available about the salient aspects of begging in the days of ceremonials.
- 1.4.2. It reveals facts about the life ways and world of beggars.
- 1.4.3. The study also provides available information for intervention or to react to this social problem for those interested in and concerned with the issue.
- 1.4.4. Finally, since the study is limited to some parts of Addis Ababa and specific ceremonial days, the findings are expected to serve as a reference for further broad and detailed investigation.

#### **1.5. Methods**

To carryout this research, a combination of data collecting methods was employed. These include: (1) Secondary data (2) Questionnaire (3) Observation (4) Interviews, and (5) Taking photos

##### **1.5.1. Secondary Data**

Different secondary sources were consulted to provide related literature on the issue. Besides, various documents from government and non-government organizations were collected for reference purpose. Above all, attempts have been made to gather historical documents from different individuals and institutions to understand the socio-economic history of the study area, Addis Ababa.

### **1.5.2. Questionnaire**

Questionnaire inquiring information about the saint's days of the Orthodox religion was distributed to three informants who were supposed to be knowledgeable and well versed in the details of the Christianity's faith.

### **1.5.3. Observation**

Observation, as a method was used as the dominant mode wherever direct perception and recording of individual or group behavior was practicable. This was considered highly desirable with respect to every important social situation to which access was gained. That is, a first principle of the ethnographic approach as applied here is that direct witnessing of on going social life as the preferable foundation of research whenever feasible.

Accordingly, a great deal of the information obtained regarding this study was based on several observations I made. Here, an attempt was made to observe the social event of begging and take notes on different issues in relation to the subject under consideration. Through personal observations, data regarding socio-demographic characteristics and physical conditions of beggars; beggars' paraphernalia, structure and organization of begging, beggars' presence to the passers-by, means of capturing attention, typical expressions and terms of address used by beggars; and the reaction of the passers- by to the plight of the beggardom and vice-versa; their overall impoverishment and modes of interaction were collected.

In a nutshell, observation was largely utilized in order to obtain information regarding the scene and the day-to-day activities of beggars. In doing so, much effort was geared toward being unobtrusive and observant without attempting to conceal one's purposes. Thoughtful observation of the various aspects of daily life in the churchyards, drinking houses, feast offerings, gatherings in the open forum, situations of conflict, *iqub* undertakings, casual interactions and the effect of ethnic

and/or regional differences on the quantity and quality of relationships were the major sources of information. Taking pictures also supplemented the observation.

#### **1.5.4. Interviews**

In conducting a study among the beggars, interviewing was primarily considered. Mass survey procedures or standardized schedules of questions were considered to be of secondary importance. In a sense, nearly all contacts were interview situations, for every effort was made to use local participants and observers continually as informants, to provide verbal glosses and commentary with respect to on going behavior. As such extensive and intensive interviewing was used in dealing with matters either inherently or circumstantially beyond the range of observation. That is, there was much questioning of informants to obtain biographical information, accounts of experience, data concerning modes of communication, and verbal expressions of beliefs, attitudes, and values. In this respect, the study sought to employ the following types of interviewing:

**1.5.2.1. In-depth personal interview:** in-depth interviews were held with different members of the beggarm population. Using this method, information on the displacement or migration history, causes for begging, modes of social interaction and the general living conditions of beggars were collected.

**1.5.2.2. Recording Case Histories:** Detailed individual histories of members of different categories of beggars were recorded. Using this method, attempts were made to obtain information pertaining to the beggars' life histories and different experiences, past and present, with respect to the activity of begging. These people or beggars represented various socio-cultural and economic characteristics and backgrounds. The life histories were constructed to illuminate the socially significant events in a person's life. In piecing the life experiences of individuals, the critical stages that shaped the life of the individuals and factors and events which cause them to eke out a meager

living by begging were identified and emphasized. As such, some stories, which were found to be irrelevant to the research question, were avoided. Despite this, all the data that could have influenced the interpretation of the life histories was included.

**1.5.2.3.Focus Group Interview:** Focus group discussions were also conducted. By using this method, data that supplemented the information collected through the other methods was obtained: the beggars' overall problems, inner feelings, values, meanings, attitudes and emotional and psychological status with regards to the activity of begging were collected. More importantly, aggregate information about the overall situation of the whole or most of the beggar men was collected by conferring with several focus groups: women, the elderly, youth, the sick and the disabled and in fact a combination of these.

In conducting the interviews, un structured interviewing was entirely used, developing as opportunities arise or situations occur in which minimally leading attempts were made to elicit explanations of quests, description of how the world is conceptualized, and expressions of sentiments. There were many private individual sessions larger and smaller group discussions. To these ends, the researcher has employed purely a sociological and / or anthropological dimension. The aim is to reconstruct the economic, social, political, and cultural contexts of poverty experienced by destitute beggars in a dynamic way. As such, the researcher didn't generalize, quantify or hypothesize about connections between variables but only when it is appropriate to what previous empirical explorations have told him – the process the researcher followed is largely inductive rather than deductive. In doing so, the researcher has approached the issue using a variety of epistemological assumptions. These include conceptual and theoretical analysis, document analysis, micro-action studies, individual and focus group interviews and of course, ethnography.

Overall, the study is fundamentally a qualitative study that avoided measurements of poverty indicators as much as possible—there are no calculations or any form of statistical analysis. Rather than requiring statistical generalisability from the findings, the concern here is more about recognizing significant patterns and recurring themes within the context of a natural setting. As such, the study simply documents the beggary problem from the scene, views and perceptions of the beggars, individuals or focus groups. In doing so, both ‘emic’ and ‘etic’ dimensions were used interactively.

### **1.6. Research Site Selection**

Numerous students of the urban scene, including Oscar Lewis, have either stated or implied their conviction that poor people living in cities cannot be studied by focusing on neighborhoods, localities, wards, or other sizable social units within the urban complex. This is the assertion that lower-class neighborhoods entirely lack the social structure and other defining characteristics commonly associated with the concept of community. According to Valentine (1968:175), however, this contention has not been convincingly supported, and it rests mainly on undemonstrated assumption. Hence, the neighborhoods and districts of the poor in cities should be studied as much to discover whether they do have a community structure, as to record any other culture patterns that may be found there.

Favouring Valentine’s claims, the present study dealt with the beggar community by considering study areas or sites nearest the city center, which have the most urban characteristics, and with relatively high concentration of beggars on the basis of preliminary assessment. It was thus before the onset of data collection that the locations were visited and potential sites identified. In many ways, site characteristics appeared to be the basis for the selection of the sites. As such, the sites for this study included environs of six Orthodox churches in different but neighboring parts of the city. These were the Savior of the World (Sidist Killo Area), St. Mark (Sidist Killo Area), St.

Mary (Amst Kilo Area), St. Gabriel (Arat killo Area) St.Stephen (around Meskel square) and St. George (Piazza Area). The celebration days and the personages were taken in to account for their prominence and cherish from the part of the Orthodox believers. In choosing these days and personages, convenience in terms of easy accessibility to the geographical area and time and other constraints were also considered. Apart from these, churchyards, public squares, traffic lights and parks adjacent to the churches were covered by the study. To be more specific, the study was undertaken following the main road, which goes from the Southern tip of Entoto all down to the margin of Abiot square plus St. George churchyard and its adjacent streets of the Arada area.

### **1.7.Organization of the Field Work and Field Work Experience**

The fieldwork for this study was conducted between the months of August 2002, and October 2002. It took a total of three months. Prior to the fieldwork, an extensive review of the literature on the problem of beggary, poverty and its precipitating events and factors was carried out so as to obtain a conceptual and theoretical understanding of the issues. During the time of fieldwork, the researcher has come across through all sorts of problematic as well as fascinating experiences.

Some social events and life ways are relatively more sensitive than others, and thus, with all the aids of social research, it may be painstaking to have access to quality data. Begging as a social event and social problem in the context of the awe-inspiring religious ceremonial days is a sensitive topic. That was why for the researcher, at first thought, it was impossible to make use of other methods of data collection except observation. The number one sources of data-the beggars – are so single mindedly pre-occupied with the committed business of asking for alms in an atmosphere of severe “competition” that it might seem naive of a social researcher to randomly intrude into the beggar’s business and start asking questions, or distributing questionnaires to be filled. For one thing, it is not easy to establish rapport and not amenable to free use of some methods of data collection. Even if one may win the willingness of one informant, it is difficult to manage the situation for the researcher would soon be swarmed by the multitude of beggars, other passers-by and the police. That

is why the researcher entirely depended and spent considerable time in observing and taking notes on begging as part of the ceremonial days. It was after the ceremony is over, mostly after ten o'clock in the morning and during the afternoon, that the researcher was able to make rapport, identify potential subjects, and conduct individual as well as focus group interview

In the course of the field work, some beggars to whom I had a previous acquaintance, while working on the problem of beggary among the youth in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the course "Advanced Ethnography of Ethiopia", in January 2002 were kingpins of the research in many respects: in establishing rapport, in gaining informed consent, in identifying subjects for individual as well as focus group interviews and in facilitating the interview sessions. Because of their relationships with the other beggars, they were instrumental particularly in finding subjects for the research. In many ways, however, the remuneration given both prior to and after each interview sessions made it possible for the researcher to secure a relatively open, free and genuine as well as whole-hearted participation of the informants.

The researcher has done his level best to provide a relaxed atmosphere for the interviewees to choose the location and time for interview. In most of the cases, however, interviewing was done in the work environment, which has helped the researcher to observe the individuals while they went about their daily routine.

Interestingly enough, the researcher has encountered with whole lots of fascinating experiences in the process of fieldwork. Among others, fight over territories, conflict between formalized beggars who beg in the name of religion and others who beg for subsistence, dramatic presentation of their cases and the care taken about their attire just like actors and performers, their being immediate sources of help at times of crisis, smooth discussions and pleasant chit chats and above all their involvement in voluntary associations like *iqub* in such seemingly very fluid and



disorganized community were some of the charming memories which have greatly attracted the researcher's attention.

### **1.7.Limitations of the Study**

What is presented in the thesis is a qualitative or perception study of poverty in general, and begging in particular based on a limited number of research sites of Addis Ababa and a limited number of subjects. The researcher does not claim that his findings are conclusive or his study definitive. The work is obviously exploratory in many respects. Emphasis is placed on the description of begging in the context of the Orthodox ceremonial days, major causes to begging as a means of livelihood, and the beggar's modes of social interaction. The study is an attempt to meet the need for observing, interviewing, recording and interpreting some aspects of the life of beggars on their grounds and on their terms with the aim of gaining a clear, first hand picture of the destitute beggars, especially street corner rather than of testing specific hypotheses. The intention was frankly exploratory basically geared toward presenting the voice of the poor, eliciting and stimulating debate and encouraging further investigation of the complex dynamics of poverty in general and the beggary problem in particular.

Besides, in the study of social networks, limited attempt was made to interview members of a network, following the links of interaction from one to another. Rather the researcher relied much on what informants say about their network. This could be prevented if the researcher was to interview every person that a respondent claims to be in his/her network. Clearly, to conduct interviews of the same depth with all the people in the same network would be an onerous task given the limited time for undertaking a piece of research like this. Hence, the researcher confesses that using interviews has the disadvantage that the researcher becomes aware of the characteristics of the network only from the point of view of his respondents and is, therefore, precluded from checking the actual quality of the relationships. In some ways, however, efforts were made to obtain information through

direct observation although the situation was sufficiently limited for the researcher to be able to watch the persons involved and to over hear most of the conversations and other forms of interactions going on.

Moreover, apart from the above mentioned limitations, shortage of methodological, conceptual, and theoretical approaches to the problem of beggary have impelled the researcher to dwell very often on issues, which have an indirect relevance. Thus it is in recognition of these facts that this thesis ought to be looked at.

## ***Chapter Two***

### ***Literature Review***

#### **2.1. Introduction**

Begging is an issue, which was not given much attention so far. In particular, it is the most untapped area for ethnographic work. In developed countries, the problem of beggary has been studied in the context of the problems and the sociology of homeless men (Anderson 1961; Hope and Young 1986). Regarding developing countries, available data on this subject reflect Indian conditions in a relatively greater extent. But, even in India there was no comprehensive study of the subject. The first available book based on Indian conditions is the book edited by Kumarappa (1945) entitled "The Beggar Problem in India". It is basically geared towards the living conditions and the causation of beggary in the city of Bombay. Similar projects were taken up and completed in Delhi and Madras. Recently, the Aligarh Muslim University conducted a survey among beggars in Kerala. The researches that have been undertaken so far are mostly in the form of local fact-finding studies (Encyclopedia of Social Work in India, 1968:54; Kamat1997). The problem of begging which is affecting quite a large number of people in Ethiopia has never been studied previously (MOLSA, 1992:1). In Ethiopia, many works on poverty seem to slightly touch the issue of begging. But independent and major studies on begging were not carried out so far. It is only in 1992 that MOLSA together with the Italian Cooperation conducted a survey in Addis Ababa where the beggar problem is grave. In general, we find little information regarding the issue of begging in the literature. To this end, I have constructed this section from a thorough scan of the available literature, which has a direct or an indirect relevance to the issue under consideration. I hope and believe I have not constructed a very straw literature.

#### **2. 2. Begging**

### **2.2.1. The Concept, Causes, Categories and Lives of Beggars**

Begging is generally viewed as an activity emanated from poverty and destitution. It is practiced to obtain from others what one is unable to get by oneself. It is a request directed to the rest of the society to bring oneself out of misery and poverty. In this regard, MOLSA (1992:2) defined begging as a method of earning one's living from the income obtained from other sectors of society using age, health and economic conditions as a means of gaining sympathy. Begging, according to Webster's Third New International Dictionary (1976:198) is practiced especially habitually for the same reasons given by MOLSA. The encyclopedia of social work in India (1968:47) viewed beggars as mobile charity seeker people who could easily be noticed by the way they live and earn money essential for survival; and most of who are homeless and live in the open or in the impoverished huts.

The definition of a beggar as given in the European vagrancy act is quoted in Encyclopedia of Social Work in India (1968:49) and reads, "A beggar means any person of European extraction found asking for alms when he has sufficient means of subsistence or asking for alms in a threatening or insolent manner or continuing to ask for alms of any persons, after he has been required to desist."

In his book entitled "the Sociology of Homeless Man" Anderson (1961) included beggars in the group of homeless migratory and casual workers. In the study which has pictured the life and the problems of the group of homeless migratory and casual workers in Chicago, Anderson (1961) divided the homeless men into five groups: (a) the seasonal laborer, (b) the migratory, casual laborer, the hobo, (c) the migratory, non-worker, the tramp, (d) the non-migratory, casual laborer, the so called "home guard," and (e) the bum. Groups b, c, d and e constitute what are known in economic writings "The Residuum of Industry". For Anderson (1961) the seasonal worker, the hobo, and the tramp are the migratory types; the home guard and the bum are relatively stationary. The home

guard, like the hobo is a casual laborer, but he works, often only by the day, now at one and again at another of the multitude of unskilled jobs. The bum like the tramp is unwilling to work and lives by begging and petty theft. The bum, are men who are wholly or partially dependent and frequently diligent as well. The most hopeless and the most helpless of all the homeless men is the bum. Old, helpless, and unemployable, these are the most pitiable, the most repulsive types of the down-and-outs. In general, the tramp and the bum constitute beggars.

Nevertheless, the concept of begging can have various definitions based on the type of people engaged in the activity and the purposes of begging. Some beg as a ritual, others may have religious reasons while the majority, were drifted to the activity because of economic or social reasons (MOLSA, 1992:3). For the purpose of this study, however, the concept of begging or beggary can be conceptualized as an act of asking alms as a means of livelihood and hence is essential for survival.

It is not possible to attribute begging to a single cause. According to Anderson (1961), the conditions and motives that make people homeless in general and beggar in particular may be classified into five main heads: (a) unemployment and seasonal work, (b) the misfits of industry, whether due to physical handicaps, mental deficiency, occupational diseases, or lack of vocational training (c) defects of personality as feeble mindedness, constitutional inferiority, or egocentricity which lead to the conflict of the person with constituted authority in industry, society, and government (d) crisis in the life of the person as family conflicts, misconduct and crime, which exile a man from home and community and detach him from normal social ties, (e) racial or national discrimination where race, nationality or social class of the person enters as a factor of adverse selection for employment and (f) wanderlust-the desire for new experience, excitement, and adventure, which moves the boy to 'see the world'.

According to the report of MOLSA (1992), the main reasons for the majority of beggars to depend on the practice are disability, destitution during old age, unemployment and

underemployment. But a variety of other reasons which include shortage of money for transportation after a visit to relatives or after medical treatment; shortage of money for medical treatment; detention for a long time; loss of money as a result of theft or robbery are also reported by most.

Moorthy (1959:48) as cited in the Encyclopedia of Social Work in India provides a more or less exhaustive list of causes to begging. The causes have been discovered in a research or survey conducted in Greater Bombay. The causes include:

Overpopulation in the region with consequent pressure on land and inability of land to support the people; systems of land tenure and subdivision of holdings coupled with large families and unprofitable methods of farming; debts; famines, floods and epidemics which weaken the community or impose hardships on it; family breakdowns; emotional and economic disabilities imposed on a man or a woman after desertion; chronic and pernicious diseases; physical and mental handicaps; truancy and delinquency; inability to secure a job; unwillingness to work; religious bias and vows and binding one to the mendicant order; anti-social attitudes and child lifting's; lack of facilities for training for employment; lack of institutions providing for the welfare of the unattached, abandoned and disabled; lack of social security measures and absence of social responsibility; obvious attractions of city life, linked up with possibility of easy and ticket less railway travel, and the general outlook on age which inclines one to believe in destiny.

As Moorthy (1959) argues in every aspect of begging some of these causes would be found to be operating. Besides, the problem being more urban in character, has roots in the socio-economic conditions prevailing in the country and concerns itself with a large numbers of handicapped persons besides the able bodied professional beggars.

The causes for begging can only be clearly identified through research that takes into account individual cases and those who have experienced it. Official statistics and reports may not depict the magnitude and underlying causes for begging. It is therefore important to utilize individual case studies to depict the underlying causes and the different factors associated with begging in its local and national contexts. Besides, the causes of begging can be given different interpretations and justifications from the viewpoint of different people and interest groups. Thus, the thesis attempted

to show that if sufficient individual cases are examined, and if the situation is framed in the larger historical and socio-economic context, the circumstances of the beggars can be proved to be more problematic than has been assumed heretofore. The actor's point of view was considered to be crucial in order to avoid stereotypes and hasty generalizations.

In an aim to give some clue to the measures required to control the problem, Encyclopedia of Social Work in India (1968:46-47) classified beggars into the following categories:

- 1) Those who beg because they can not work on account of old age,
- 2) Those who beg because they are permanently disabled or infirm or chronically ill or otherwise handicapped (including children who beg because they are physically or mentally handicapped or are destitute or are without proper guardianship), and
- 3) Those who though able bodied, beg because of unemployment or underemployment or to earn livelihood by easy means.

In a similar way, Anderson (1961:102) divided beggar types into the able-bodied and the non-able-bodied. The non-able bodied beggars are more numerous in the cities. They are forced because of their handicaps, to remain where the greater numbers of people are. Some handicapped beggars, however, are able to travel with marvelous speed over the country. These non-able-bodied types as Anderson (1961:102) go by different names according to their afflictions.

Peggy is a one-legged man. Stumpy is a legless man. Swingy is a man with one or both arms off. Blink is a man with one or both eyes defected. A dummy is a man who is dumb or a deaf and dumb. Some of these types do not beg. They make a livelihood by peddling or working at odd jobs. A nut is a man who is apparently mentally deranged.

According to a report made by MOLSA (1992:6-9) three different types of beggars are believed to have existed and still continue to exist in Ethiopia. The first category of beggars includes the disabled, the aged and other destitute, who ask for alms around churches, mosques, public places and rural villages. The second category includes the Orthodox religious students and professional

beggars known as *Hminas* or *Lalibelas*. The third category includes holly beggars of various sorts including priests who carry sacred pictures and ask for charity for different reasons.

The major concern of this thesis is to the first category. In chapter four, however, the most eye-catching, easily recognizable groups or spectacular categories of beggars are also described in terms of their structure and organization of begging merely to provide an overall picture of the social event of begging in the context of the saint days.

One gets some glimpses of the way beggars live, earn and spend money from research reports and some of the limited books. According to Encyclopedia of Social Work in India (1968:47), the surveys in India reveal the following conditions with respect to the lives of the beggars.

The income of a beggar in different parts of the country varies from Rs. 1.50 to Rs. 10.00 (0.375 to 2.50 Eth.Birr). Most of the beggars are homeless and live in the open or in the impoverished huts. Some of them are married. Quite a percentage of the male and female beggars live as married without formal solemnization of marriage. In the rank of beggars, there are the aged, the infirm, the chronically ill, mentally ill, vagrants, patients of leprosy, patients of T.B, Juveniles, etc. The methods they employ while begging are plain appeal, singing and dancing, exposing sores, etc. Most of the expenditure they incur is on food, smoking and entertainment. Intoxicating drugs account for the remaining expenditure. Some, who do not earn much, live on collected waste food. A large number of beggars are illiterate but there are some who have received primary and even secondary education. The large number of beggars lives on the charity of citizens. Some of the beggars or indigent persons are taken care of in institutions, but this number is negligible as would appear from the review of homes and services established to help the beggars. The traditional way of giving charity has as a matter of fact encouraged the able-bodied beggars to take advantage of it with the genuinely needy. Religion has also, to some extent, given sanction to the profession of begging. According to the same report, those who have become beggars out of misfortune, disease or handicaps, are often treated as social outcasts. They are often the victims of social stigmatization. Professional beggars are probably the creation of indiscriminate charity.

The survey results conducted by MOLSA in 1992 have also shown a more or less similar conditions pertaining to the lives of beggars. Accordingly, the following conclusions were reached, which explain some local facts regarding the beggar problem and lives of beggars: (1) a large number



of beggars are migrants who came to Addis Ababa seeking better lives. And the majority have very low educational and employment status, (2) most of the migrant beggars came from the northern regions which are affected by natural and man made disasters, (3) high proportion of beggars resort to begging within the years 1990 and 1991 owing to economic and socio-political situations which include escalating cost of living and displacement, (4) beggars who are engaged in activities other than begging in order to supplement their income are engaged in marginalized jobs, (5) beggars earn better income than other urban poor or minimum large earners in the country, (6) family disruption through death, divorce or unknown reasons contribute to child begging.

### **2.2.2. Historical Development of Begging: International, Regional and National Perspectives**

There is no written evidence as to where and when begging began to be practiced first. However, studies indicate that begging was non-existent in primitive societies where small groups of relatives used to live together and support one another. Mutual aid served as self-protection and security for the clan or even the whole tribe. The phenomenon of begging has emerged in association with private property (Henderson, 1904:5; Ottaway, 1975:11).

In the early civilizations, alms giving was considered as a holly deed and begging an honorable act. Ancient religious feast included alms giving as a ritual. However, the spread of the practice was checked by the discomforts of the life and the existence of old support systems for the economically dependent group such as polygyny, prostitution, slavery, clientage and vassalage (MOLSA, 1992:4). The problem of begging started to multiply in relation to the disintegration of the

earlier social structures and support systems as a result of socio-economic disorganization and changes that occurred at different times in history and in different places. For instance, the black death of Medieval Europe, Industrial Revolution, the Discovery of America, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century wars conducted to overseas expansion, the crusades and many more historical changes which disturbed previous socio-economic structures led segments of various societies into begging, vagrancy and robbery (Henderson, 1904:5).

Starting from the beginning of the middle ages, the spread of begging was reinforced by the Christian doctrine of alms giving. Pity for the poor expressed by alms giving was considered to be a means of salvation from the threat of divine punishment after death. This is clearly elaborated in the Bible notably in the New Testament (Matthew: Chapter 6, Verses 1-4). The rise of monasticism contributed to the return of the consideration of begging as a holy occupation. In many countries alms giver as well as the beggar were honored due to the religious value attached to alms giving. The church was the most charitable institution of this period. However, little was done to change the conditions of the poor so that they might become self-supporting (MOLSA 1992).

At the time of the Black Death there were different types of professional beggars in Western Europe. These were the mendicant friars, the gypsies, the begging scholar, bands of rovers and fakers like palm readers and physiognomies. It was at this era that begging started to pose as a disturbing element to the public. Despite this, regulations that came out as early as the 14<sup>th</sup>c-England's statute of laborers; the great poor law of the beginnings of the 17<sup>th</sup>c; the formation of labour colonies in 19<sup>th</sup>c-in many countries-and the establishment of organized charitable and relief agencies in the 19<sup>th</sup>c has greatly contributed to the prevention of beggary in most developed countries. However, begging was allowed for mendicant friars; pilgrims; those affected by war, fire or floods; the aged, blind or others suffering from disability (Hederson, 1904: 6).

The socio-economic conditions of developing countries are characterized by low incomes, high unemployment rates, fast rising cost of living, high rates of population growth and continued rural-urban migration. Conflict, famine and displacement are additional features notably in Africa (Mesfin, 1999:197). These socio-economic pressures in turn resulted in the collapse of traditional social structures and joint families and close-knit socially considerate neighborhoods, contributing to the number of the urban destitute having no one to turn to. The aggravated misery of mass poverty makes itself visible in large cities with the spread of slums and shantytowns. In all these the already large beggar population has taken up a surprisingly fast growth rate (MOLSA, 1992:6).

In Ethiopia, there is no written document that indicates the exact time and place of the emergence of the practice of begging. However, it is known from oral reports that the practice has existed for centuries especially around religious temples (shrines) and in the rural areas. According to a report made by MOLSA (1992) three different categories of beggars are believed to have existed and still continue to exist in Ethiopia.

The first category is begging by the destitute related to religious teachings and beliefs. This took place mostly in churches, mosques, public places, rural villages and on farms, especially during the harvest period. Beggars that depended on this type of begging were the disabled and the elderly with no body to support them. Both the Orthodox and Muslim religions that claim a great majority of followers have been teaching that alms giving is sacred and that it will help to get God's forgiveness for wrong doings. In addition to this, the Orthodox religion expects followers to give several memorial feasts known as *Qurban* as a ritual on behalf of family members who are deceased. These feasts involve the payment in cash for the mass held in the name of the dead and also include the offering of food and beverage to the clergy and the poor waiting outside the church compound. Similarly, every Muslim is expected to give 2.5% of his yearly income to the poor, *Zeka*, and whenever a Muslim feels that he has committed a sin, he/she gives something to the needy, *Sedeka*.

These kinds of religious teachings and practices are therefore believed to have some contribution to the increasing number of alms givers as well as receivers.

The second category of begging is by religious students, and caste related to traditional beliefs. The former type is based on a belief that if spiritual students travel far away from their home regions they can easily absorb the religious teaching and hence become bright students. The latter types are a caste known as *haminas* or *lalibelas* who are related to another traditional belief holding that these special caste of people will become leprous unless they practice begging.

The third category of begging is related to a religious ritual service. It includes holly beggars like priests who carry sacred pictures and ask for charity to build new churches, to buy clothes for clergymen, etc. Another type of holly begging is the appeals mostly made by women during religious holidays in order to get alms for giving religious feasts in the honor of one of the angels or saints of the Orthodox religion. There are also those who carry sacred pictures and display big jars covered with colorful rags. There are also those who beg carrying heavy stones, walking around in the nude, kneeling down or walking on their knees and performing other odd acts while begging for alms. This type of begging is practiced by those who have prayed for overcoming a serious problem or for the fulfillment of a wish. At the event of a positive response they beg in accordance with their promise and present what they get as alms to the church.

Thus, it is mainly due to the above reasons that the problem of beggary has begun to grow and expand in Ethiopia. However, during the last three decades the country has suffered recurring drought and famine together with internal wars that lasted for quite a long time. These brought about mass displacement and disintegration of social systems. As modernization characterized by industrialization and urbanization slowly came to the picture, traditional social and economic structures were clustered without actually being replaced by adequate ones to take their place. It is particularly in the last two or three decades that the number of the displaced has increased at

alarming rates. The proportion of people living in absolute poverty has been growing rapidly and the worsening situation of the urban poor has become unavoidable. Consequently, a large number of the urban poor have been driving to begging (MOLSA 1992; Hadgu 1995; Muhamed and Simeon 1995; Getahun 1999; Aklilu and Desaleng 2000; and Meheret 2001). As such, these and many other scholars argue that the beggary problem prevailed in urban Ethiopia, particularly in Addis Ababa today has shatteringly been brought about poverty.

### **2.3. Poverty in Ethiopia**

Reports and research outcomes given by the community of nations, government or non-government organizations and individual researchers confirmed that Ethiopia is, by any measure one of the poorest countries on earth. Among others, Befekadu and Berehanu (2000:1) have given a summary of the overall poverty level in the country. The report says:

The miserable condition of the Ethiopian people is reflected in every sector and by all standard social and economic indicators one chooses to use. Ethiopia's real per capita GNP calculated in dollar terms for 1998 was \$100. The average figure for low-income countries for the same year was \$520 while the average for sub Saharan Africa was \$480. Using purchasing power parity (PPP) which is more indicative of people's buying power in their own countries, Ethiopia's real GDP per capita for 1998 amounted to \$500, the third lowest figure in Africa, only higher than those of Sieraleone's \$390 and Tanzania's \$490. The Ethiopian PPP measured per capita is only a fourth of the average for the LDCs (\$2130), and nearly a third of the average for sub Saharan Africa's \$1430. Ethiopias underdevelopment is more shocking when the condition of the people is taken into perspective. An estimated 50% of the population lives in absolute poverty. Twelve out of hundred children born alive do not celebrate their first birthday. Eight out of hundred children who survive their first year die before they reach their fifth birthday. A child born today can expect to live to age 43 only, and 66% of the people are not expected to survive to age 60. Neither do the people see any light at the end of the tunnel. Less than a third of the primary school aged children go to school, of which only 19% advance to the junior secondary level. Only 9% of the appropriate age cohorts are at the secondary level and 1% advance to the tertiary level. Above all, the rate of unemployment, including the educated unemployed particularly those that have completed high school, is very high and is increasing.

The implication of all this to the daily life of the average Ethiopian is clear; the level of poverty that is observed in the rural areas of the country and in the significant proportion of the urban population is simply staggering. It is such dismal scenes that prompt many Ethiopians to desperately seek a way out of the social and economic quagmire, thousands eking a meager living using odd and marginal jobs including begging.

Regarding the recent situation of poverty in Ethiopia, Aklilu and Desalegn (2000: i), among others, disclosed that the majority of the Ethiopian population is drifting from the middle category ten years ago to the lowest category of well-being. For Aklilu and Desalegn, however, the nature and types of problems of poverty are different for rural and urban communities. Leading problems in rural communities include drought and the problem of access to farmland. The latter is argued to be aggravated by two main sub-problems: the rapidly increasing number of landless peasants, and the shrinking of farm plots due to either deforestation or erosion or fragmentation of farmlands. Other priority problems include the quota system of the Derg government, pests and the high price of fertilizers.

The manifestations of poverty in urban and semi-urban Ethiopia are, however, different from those in rural areas (Aklilu and Desalegn 2000; Meheret 2001). In this respect, chronic unemployment is believed to be the main problem in urban communities, which has a related set of sub-problems including lay offs of government employees, the removal of subsidies and demobilization of the Derg army. These are blamed on the current government's free market economy. Rapid population growth and the absence of vital services such as health, water, electricity, housing and sanitation are also mentioned as priority problems. Regarding the impacts of poverty in urban communities, Aklilu and Desalegn (2000: ii) noted:

The impact of poverty in these communities is seen in the form of hunger, the increasing number of beggars on the streets, the high rates of morbidity

and mortality, and the overall unhealthy and dangerous sanitation conditions in the neighborhoods. This is not to speak of the less obvious signs of hopelessness and desperation among the urban population, particularly the youth.

Overall, Getahun (1999:63) made plain that whole lots of recent studies on poverty have been carried out particularly since the collapse of the Derg regime and the consequent change of government and as such a number of studies have confirmed that poverty level in the country is among the highest in the world. The general indication is that, unlike other African countries, the situation of poverty in urban areas is less encouraging.

As argued by scholars concerned with development issues, countries, which formulated and implemented the right policies and programs, were able to make a difference by registering tremendous improvement in their poverty situation. In this regard, the present government in Ethiopia has at least expressed its commitment for poverty reduction in the country in many respects. Major policies of the government are formulated based on the primary objective of reducing poverty in the country.

The genesis of PRSP emanates from the concern and even dismay among international financial institutions that the enormous amounts of money and effort put into development and poverty eradication over the last fifty years has not yielded commensurate results (Subbaravo, 2002:13). This also holds true for Ethiopia. The initiative of poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) implies for Ethiopia both continuity and sharpening of the focus on poverty of the previous years. Reduction of poverty will continue to the core of the agenda of the country's development, which consists of four building blocks, namely, agricultural development lead industrialization, ADLI; judiciary and civil service reform; decentralization and empowerment; and capacity building in public and private sectors. The main contents of these building blocks; their inter-relations and combinations are hoped to poverty reduction over the long term. It is in fact too hasty and premature to predict the overall changes with regard to the reduction of poverty in the country in the future. Based on her preliminary observations, however, Jalal (2002:22) forwards her fears and strongly recommends that:

If done well, the PRSP has the potential to play a major role in building consensus and a national social contract to combat poverty. If done badly, it can be counter productive and undermine existing progress towards poverty reduction. It is therefore in everyone's interest to ensure the PRSPs are well designed, and genuinely participatory processes.

Nevertheless, apart from policy constraints, implementation problems and other man made factors, rural poverty seems to continue becoming a major obstacle in achieving the goals set by PRSP and in paralyzing the prevailing poverty agenda. In addition to the previous recurrent famines and war which had resulted in massive exodus of rural people to urban areas particularly to Addis Ababa, the recent drought which reportedly victimized 14 million compatriots has also undoubtedly brought about mass migration, although the exact number may not be known, making the situation of urban poverty even more severe. As such, the problems of the urban poor are likely to grow in scale and severity because of the ever-continuing high rate of urbanization. This situation may force many urban poor and the new comers to resort to begging among others in a situation where there are very limited job opportunities, mostly irregular and unstable employment, and earnings are often below subsistence.

#### **2.4. Urbanization and Population Mobility: Conceptual and Theoretical Issues**

The term urbanization may have different but related meanings to different scholars. However, the most commonly employed measure of the degree of urbanization of a given country is based on the demographic definition of urbanization that takes into account the percentage of the total population resident in urban places of a specified size (Davis, 1967:7; Davis and Golden, 1954-55:6-7). As such, urbanization refers to the change in the proportion of a population living in urban areas (Befekadu and Berehanu, 2000:74).

The experience shared by some developing countries demonstrated that urbanization could easily precede industrial development while the condition of rural communities, a search for social freedom and better quality of life remain the major causes for the rural population to migrate. The same variables, however, have less effect on rural migration in the developed nations. Davis (1967) maintains the opinion that urbanization in the Western world is the product of economic development resulting from the industrial revolution. The shift of population from rural to urban was due to the technological enhancement of human production. The expansion of the manufacturing sector in cities drew a large labor pool from rural areas.



The conventional explanation for population movement from one region to another can be explained as a result of commercial and industrial development (Butterworth 1982). While other writers have discussed the same issue by using push and pull analysis. The push factors include lack of economic opportunities, educational services, or sufficient land or the occurrence of natural disaster in the area of origin. The pull factors are the availability of services, including employment opportunities in the urban areas (Assefa, 1993:8).

Africa's rate of urbanization is the highest in the world, which is mainly the result of rural-urban migration. And the causes of Africa's rural-urban migration are explained by push and pull theory of urbanization (Teklebirhane, 1969). Houser and Schonore (1966:16) also stated that urbanization in Africa, Asia and Latin America is thought to be caused by a push from the rural areas due to static resources, rapid increase in population and insecurity. In the Ethiopian situation, as Befekadu and Berehanu (2000) noted, urbanization could occur as a result of internal rural-urban migration, natural increase or reclassification of places to urban. But rural-urban migration stands out the most driving factor for the dynamics. In this regard, Befekadu and Berehanu (2000:74) disclosed:

Rural-urban migration in Ethiopia is ... significant type of movement for the spatial distribution of population. The attraction to urban areas, mostly to one primate city (Addis Ababa), is largely economic and due to rural-urban income differentials. In recent years, these fundamental forces have been supplemented by socio-political instability, including the land reform in 1975 and subsequent anti-feudal and landlord movements as well as the post 1991 ethnic related relocations.

In Ethiopia, the rural-urban migration cannot be explained in a single explanatory variable. It is rather a complex process combining different factors. Over all, internal migration in Ethiopia can be described as a consequence of drought, political crisis, regional wars, government compulsion, debilitation of natural resources, search for employment opportunities and lack of social services (Assefa, 1993:7-8).

Regarding Ethiopia's urban development, Mulatu (1976:39-77) among others provided a detailed historical perspective. For him, the Ethiopian cities have generally undergone significant changes not only in size and in structure but also in economic characteristics. Pre-twentieth century Ethiopian cities have been characterized as centers whose development has been influenced by the long history of a feudal system that dominated Ethiopian social, political and economic life. They were identified as centers that rose and fell with the waxing and waning of political powers in different regions. Their development was viewed as a cyclical phenomenon that was intimately related to the rise of political power; it was not a continuous process that developed in response to economic factors. Contemporary urban areas, unlike their pre-twentieth century counter parts that were for the most part characterized as short lived military camps, have become permanent centers of political and economic decisions as well as major receptacles of millions of people that migrated to them. They are the centers of modernity and change. Regarding the changes, Mulatu (1976:40) adds:

These changes are not unique to Ethiopia. It is part of the social and economic transformation that has swept over most developing countries. Ethiopian cities may be regarded as young and small by world standards, but they are growing fast; and the rapid growth of the cities superimposed on the meager resource base of the country exercises increasing pressure on the national economy.

By and large, Ethiopia's urbanization shows us that cities have become crowded due to the massive internal migration triggered by multitude of factors. They have become shelters for the homeless and destitute. Farmers who were the blood streams of the urban population become the urban lumpen, roaming around in search of food and employment. The existing housing stock in major cities could not accommodate the massive influx of new comers from the rural areas. Lack of social services accelerated the magnitude of the urban problems and urban life became a chain of crises. The increasing flow of internal migration affected the urban economy and hindered the urban economic growth and social development (Mesfin, 1968:27; Assefa 1993:8).

Although it is argued that cities appear as a source of investment and the primate city in particular is assumed to be the biggest investment to which a country can put human as well as physical resources and money, the reverse is true in our case. The population and size of Addis Ababa is increasing fundamentally due to migration and mass displacement. As it was exposed earlier, this increase does not, however, have a positive effect but heavily lean to the negative. Slums are increasing in number as well as the social problems of which begging is the major one. Thus, in this particular case we are partly and even largely dealing with displaced or migrant people who are earning a living in an urban setting-Addis Ababa-as beggars.

Concepts and terms might be used for practical as well as analytical purposes. This in turn indicates that putting clear demarcation lines and clear-cut typologies entail practical impacts on the lives of migrant and/or displaced people. In this respect, for analytical purposes in this thesis the term internally migrated or internally displaced was used. The internally migrated or displaced beggars in this context include all beggars who are migrated (voluntarily moved to another locality) and displaced (involuntarily and suddenly expelled from habitual residence) by various reasons and presently living by begging in urban areas. In this case an individual or group might be affected by a number of causal agents at a time or through a long period of time (Baker 1986; 1995). Therefore, it is difficult to attribute one single reason for an individual's or group's migration or displacement. This holds true for the migrant and displaced beggars who make large part of the subject of this research.

Many scholars (Mitchel 1956; Anderson 1961; Kapferer 1966; Mesfin 1968; Gutkind 1974; Hadgu 1995; Meheret 2001) argue that migrants and displaced people generally find themselves in difficult socio-economic circumstances at their destinations; they spend greater time in unemployment and if employed, their works are odd and casual. Anderson (1961: 40) puts it as "getting by putting in a few hours a day at the most casual labour and odd jobs: jack rolling,

peddling, street faking...and begging". As such, the socio-economic situation which migrant and displaced people find themselves in, would enable us to employ the theoretical framework through which we can substantiate much of the circumstances.

Regarding the socio-economic circumstances to which African rural-urban migrants find themselves in, Gutkind (1974:82) among others argues:

The African rural-urban migrant, who leaves his peasant life style to go to the city, is thrown into a very competitive system with radically different economic structures. The typical migrant is young, unskilled and has very little formal education. But he is suddenly faced with a society that highly values these very attributes he lacks, does not properly understand and does not control. A small proportion of unskilled workers may find employment as petty traders, but the majority makes their livelihood as porters, security guards, messengers and other odd jobs.

Gutkind (1974:83-84) further argues that in contrast to their peasant life style, new migrants must learn to adapt to the different circumstances by learning to obey orders, work with people not their own kin or ethnic group, and above all learn to budget their meager wages, because much of their earnings will have to be spent on the purchase of food. The desire to obtain a living wage introduces the new migrant to new social relationships and institutions. The work environment increase social contacts, and membership of a trade union or an occupational group may end up becoming more valuable than kinship or ethnic relationships.

The socio-economic context the displaced people would find themselves in can also be generalized as Cernea (1996) states on his impoverishment model to depict the effect of displacement on the lives of the victims. According to this model, displacement entails "multifaceted impoverishment via induced landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalization, increased morbidity, food insecurity, loss of access to common property and social disarticulation" (Cernea, 1996:13). Displaced people would share one or more of the above elements of poverty due to the socio-economic disruption they are falling into. This situation of impoverishment can be found wherever displacement takes place. However, the socio-economic environment (context) the displaced move into might provide a different color to the overall situation. Here, the lives of the

displaced in the urban context can be seen through their effort to adapt to the socio-economic context using various survival strategies.

Individuals, households, communities, ethnic groups, or whole nations can adopt coping strategies. Here we are concentrating on how poor individuals and households manage their poverty. As such, Begging can be seen as one of the survival strategies in the urban context. In this regard, Bevan and Ssewaya (1995) writes: “.... Many poor individuals or households adopt three general survival strategies: selling their labour or sexual services, selling their assets or resort to begging”.

Observations have been made by anthropologists pertaining to people who are coping with problems of adaptation to a new socio-economic environment (Markowitz 1996). Spencer (1851) laid the foundation for a profound theoretical ground in the history of anthropology, that man survives through constant process of adaptive response in changing circumstances. Long after Spencer, social and cultural anthropologists used adaptation as a theoretical framework to depict human adjustment and survival in changing socio-economic circumstances in different places. Spradley and David (1975:667) defined adaptation as "the process of coping with a specific physical, biological and social environment to meet the fundamental requirements for survival." Here, human adaptation is regarded as the first and most important use of any body of cultural knowledge. Nevertheless, the concept of culture lacked utility and was conceptually ambiguous (Wassermann and Joseph 1995). Thus, it is important to identify the particular "social field" where an individual or a group practically organize his experience to act in a certain way in order to exploit or equally interact within a given socio-economic context. In Spencer's assertion man needs adaptation of constitution to conditions to ensure fitness for surrounding circumstances (Spencer 1851:61). Therefore, in this particular context, social institutional interaction of people can be manifested through social networks and socio-economic or cultural institutions established for specific purposes.

## **2.5. Social Networks in the Urban Context**

Each individual in a society has social relations with a large number of friends and acquaintances. All these relationships together constitute what has been called a personal network. "Personal network" would include all those with whom a person interacts on an informal basis (people mutually recognized enough to have a conversation)" (Wasserman and Galaskicwiz 1994:58). This broader definition shows the whole system of relations that individuals could establish for mutual exchange.

In the urban context, social networks depict the internal structure of social relation (Rogers and Steven 1995:15). The medium of this social relation can be based up on the movement of communication and material items from one person to the other. According to Mitchell (1969:36-37) network relations enhance the transfer of information between individuals and transfer of material goods and services between people.

Network relations can be established based on different factors and enable people to exploit different alternatives to survive with the urban context (Gutkind 1967:158). Factors such as ethnic identity, friendship, gender, age group, former occupational background and village ties might play a crucial role in network formation. The degree of importance of these factors might differ from one socio-cultural context to the other. For instance, networks can be established on the basis of different traditional values of a certain group (Ngin 1995:227-228).

In the Ethiopian context, traditional voluntary associations broaden the system and social relations among urban inhabitants. Self-help associations such as *edir*, *ekub*, *mahiber* are used as a means to establish a stable pattern of relations between individual members of the associations. Specifically voluntary associations provide the members with socio economic advantage and spiritual unity in the new urban context (Mekuria 1973:363-364, Fakadu 1974:376). In Ethiopia, as in many other parts of the world, people have evolved traditional non-governmental methods of self-help

which play an important role in the struggle of their daily life and a source of strength (Pankhurst and Endrias 1958).

In the case of the migrant, displaced and the urban poor who earn a living by begging in Addis Ababa social network and involvement in small self-help associations may ensure survival and adaptation to the socio-economic, cultural and physical situation of the city. It is through the strategy in these two spheres of activities among others that they could face the utter poverty situation that is resulted from their particular situation. The network analysis can best depict the socio-economic structure of the migrant, displaced and the urban poor beggars and their struggle for economic survival and socio-cultural adaptation. Often such network relations are complex to understand.

A number of writers (Barnes 1954; Epstein 1961; Jay 1964; Srinivas and Beteille 1964; and Mayer 1966) all quoted in Wheeldon (1969) have evolved different criteria in order to differentiate between these complex network relationships. Wheeldon distinguishes three aspects of the concept: content, range and the effective and extended elements of a network.

Relationships between individuals according to Wheeldon differ in the content and complexity. If the situations in which people habitually see one another are clearly distinguished, it is possible to separate, very crudely, the strands, which contribute to their relationship. The range of a network is affected by the absolute numbers of people with whom ego is observed to have a personal relationship, whatever its nature; and the numbers of people in his network who do not belong to broadly the same socio-economic group as him. For Epstein as quoted in Wheeldon (1969) the effective area of a network involves those people with whom a person interacts most intensively and most regularly, and who are therefore also likely to come to know one another, that is to say that part of the total network which shows some degree of connectedness. The extended network by contrast would be those with whom a person interacts less intensely and less regularly, who are unlikely to know one another so that the network linking them would be relatively open.

In the analysis of my fieldwork thus, I have discussed interactions among individuals in the beggar community in terms of content, the range and character of their network, and related this to their observed actions in specific situations. I have not been able, yet, to quantify this concept of range, and refer simply to small, middle, large, narrow or wide range of networks. Overall the character of the network seems fluid and ad hoc for the impoverished group under investigation. Although interpersonal relations are quite apparent, socio-economic interactions through cultural institutions and associations seem by far marginal to the destitute beggars. Poverty seems to dictate their entire existence and way of life. To these ends, poverty would enable us to employ a theoretical framework through which we can substantiate the overall circumstances.

## **2.6. The Concept and Theories of Poverty**

### **2.6.1. Definitions and the Nature of Poverty**

As Will and Vatter (1970) argue, poverty has many facets: lack of material necessities and comforts, psychic travail, the multi-problem family and individual, dysfunctional behavior. But it is the first of these above all; as Carlye quoted in Will and Vatter (1970:2) so penetratingly wrote, "it is to live miserable we know not why; to work sore and yet gain nothing." Howells in Will and Vatter (1970:2) described it as "the fear and dread of want." By taking different American conditions Will and Vatter (1970) viewed poverty as a condition in which one-third of a nation is ill housed, ill clad and ill nourished. For Johnson (1970) poverty means the following for those who endure it. It means that the abundance, the comforts, the opportunities they see all around them are beyond their grasp; worst of all, it means hopelessness for the young man or woman who grows up with out a descent education in a broken home, in a hostile and squalid environment, in ill health or in the face of racial



injustice that young man or woman is often trapped in a life of poverty. Fuchs and Orshanky (1970) view poverty in terms of current income as an adequate indicator.

Much of the discussion of poverty is posed in terms of an income line. Despite this, Miller et al (1970) approached poverty by broadening the economic perspective from a narrow concern with income. They viewed poverty in terms of lack of educational opportunities and hence reduction in social mobility chances. Further, they considered social exclusions to be a major issue of the poor rather than their income level. Being included in society, which means being accorded respect and accepted in social and political relations with others, is increasingly an important issue of inequality. For Miller et al (1970), however, discrimination is not the main dimension. The more important dimensions surround the prestige of various groupings in society and the nature of interactions among groups. Despite this, data are lacking on the ways in which others rate low-income groups. A very important area here is the way that the poor look up on themselves- acceptance of self, the agreeability of self-image, and the satisfaction with life.

According to Valentine (1968), the primary meaning of poverty is a condition of being in want of something that is needed, desired, or generally recognized as having a value. Valentine further elaborates:

A moment's reflection on such related concepts as indigence, penury, and destitution makes it clear that there are variable degrees of poverty. As the primary definition implies, poverty varies in terms of spatio-temporal context. The state of poverty is thus a continuum rather than a point in an absolute scale. The condition is always defined in relation to a variety of quantitative and qualitative criteria, which change as societies and cultures change. The idea of poverty is above all a comparative concept that refers to a relative quality. For these reasons it is difficult to provide a concrete definition. As a quality, however, the condition of being poor does have a central significance: the essence of poverty is inequality. In slightly different words, the basic meaning of poverty is relative deprivation. The poor are deprived in comparison with the comfortable, affluent, and the opulent. The kind of privation that first comes to mind with the word poverty is inequality of material wealth. The poor are also disadvantaged

in a number of other areas widely agreed to be of value; occupations, education and political power among others.

For Valentine (1968) since being poor in many societies is closely associated with status in a hierarchy of social classes, poverty has often been studied as an aspect of class systems. These systems themselves are of course major structural expressions of inequality. In like a manner, Herzog in Meisner (1966) provided a summary of quite a number of lists of various kinds of attributes that have been given to the poor by different investigators and which are supported by evidence. The traits or characteristics attributed to the poor are meant for showing inequality and differentiating the poor from the prosperous.

Recognizing the debates on the problem of definition of poverty, Alock (1997:85) argues that the experience of poor people in practice extends beyond reliance simply on an inadequate income, it also includes a multifaceted combination of deprivations and unmet needs that prevent them from participating in society in the same ways that others do. The extent of these broader deprivations and their impact on individuals and households vary from place to place, person to person and time to time-and even at different times within one persons lifetime. Thus, for Alock, a full picture of poverty within a society needs to address these fine grains of the experiences of deprivation, which the simplified definitions and statistical measures necessarily overlook. Similarly, Scott (1994:17) maintains, “The poor are those deprived of the conditions necessary for an adequate life in the society in which they live. Poverty is thus a feature of particular patterns of inequality”. Dixon and Macarov (1998:16) also added, “Poverty is about exclusion. It is a wide-ranging and complex phenomenon, profoundly affecting individuals and households. The emphasis on exclusion directs us to the heart of poverty: that the lack of resources prevents participation in the normal life of the community.”

Thus, the destitute beggars under investigation can also be viewed as very poor people different from the prosperous in a number of socio-economic characteristics; poor people which are disadvantaged in areas widely agreed to be of value-material wealth, occupations, education and political power and above all participation in the normal life of the community. Such analysis implies not only viewing the destitute beggars as those who are lagging behind relative to others in the society but also extending the concept of poverty beyond the narrow limits of income. This is because at the bottom of the income- consumption distribution, there are groups of destitute people-beggars- with no means of producing even enough to subsist and widely deprived of the basic necessities essential for survival and participation in the different spheres of the society at large.

### **2.6.2. Approaches to the Study of Poverty**

The whole concept of poverty according to Will and Vatter (1970) has been attacked as too simple and crude when it draws heavily upon the one criterion of low income and too ambiguous when it invokes other criteria such as educational deficiency, weak personal motivation or lack of family cohesion. More than a definition is involved. Policies toward poverty are appropriate only if the phenomenon is viewed in terms of human experience. In this regard, many scholars according to Will and Vatter (1970) believe that money alone cannot wipe out an adverse poverty heritage of alienation, indifferent motivation, low aspirations, physical debilitation, dysfunctional behavior, and environmental dearth. This multidimensional approach leads directly to the notion that the poor constitute a subculture, a group within the larger society that has, in Williams words as quoted in Will and Vatter (1970:128), "its comparatively distinct value system, its special problems, its

distinctive social perspective". It is in this connection that Lewis (1966) coined the phrase "culture of poverty".

According to Valentine (1968) Lewis's culture of poverty is the most extensive and detailed representation of the poor or lower class subculture. Lewis as quoted by Herzog in Meissner (1967:92) summarized the reasons for believing that there is a culture of poverty, when he said:

In anthropological usage, the term culture implies, essentially, a design for living, which is passed down from generation to generation. In applying this concept of culture to the understanding of poverty, I want to draw attention to the fact that poverty in modern nations is not only a state of economic deprivation, of disorganization, or of the absence of some thing. It is also something positive in the sense that it has a structure, a rationale and defense mechanisms without which the poor could hardly carry on. In short, it is a way of life, remarkably stable and persistent, passed down from generation to generation along family lines. The culture of poverty has its own modalities and distinctive social and psychological consequences for its members.

The ideas of culture of poverty are discussed at length and pretty well by Lewis in Will and Vatter (1970). Lewis tried to understand poverty and its associated tracks as a culture, or more accurately, as a subculture with its own structure and rationale, as a way of life which is passed down from generation to generation along family lines. This view directs attention to the fact that culture of poverty in modern nations is not only a matter of economic deprivation, of disorganization or of the absence of something. It is also something positive and provides some rewards without which the poor could hardly carry on. According to Lewis, the culture of poverty transcends regional, rural-urban and national differences and shows remarkable similarities in family structure, interpersonal relations, time orientation, value systems and spending patterns. These cross-national similarities are examples of independent invention and convenience. They are common adaptations to common problems.

The culture of poverty represents the effort of the poor to cope with feelings of hopelessness and despair, which develop from the realization of the improbability of achieving success in terms of

the values and goals of the larger society. In deed, many of the traits of the culture of poverty can be viewed as attempts at local solutions for problems not met by existing institutions and agencies because the people are not eligible for them, cannot afford them, or are ignorant or suspicious of them. For Lewis, however, the culture of poverty is not only an adaptation to a set of objective conditions of the larger society. Once it comes into existence it tends to perpetuate itself from generation to generation because of its effect on the children.

According to Lewis, most likely, candidates for the culture of poverty are the people who come from the lower strata of a rapidly changing society and are already particularly alienated from it. Thus landless rural workers who migrate to the cities can be expected to develop a culture of poverty much more readily than migrants from stable peasant villages with a well-organized traditional culture. In this connection, there is a striking contrast between Latin America, where the rural population long ago made the transition from a tribal to a peasant society, and Africa, which is still close to its tribal heritage. The more corporate nature of many of the African tribal societies, in contrast to Latin American rural communities, and the persistence of village ties to inhibit or delay the formation of a full-blown culture of poverty in many of the African towns and cities. The special conditions of apartheid in South Africa, where the migrants are segregated into separate "locations" and do not enjoy freedom of movement, create special problems. Here, the institutionalization of repression and discrimination tend to develop a great sense of identity and group consciousness.

In its crudest form, the theory of culture of poverty promoted the idea that the poor are poor because they are poor and hence encourage the poor to accept their poverty as inevitable. Lewis as Valentine (1968) writes, attributed the culture of poverty to the following crucial characteristics:

The lack of effective participation and integration of the poor in the major institutions of the large society; poor housing conditions, crowding, gregariousness, above all a minimum of organization beyond the level of the nuclear and extended family, when looked at the local community level; the absence of childhood as a specially prolonged and protected

stage in the life cycle, early initiation into sex, free unions or consensual marriages, a relatively high incidence of the abandonment of wives and children, trend toward female-or mother-centered families and consequently a much greater knowledge of maternal relatives, a strong predisposition to authoritarianism, lack of privacy, verbal emphasis up on family solidarity which is only rarely achieved because of sibling rivalry, and compensation for limited goods and maternal affections are the major traits of the culture of poverty on the family level; on the level of the individual the major characteristics are a strong feeling of marginality, of helplessness, of dependence and of inferiority.

In a nutshell, Lewis attributed poverty to the poor own creation of marginalization, deviant attitude, incapability to cope with the development process, socially disorganized, politically apathetic and loss of aspirations. This hypothesis of the separate subculture was used to explain the perpetuation of their poverty from generation to generation.

Lewis's view was quickly challenged by valentine (1968), and Perlman (1976) and Portes (1979) quoted in Goitom (1996). They argued that, while the poor undoubtedly contribute at times to their own poverty, the basic causes of that poverty are beyond their control. Poverty is a reflection of having insufficient money and lack of economic opportunities and other means to fulfill and realize their aspirations. In this regard, Valentine in Will and Vatter (1970) attributed poverty in terms of its gross indicators or correlates which include unemployment, underemployment, unskilled work, low-status occupations, meager wages, and lack of education. Reinforcing these later views Moser and Salterwaite (1988) provided evidences of squatter settlement data that the poor were highly heterogeneous and that they were fully integrated in the city economy. These and other evidences suggest that Lewis failed to provide adequate empirical evidence to prove the relevance of his theory. He failed to incorporate the perception of the poor about their own poverty nor did he consider the opinion of other scholars or the view of the government about the causes of poverty (Goitom 1996). This research has, however, analyzed the situation of poverty among beggars by conferring with the

poor themselves in an attempt to investigate their 'emic' views pertaining to the causes of their poverty.

As Herzog in Meissner (1966) argues the few people who challenge the idea of the culture of poverty assert that in great cities the poor live relatively isolated lives; there is aggregation, but aggregation under circumstances which make it rather a dissociating than a unifying principle, and that the life of the slum dwellers represent, not a system of culturally evolved patterns, but rather a series of disjointed pragmatic adjustment to exigencies perceived as predictable and uncontrollable. For Herzog, however, these represent the chief qualifications to the concept of culture applied to the poor. They do not destroy the usefulness of the concept, provided its limits are recognized. They do, however, reduce the usefulness if these limits are not recognized, for failure to recognize them invites a new stereotyping, which in turn invites distortion and misapprehension. The culture of poverty should be thought of as a subculture rather than a culture.

Wilson (1991) quoted in Goitom (1996) advanced Lewis's culture of poverty in his theory of underclass hypothesis, i.e., the creation of ghetto underclass. Although he attributes certain elements of poverty like crime and other anti-social activities to binding the poor, unlike Lewis, Wilson accuses the failure of U.S. government policy in overcoming the poverty trap. He thus argues that the poor are essentially victims of the system. In the present study, this theory was of relevance as the situation of beggary in Addis Ababa has partly resulted in inappropriate government policies of our own, past or present.

In general, the attribution of a distinctive cultural system to the poor has been widely accepted and indeed seems increasingly to be taken for granted. At the same time, however, there has been a certain amount of criticism and opposition. Some anthropologists and sociologists have felt that much social science research and writing about the life of the poor is biased by a middle class point of view. In this regard, Valentine (1968) considers a series of papers by Fraizer, Agan, Miller, Vistica Clark, Keil, Gladwin and Liebow delivered at the 1966 meeting of the American Anthropological Association which show how the "culture of poverty" notion and associated ideas distort the reality of life among the poor, prejudice our understanding of that life and encourage policies which perpetuate the disadvantages associated with poverty.

To this effect, alternative interpretations of life under conditions of poverty have not been entirely lacking. Much of the behavior alleged to be specifically characteristic of the lower class and therefore often invoked as evidence of cultural distinctiveness, has been explained on other grounds. As Valentine (1968) discloses most of the critical questions that have been raised are related in one way or another to this central issue of the relationship between culture and social class. It has been suggested that analysis in terms of "culture of poverty" may distract attention from crucial structural characteristics of the stratified social system as a whole and focus it instead on alleged motivational peculiarities of the poor that are of doubtful validity or relevance. Several investigations of the problem of class structures suggest that the cultural values of the poor may be much the same as middle class values, merely modified in practice because of situational stresses. The view has been presented that such putative lower class characteristics as self-indulgence or inability to defer gratification are better explained by situational variables than by determinants of class affiliation.

Recent publications regarding poverty (John 1994; Alock 1997; and Dixon and Macarov 1998) explicitly reveal that the attempt to identify the individual or social characteristics of the poor as the source of their poverty implies a pathological model of the causation of poverty. For them, in

blaming the victim, therefore, poverty becomes the problem of the poor people themselves, and identifying them as occupying a distinct status as an underclass as a result of this provides a spurious socio-economic justification. Among others, Allock (1997) strongly argues that researchers who have studied the culture of poverty, such as Lewis have frequently done so in order to describe rather than condemn the isolation and separation of the poor. Attempts to identify the social divisions and social characteristics of poverty do not always identify these as causes of deprivation, and even pathological approaches to poverty do not all carry with them adverse moral judgments of the characteristics associated with those found to be poor. Allock (1997:37) further argues:

...The separation and cultural isolation of the underclass is not the problem of the poor who supposedly inhabit it, but of the rest of society, who see in it some justification for their (slightly) higher social status. There is no hard evidence to suggest that there are ... cultural differences between the poor and the rest of society. However, for those who suggest that there are, there is the moral comfort of believing that the problems of poverty and exclusion that poor people experience are 'theirs' rather than 'ours'.

Despite such tremendous conceptual and theoretical debates, the poor have been studied mainly in the style of anthropological field investigations. Nevertheless, no single writer in the qualitative tradition has provided an exact description of the poor (Rossi and Bum 1969). But there is a consensus that the poor are different. Accordingly, most anthropologists, all cited in Rossi and Bum (1969) such as Cohen 1964; Engle 1966; Harrington 1962; Lewis 1966; Miller 1964a, 1964b; Pavenstedt 1965; Riessman 1962, 1964; and Schneiderman 1964, 1965 attribute the following essential features to the poor. The features include:

- 1. Labour force participation:** long periods of unemployment and/or intermittent employment. Public assistance is a major source of income for extended periods.
- 2. Occupational participation:** when employed, persons hold jobs at the lowest levels of skills, for example, domestic service, unskilled labor, menial service jobs, and farm labor.



**3. Family and Interpersonal relations:** high rates of marital instability (desertion, divorce, migration), high incidence of households headed by females, high rates of illegitimacy; unstable and superficial interpersonal relationships characterized by considerable suspicions of persons outside the immediate household.

**4. Community characteristics:** residential areas with very poorly developed voluntary associations and low levels of participation in such local voluntary associations as exist.

**5. Relationship to larger society:** little interest in, or knowledge of, the larger society and its event; some degree of alienation from the large society.

**6. Value orientations:** a sense of helplessness and low sense of personal efficacy; dogmatism and authoritarianism in political ideology; fundamentalist religious views, with some strong inclinations toward belief in magical practices. Low "need achievement" and low levels of aspirations for the self.

In a nutshell, although several other characteristics could also be added to this inventory, my informal content analysis to the literature indicates that these characteristics are those about which there is considerable consensus and that tend to be stressed as critical features of the poor. Thus, destitute beggars being part of the broad category of people we call poor, they were assumed to share these essential characteristics attributed to the poor. Consequently, the study discusses the situation of the beggards in terms of interpersonal, institutional and associational interaction; and their limited interactions with the society at large apart from the major reasons, which have precipitated them to resort to begging.

To these ends, much of the present study argues against the grist for the culture of the poverty mill. The beggars studied experience their lives as devoid of success or satisfaction, and they see themselves as personifications of failure often owing to circumstances beyond their control, precisely because they share the standards and criteria of the wider society. Far from being a self sustaining

system, set off from the rest of society by cultural distinctions based up on historical continuity, the world of beggars is an integral part of Ethiopia, living in a continual and pain full awareness of dominant “Ethiopian values and sentiments.”

Overwhelmingly, however, the underlying reality studied is complex and diverse and any definitions used and aggregations made try to make meaningful to the poorest beggars experiencing chronic poverty in light of the socio-economic history of the country in general, and the specific urban context, Addis Ababa, in particular.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Socio-Economic History of Addis Ababa**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

Begging as a phenomenon-a social problem, is more urban in character. It is more prevalent in areas where traditional economic and social organization has been changing fast to new forms of organization, i.e., in cities and towns of which Addis Ababa is the major one where the problem appears serious. In this chapter, the dynamics of the general situation of the particular urban context the impoverished beggars have become part is presented. As such, the chapter discusses the socio-economic history of an important variation of the contemporary modernizing pre-industrial city, Addis Ababa, whose social and spatial characteristics have not been significantly affected or altered by a colonial heritage (Palen, 1976: 205). More importantly, this chapter attempts to expose the overall poverty situation and the problem of beggary in Addis Ababa.

#### **3.2. Spatial Structure**

Addis Ababa is often referred to as the capital of Africa due to its history of independence and, more importantly because it houses both the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the head quarters of the Organization of African Unity (which is recently called African Union). In sub-Saharan Africa, only Lagos, Ibadan, Kinshasa, and Accra can be compared to Addis Ababa in size. Addis Ababa did not come into existence as a result of gradual growth, but rather was established as a result of emperor Menelik II's decision to settle his temporary capital on the site. The city site is also unique in both being over 8,000 feet in elevation and in not having a tropical climate (Palen 1976).

In terms of spatial ecology, the city was originally organized as an armed feudal camp (garrison) with each of the major nobles (ras) allotted quarters known as *sefers*. Each *sefer* was a miniature of the royal compound or *gebbi* in that each *sefer* housed the major noble plus this family, servants, slaves, and troops. Because of this mixture in each area no distinctly lower and upper class areas developed within the city. Unlike African cities founded by European colonialists, there was no division of the city between indigenous and European sectors. There is no clearly defined area of elite residence. Within districts higher and lower status residents are intermixed (Palen 1976).

Merab (1921-1923:11) quoted in Palen (1976), in his writing about pre-World War one Addis Ababa, commented that the city resembled nothing so much as immense floating camp. Since the 1930s, city growth has been fairly consistent. During their five-year occupation, the Italians created on the North end of the city a new market center, the 'Piazza', between the emperor's palace and the traditional market, and on the Southern end attempted an Italian residential district; which was one of the prime residential areas despite its propinquity to the airport (Palen 1976).

The municipality covered a land area of some 218 square kilometers-the radius of the city was roughly seven to nine kilometers, with the most heavily built up area of the city approximately in the geographical center. There was no central business district as such. As of 1975 the city still, approximated the structural pattern of a pre-industrial city. Growth and social class distributional models appropriate to American or industrial nation cities do not apply. Neither does Addis Ababa replicate the experience or structure of other African cities having a colonial influence (Palen 1976).

Theoretically, Addis Ababa is the third permanent capital of Ethiopia next to Axum and Gondar (Bahiru 1987: 44). However, among its precursors within the Shoan Kingdom, Addis Ababa broke the air of impermanence that had brought abandonment for old Entoto, Debre Brehan, Fitcha and Ankober. The following (all quoted in Bahiru 1987: 44) travelers and historians observed that the capital at different times in its history was just 'a gigantic camp' (Glenichen 1923) "huge camp"

(Merab 1920, born around the royal tent of the Shoan king (Berlan 1963), semi permanent type of "Ketema Similar" to that of its precursors within the Shoan Kingdom (Johnson 1974). The land of Addis Ababa was given to the nobilities, palace workers, the clergy and foreign legations by the order of the King (Eshete 1987:80). These different holders settled in different *sefers* with names indicating dignitaries who govern the localities, the occupation of the inhabitants, their lords or their ethnic background. In 1907, *awaj* (an edict) was issued to transfer the temporary possession of land into permanent ownership. For some, that was the major point that insured the permanency of Addis Ababa as the capital of the empire (Kiros 1984; Bahiru 1987).

Overall, the arbitrary nature of the land holding system is in turn reflected in the spatial structures of the city up to the present. Initially, the city grew around the *gebbi* (palace) as the political center and St. George the religious center (Bahiru 1987). Today, much of the early non-urban character remains: there are relatively few/modern high rise buildings, while the ubiquitous eucalyptus trees and clusters of native build houses give the city a rural appearance. In spite of its millions population, there are barely sanitary sewers, even for hospitals, hotels or apartment buildings (Palen, 1976: 208). This kind of growth attributed to the capital the semi-rural and village character with its empty spaces and many large compounds (Chapple, 1987: 143).

According to Bahiru (1987) on the basis of the present patterns of settlement trend, there are new places such as Bole, Gerji and others in the peripheral sites largely preferred by the affluent class for residential areas; especially the rising middle class. In the new sites it is unlikely to see sharp contrasting entities as squatter and modern villa side by side as in other parts of the capital.

Most of the present growth of the city is to the south, where industrial and residential areas are expanding rapidly. In the Northern section of Addis Ababa lies Addis Ababa University, where there is also located the ethnographic museum of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies. Just in the South

is located the National Museum towards the center of capital lie the palaces of the Emperors Menelik and Haile Selassie (Addis Ababa City Council 1989).

Addis Ababa cannot be said to have a centralized commercial areas, but Merkato, to the West, is one of the largest market places in Africa. In the central section, lie the areas of Piazza and Churchill road, the sites of many popular shops and restaurants that run down from the municipality building to the rail way station (Addis Ababa City Council 1989). In the Eastern part of the city are located the secondary market centers of Shola Market and Megenagna. These areas are only second to Merkato in terms of volume of trade. The feature traditional markets selling perishable goods as well as modern shops, delivering goods at retail and wholesale in large scale (M.P.R.P 2001).

Many observers have pointed out that Addis Ababa occupies a unique place among Africa's major cities. It has few centralized characteristics, and is a place of contrasts, where the traditional and modern intermingle, mud huts and sky carpers, donkeys and motorized vehicles, tourists and peasants, the affluent and the poor, all come together to make up Addis Ababa.

To the North and East of Addis Ababa lie the major grain producing areas of the country, while Ethiopia's main export, coffee, is produced in the regions to the south and west of the city.

### **3.3. City Function**

Addis Ababa, in terms of functional base, is still primarily a political and administrative center. All major Ethiopian government agencies, foreign embassies, as well as the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the Organization of African Unity (now termed as African union) are found in the capital. During the last decade there have been notable increases in the transportation, communication, manufacturing and educational sectors. Retail trade is also growing. Industrialization is still at a relatively infant stage (Palen, 1976: 205).

Bahiru (1987) in his article entitled "Early *sefers* of Addis Ababa: Patterns of Evolution," attempts to discuss the pre-Italian, Italian and post-Italian periods consecutively. Nearly all these

historical contributions treat the growth of Addis Ababa from the early *sefers* until the time it has become a big city. In the history of its administrative divisions, the *sefers* are persisting against changes introduced through time. And, as a result the area seems to struggle to maintain the "semi-rural and village character" as a legacy from its early growth (Chapple, 1987: 47).

Administratively, the city was divided into five sub-municipalities: Northern, Eastern, Southern, Western and Central; each of these sub-municipalities is administered by a governor. The city is further divided into ten districts or *woredas*. The ten districts were Arada, Gefersa, Gulele, Entoto, Mehakelegna, Yeka, Bole, Lideta, Keranio, and Tekleharimanot. The districts nearest the city center-Arada, Mehakelegna, Teklehaimanot-have the most pronounced urban characteristics, even there is still some vacant land in these districts. At the other extreme, the districts of Entoto, Yeka and Keranio are sparsely populated and contain much vacant land. Housing, particularly in outlying areas, tends to be found in clumps rather than spread evenly over the terrain. Some of the sullyng land, particularly in Entoto and parts of Yeka, is rough and relatively inaccessible and remains far more rural than urban. As of 1975 over the quarter of the city is still rural (Palen 1976: 210).

After the 1974 revolution, new administrative structures and divisions were introduced. In September 1988, Addis Ababa became a 'city state' with the inclusion of the surrounding districts namely Akaki, Alem-Gena, Welmera, Sululta, and Bereh, which in aggregate consist of 381 peasant associations. The former territory of the city then is divided into 14 *awrajas* and 284 *kebeles*.

Since the change of government in 1991 up to late 2002, Addis Ababa had 6 zones and 27 *woredas* with 305 urban *kebeles* and 23 rural peasant associations. It was in 1997 that Addis Ababa was proclaimed for the second time to be a chartered city subsuming the 305 *kebeles* found and the 23 rural peasant associations. Recently, in late 2002, a new master plan was officially issued. According to the master plan, the city turned out to have 10 sub-city administrative councils. With the implementation of the city's new master plan, there might come some other spatial and structural

changes related to settlement patterns and places leased to private investors. It is, in fact, too early to predict the overall changes with regard to administrative divisions of the city in the future.

### **3.4. Demographic Characteristics**

By 1910, the permanent rainy season population of Addis Ababa was approximately 60,000. With the arrival of soldiers and caravans, the total population would go up to 80,000 or even 100,000 (Pankhrust, 1965: 75). Following the Italian invasion of 1935, the administrative census of 1938 estimated the total city population at 140,000 of which 30,000 were Italians. Not entirely reliable census figures put the 1961 population of the city at 455,558 and the 1967 population at 683,530 (Palen, 1976: 208).

There was an attempt to show the relative density of population of the ten *woredas* of the capital in the 1950's. Based on this information, Arada was taken as a *woreda* with "largest concentration of population" (Bahiru 1987). Teklehaimanot *woreda* was a fast growing area with excessive congestion of settlements next to Arada. Despite this, density figures for the municipality as a whole are of little value because of the spatial structure of the city (Palen 1976). In 1961, for example, the average density of population for the entire city was 2,035 per square kilometer, but this included a tremendous range in district densities, from 6,868 in Arada to 432 in Entoto. If the three most rural districts of Yeka, keranio and Entoto are excluded the average density of the remainder of the city-which included 86 percent of the total population was 3,920 per square kilometer.

In November 1994, the population of Addis Ababa was 2,112,737 (CSA 1995), but a decade and five months earlier the population was 1,423,111 (CSA 1984). The population has increased by 689,626, which is 48.5 percent of the 1984 population. This increase was attributable to boundary change, natural increases and internal migration. Addis Ababa has most of the country's services, administrative, commercial and industrial establishments. This has created the potential for employment opportunities and attracts a large number of migrants from rural and urban areas. The



migrants came to Addis Ababa not only for economic reasons but also for non-economic reasons (AAMPPO 1985). The following table shows distribution of the migrant population by sex for three consecutive census years.

**Table 1: Percentage distributions of migrants by sex ,for three consecutive census years, Addis Ababa.**

<b>Year of census</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>No. of migrants</b>
1994	Total	974,839
	Male	471,368
	Female	503,471
1984	Total	732,637
	Male	351,954
	Female	380,683
1967	Total	380,590
	Male	192,950
	Female	187,640

*Source: The 1994 population and housing Census of Ethiopia,*

*Results for Addis Ababa*

Comparison of the level of migration during the periods 1967, 1984 and 1994 reveals that in-migration has increased. In the early stage of the development of Addis Ababa, internal migration may be viewed as a favourable and natural phenomenon for it provided with the needed personnel for the development of industrial and other socio-economic sectors. But now a days, internal migration is regarded as a major contributor to the creation of a large number of unemployed labor force. Moreover, internal migration has played the major role in creating shortage of housing, educational and health facilities and scarcity of basic consumer commodities (CSA, 1994: 225). Overall, internal migration has contributed a lot to the current poverty situation prevailed in the city of Addis Ababa.

### **3.5. Situation of Poverty**

Poverty is an issue that has witnessed shifts of emphasis in the development literature over the past five decades. As a result, it has suffered the perils of ambiguity and discord in concept definition and measurement (Abebe and Bereket, 1996: 1). It is in view of this that the dearth of reliable poverty related data for the city of Addis Ababa poses problems in the analysis. In addition to the limitations and deficiencies of data, there are weaknesses in the income/expenditure poverty line index to depict visibly the poverty situation. To this effect, analysts have devised social indicators to adequately understand the situation of poverty (Goitom 1996: 233). These aspects of poverty for the city are examined briefly below and include unemployment situation, conditions of shelter, basic amenities such as water and sanitation and living environment.

### **3.5.1. Unemployment**

Estimate of the rate of unemployment from the population census of 1984 is 10.5 percent. Further, the data indicate that the unemployment rate is in the order of 14 percent for the age group 15-34 suggesting the problem of unemployment is more serious among the youth. But the pressure of unemployment is potentially threatening when the absolute number is considered. The absolute rate refers to an unemployed population of 49 thousand from a base population of 1.4 million and a labor force of 407 thousand (Goitom 1996). The last census report revealed that the total unemployment rate of Addis Ababa was 34.7%. This implies an increase of 24.2 percentage points between the two census periods (CSA 1994).

The employment exchange does not show the full picture because all the unemployed does not register, implying under-coverage. The survey data suffer from similar deficiencies because there is cultural taboo that a household would not report any member of its household as unemployed for fear of other consequences. Based on data assembled from various sources, new estimates of unemployment and unemployment rate have been estimated by Goitom (1996) and are shown in the following table.

**Table 2: Estimates of Unemployment for 1992 and 1995**

		<b>1992</b>	<b>1995</b>
1	Total Population	2,107,895	2,383,555
2	Population aged over 15 years ((1)*0.57)	1,201,500	1,358,056
3	Economically active population ((2)*0.55)	660,825	749,931
4	Government employment <sup>1</sup>	175,354	179,677
5	Total employment <sup>2</sup>	513,375	544,477
6	Unemployment ((3)-(5))	147,450,	202,454
7	Rate of unemployment in % ((6)/(3))	22.3	27.1

*Source: CSA (1984) Population Census: MOLSA (1986/87) Public Sector establishments and computed by Goitom (1996).*

The evidence from the table indicates an unemployed population of 147 thousand for 1992, i.e. rate of 22.3 percent. In 1995, the unemployed population grew to 202 thousand, indicating a rate of 27.1 percent or an increase of 55 thousand in three years with an average of 18 thousand per annum. All those in regular employment with regular jobs and income are not outside poverty but all the unemployed fall entirely within those in poverty. For 1995, assuming average household size of 5 members and assuming grossly the unemployed constitute heads of household, the estimated households affected by unemployment is in the range of 8.5 percent of the total households of the city. This would also means that 8.5 percent of the households are affected by poverty due to unemployment. The significance of this situation is reflected by the duration of unemployment. A large proportion, in the order of 50 percent, has remained unemployed for over one year (Goitom, 1996).

Before the reform to a market economy, Goitom further noted, the policy pursued was that many workers were placed on the payroll of public enterprises, which were overstaffed and unproductive. Large decline of employment and rise of unemployment stemmed from the process of reallocation and restructuring. There is indication that 15 percent of the total public sector employment has been retrenched. This has added to the pool of unemployment, in addition to

<sup>1</sup> Government employment for the city is 30 percent of total government employment for the country.

<sup>2</sup> Government employment is 34 percent of total employment.

demobilized soldiers and sizeable vulnerable groups constituting the street children, the beggars, the prostitutes, the pensioners, the physically handicapped which could go as high as half a million. Slow economic recovery, retrenchment of workers, rapid population growth could be spelled out as factors exacerbating unemployment and poverty. As a result of retrenchment, the unemployment level increased from 2002 thousand to 253 thousand, raising the unemployment rate from 27 percent to 34 percent.

### **3.5.2. Poverty, Housing Shortage and Housing Conditions and Facilities**

Shortages of housing and poor housing conditions are visible manifestation of poverty. The 1994 housing census indicates that 24.4 percent of the total housing stock was occupied by three to four persons per housing unit. Moreover, the occupancy rates as measured by persons per room range from 2.6 to 3.5, indicating a very serious overcrowding in most of the dwelling units. Further analysis of the housing conditions suggest that 23.5 percent of the total housing stock require either to be totally demolished or require expensive maintenance. To this can be added that more than 4 thousand housing units are located along river courses, which are prone to flood.

The construction material of the housing units exhibits a revealing feature of poverty. 82.3 percent of the households reside in housing units, whose walls are made of wood and mud and 52.8 percent whose floor is earth mud, exposing a large proportion of the city population to hazardous health conditions. Examination of water supply, water consumption, toilet facilities, sewerage, sanitation and lighting facilities also demonstrate poor conditions of the city. 24.9 percent of the housing units have no toilet facilities; 95.5 percent use kerosene lighting facilities; refuse disposal coverage is 40 percent and estimated water consumption per capital per day as low as 26 liters for 1987 (Hadgu 1987) down from 40 liters in 1984. Moreover, ownership profile of assets suggests that 30 percent of the households do not own radio. All these figures, though different order of magnitude, indicate high level of poverty.

### **3.5.3. Poverty, Urban Population Increase and Economic Growth**

According to the Census of 1984, the population of the city was estimated at 1.4million. CSA projections for 1994 indicate a population size in the range of 2.3 to 2.8 million. This constitutes 30 percent of the total urban population and 4 percent of the total population of the country.

Evidence from available data indicates that the city grew at 7 percent in the 1960s, 5 percent in the 1970s and 4.5 percent in the 1980s and 1990s. Despite declining pattern, the rate of urban growth is high largely due to natural rate of increase. Results for 1994 indicate that 46.4 percent of the growth is attributed to rural-urban migration. A rapidly growing population means greater demand for education and health care service that require large and continuing investments. Currently, the health care and the education coverage suggest that it is extremely difficult to maintain even a minimum level of efficiency in providing health and education facilities. Low health coverage and high charge prices of health service create appalling conditions of the city. Low education coverage affects the level of educational qualification and poses difficulty in obtaining employable skill and aggravates poverty situation. This is the vicious circle of poverty. High poverty leads to high population growth; high population growth creates low health and education coverage and therefore high level of poverty. (Goitom, 1996).

In addition to demographic factors, economic factors are essentially responsible for the high and visible incidence of poverty. As such, recent macroeconomic performance recorded particularly in the 1990s is the root cause for the high incidence of poverty in the city.

In general, poverty in the city is becoming more prominent and is graphically manifested by increases in slums and squatter settlements; in unemployment; and in lack of access to such basic services as water and sanitation, transportation, health and education. The most affected sector of the society by the degenerating socio-economic situation according to MOLSA (1992: 12-13) are the migrants who came in search of better life to Addis Ababa and the urban poor who live below the

poverty line. As a result of all these accumulated and complex problems, the urban poor and the in migrants have to resort to other unacceptable activities like vagrancy, prostitution, crime, etc., or to (acceptable according to the actors perception) such as begging or others marginal activities (Mesfin, 1968: 26). Apparently, the most venerable among these sectors of the society who are exposed to the problem of poverty are the aged, the disabled, street children and unwed mothers (MOLSA 1992). The number of these vulnerable social groups has therefore increased alarmingly.

### 3.6. Estimated number of vulnerable social groups

Assembled data from different sources and national data point to the following estimates of vulnerable groups in the city.

**Table 3: Estimated Number of Vulnerable by Social Group in 1993**

	<b>Social groups</b>	<b>Estimated figure</b>	<b>Adjusted figure</b>	<b>% of total*</b>
1	Prostitutes	34,500	17,250	7.5
2	Street children	69,460	34,370	15.1
3	Beggars	42,780	21,390	9.3
4	Destitute elderly	94,300	47,150	20.3
5	Physically handicapped	214,820	107,410	46.7
6	Orphans	41,820	2070	0.9
	Total	460,000	230,000	100

*Source: Goitom (1996)*

The table indicates a size of 460 thousand people of vulnerable groups, which constitute 20 percent of the total population of the city. From the above table we clearly see that beggars are one of the most vulnerable social groups in the city of Addis Ababa. And the practice and /or the activity of begging has become an every minute scene in Addis Ababa involving all kinds of beggars. It has

particularly become one of the most conspicuous, readily visible social events and problems especially during the religious commemoration days of the Ethiopian Orthodox church, notably the day of the saints. The next chapter, therefore, attempts to provide an over all picture of the problem of beggary in such a context.

## Chapter Four

### Description of the Event of Begging in the Context of the Ethiopian Orthodox Religious Ceremonial Days-Commemoration of the Saint Days

#### 4.1. Introduction

It is often argued that religion has given sanction to the profession of begging. In India, the traditional way of giving charity <sup>3</sup> in the name of religion has increased permanent and stationary beggars of the temples and churches (Encyclopedia of Social Work in India 1968; Kamat 1997). According to the report of MOLSA (1992), although the contribution of religion to the institutionalization of begging is controversial and needs further investigation, begging related to the practice of alms giving supported by religious teachings and beliefs has always been the situation in Ethiopia. This took place largely in churches and most notably during the religious ceremonial days.

The ceremonial days act as forces of attraction to various groups of people, coming with distinct objectives. The major categories of people one would observe in all the ceremonial days are, apart from beggars, petty traders, peddlers, worshipers, itinerant preachers, pickpockets, policemen, alms-givers and the like. The ceremonial days and events are ideal for a social researcher to investigate into the many sided human behavior and social life. The social scene there is so appealing and interesting that, unless care is taken, one may end up becoming caught up in the scene. Begging is just one facet of this social milieu. In this chapter, an attempt is made to describe the social event of begging as it was observed during the ceremonial days of commemoration of the saints of the

---

<sup>3</sup> **Actually, charity is not synonymous with relief or alms. As the Encyclopedia Britannica points out, the word has money meanings. It can denote the impulse to give love, friendship and service. It can represent individual acts of good works. It can signify organized philanthropy, which associates members of a community together for a purpose. In practice it has largely concerned itself with the poor. But it is also closely linked to the sense of obligation to one's fellow human beings as a whole, and to the belief that society, acting through its appropriate institutions, has a collective duty to ensure the well-being of all its members. Charity in the sense of alms- giving is an act that poses a barrier between benefactor and beneficiary, and reinforces the latter's**



Orthodox religion. As such, the present chapter offers a deeper look at the scenario of the overall situation of the beggary problem.

#### **4.2. Socio-demographic and Physical Aspects of the Beggardom**

On the basis of the researcher's mere observations, it seems that the beggardom population constituted all age groups and, both sexes, although the adult and male beggar population seem dominant. Children, boys and girls, adolescents, elderly and senile men and women beggars were observed.

The beggars are composed of different ethnic groups. I was able to realize this fact in due course of the research process. I have allowed myself to go awash in data and to play the field. In this regard several prospects were found, and the beggars ethnic background in the different begging joints was realized. All the interview contacts with many informants also revealed the beggars' heterogeneity in terms of their ethnic identities. The overall profile of my informants does provide an insight into the affair under consideration (see annex 1).

The physical conditions of this beggardom population were most appalling. By physical condition is meant, primarily, the nature, type and degree of disability, deformity, health condition, etc. In this regard, in the rank of beggars, there are the aged, the infirm, the chronically ill, mentally ill, vagrants, patients of leprosy, patients of T.B, juveniles, etc. Numerous non-able bodied beggars were also observed. The main types of disability observed include: blindness, deafness, lameness, crippled ness; and also the deformed, the terminally ill, the maimed, and the senile and deranged. There were also those relatively without any outwardly observable deformity or disability.

#### **4.3. Spectacular Categories of Begging**

---

low self esteem and sense of helplessness. Partly because of these overtones, charity is a term that has a certain disrepute.

As it was exposed in earlier section of the thesis, beggars have generally been categorized in terms of ability and disability conditions. The present study, however attempts to describe the spectacular, most eye catching easily recognizable groups of beggars in the context of the Ethiopian Orthodox religious ceremonial days.

Almost immediately, any keen ethnographer of begging at ceremonial days would identify the following categories of begging and /or beggars by whatever terms he may describe the categories; itinerant begging; formalized, religion covered begging; begging in the name of avowal; silent begging; song/music accompanied begging; team begging; family begging and unruly begging. These are the categories of begging and /or beggars the researcher have observed and identified. The terminologies are also the researcher's own coinages applied in accordance with the particular attributes of each category of begging observed. Above all, the classification is not as such 'scientific' as it should be.

"Itinerant" begging is a form of begging whereby the beggars actively and systematically move and walk from place to place; it is going to and approaching the potential source of the alms. Its opposite from is what the researcher calls 'stationary' or 'static' begging whereby beggars remained stationed at a specific and strategic site. They solicit for alms from every passers- by; they supplicate help by appealing to the pity of the passers-by. Any concerned passer by may donate alms; unlike the itinerant begging, the potential donator is not personally approached and intruded.

The most conspicuous of all alms-soliciting category is what the researcher calls the "formal" begging group which is adorned with an over coat of religion. Formalized begging is so named, because, the begging is in the name of church building, and the beggars are religious personalities such as priests, nuns and other licensed persons; licensed to ask alms and collect money from the passers-by during the ceremonial days. One may not consider and categorize this group or type of

begging with actual begging. The category itself has an aura of religious honor that no passer by could consider it as beggars as those who beg for a living.

Another easily identified form of begging was done in the name of what the investigator labels "avowal". Females practice almost all of the "avowal" begging. Avowal beggars are women, usually elderly mothers, and also nuns. Outsiders may not consider them as actual or "true" beggars. They are all well dressed. The purposes of their begging as I heard them begging, is that they beg in the name of a particular saint and offer the alms to the saint later on pay their vows to the saint. Those who have prayed for overcoming a serious problem or the fulfillment of a wish practice this type of begging. At the event of a positive response, they beg in accordance with their promise and present what they get as alms to the church.

There is also a "silent" form of begging. The beggars just remain seated, standing or lying on the ground without any form of expression. Or they may simply expose their damaged part of body; or they may just put a placard with inscription introducing their condition; or a series of photographs expressing their past or present biography.

The song/music accompanied begging includes those beggars who put their begging expressions into song or music forms. Some use musical instruments often a flute; most of them are lone beggars; others beg singing in chorus or team.

"Team begging" refers to those beggars who beg jointly. Mostly they are three in number; but the number usually ranges from two to seven. They are usually stationed in a begging side. They may also move or walk around. It does not, however, include those beggars who are simply crowded in one area. Team beggars do their business in a well-planned and organized manner. The team might also constitute a group of beggars supposedly constituting a mother and her children or a father and his children; and in some cases a husband and wife together with their children. What one could often observe in team begging is a group of people begging together, sharing a begging side, sharing

food together, and close interaction as if they constituted a family, etc. Therefore, team begging as used in this ethnographic account, sociologically or anthropologically speaking, is not a simple aggregate of individuals who happen to stand with one another temporarily in physical proximity. Rather team beggars constitute a social group who has relatively regular and sustained interaction; shared interests and a sort of pattern for organization of behavior.

Among the team beggars, the most eye-catching and conspicuous type is the youth team begging. The team is composed of young able-bodied people usually labeled as "borkos" – literally interpreted as people who lack body and physical cleanliness. These are shabby people on the street who wear, dirty, old and torn apart clothes; and who generally show carelessness to their physical setting by being poorly dressed. Outsiders give the label *borko* to them but the *borkos* also seem to accept the label. The youth team beggars are usually homogenous in the sense that they constituted young able-bodied teenagers of both sexes. Heterogeneity in terms of disability-deafness, lameness, crippledness, etc. was not observed. The teams usually constituted of three to seven young beggars without any outwardly observable deformity or disability.

Another form of begging is "advocacy begging". In this type of begging, one person begs in the name of; or as an advocate and spokes person of another person. The most appealing of this sort observed is when a woman who has very recently given birth to a baby lies on the ground, with her infant-who is mostly exposed so that every passer-by may see and another person, most probably the woman's mother, and in some cases her husband beg for or in favour of the woman. Another example of this sort was a person begging for or in favour of the terminally ill person, or a person with easily recognizable severe form of deformity, swelling, sore or other case.

The other rare form of begging is "unruly begging" which is practiced by some beggars who seem to be deviating from the rules and norms of the 'normal' begging. They may be novice beggars,

or deranged and mentally ill ones who approach the passers- by in a threatening and unruly manner, even sometimes soliciting for money in a nagging, intimidating way.

Nevertheless, people in some of these spectacular categories do not remain being part of it every time. Individuals continually pass from one category into another. One man in his begging activity may perchance have been, in turn, itinerant beggar, silent beggar, member of song accompanied begging, unruly beggar, member of team begging, an advocacy beggar, etc. People that represent the categories are as restless as their general life situation. The categories serve for some a while and then pass out, giving place to some other men.

#### **4.4. The Beggars' Paraphernalia, Structure and Organization of Begging**

The beggars' paraphernalia include all the necessary equipment, associated with the begging activity or 'business'. The paraphernalia of individuals begging for survival include, a bag for holding non-monetary alms, water containers, a mat or any piece of cloth put in front of them on which the potential donors may drop money. Some display and/or carry with them photographs and blocky written documents to show their past or present situation. Begging can be organized or undertaken individually, in a group or can be carried out by an individual in favour of a group or vice-versa.

The paraphernalia of individuals begging in the name of avowal include- a picture of a saint in whose name or for whom the alms is solicited, a special kind of container to hold coins, usually covered by a piece of cloth. Most often, begging is put into practice at an individual level and nearly at all by a woman.

The paraphernalia of formal begging is much more interesting and attracting. It includes usually a loud speaker, a huge picture of particular Saint, a special umbrella, a cross, certain religious books, a mat and a sheet of cloth and a letter of recommendation that inscribes their license to ask for alms. The structure and organization of formal category of begging is quite appealing. In the formal

kind of begging, the number of persons involved usually ranges from one to eight. As to the sex composition, although it is mostly the male priests, females are also involved. In most cases a team of two to four persons are involved. The division of labor is also well delineated. The most important job is talking, speaking or soliciting through the loud speaker. This is by an expert in the religious matters. One person mostly does the job of speaking through out, but in a number of cases the person may be replaced. There are those who do the job of "accounting" usually one individual taking care of the money being offered. He is also responsible for arranging the mat, sheet of cloth, or other paraphernalia in case some kind of misplacement or disorder happens. There are those who hold the umbrella; there is also a priest, holding a cross, to whom occasionally the passers-by, while offering alms, come and kiss the cross.

Youth team beggars do not have considerable belongings, equipment and accessories associated with the begging business. As such, a bag for holding non-monetary alms, water drinking containers, a mat or any piece of cloth put in front of them where the potential donors drop any from of alms was not observed as the paraphernalia as it is common to observe among other categories of beggars. The structure and organization of the youth team beggars is, however, interesting. The youth team beggars usually sit in a circle around a small soldering fire, with sandalwood burning and incense smoking. Amid the circle, there were fresh marsh grasses strewn all over the area and a lighted candle in the center of them. These youth team beggars sometimes sign in unisons and sometimes beg.

Quite commonly observed category of these youth team beggars most notably during ordinary days on the main streets and traffic lights are, however, those groups of young beggars who sit in a circle, chewing chat, smoking cigarette, engaged in a pleasant chitchat and also do the begging. There is no a clearly delineated division of labor with regards to the begging activity. The most important job is, of course, talking, speaking or soliciting. Mostly one person does the job of

speaking, but two or more persons of the group could also speak simultaneously. Overall, youth team beggars do not seem very serious about attacking passers by. Sometimes they seem indifferent and at another time, they become curious to the begging. They were observed begging half-heartedly in an on and off manner.

#### **4.5. How Beggars Present Themselves to Passers-by: Means of Capturing Attention**

Beggars usually make their appeal directly to another, often a busy side walker on the street. The beggars seek to make their condition of need known to passers-by, either visually or verbally, and that their desire is to receive assistance. To accomplish their desire, they employ different ingenious mechanisms, 'getting by' a business of wringing money from chance sources each day to supply their insistent wants.

Begging as a social event in the context of the ceremonial days is a kind of business for the beggards. It demands commitment; competitiveness-it is an event where the principle of "survival of the fittest" seems to work. The lazy, the indifferent, the uncommitted, the novice and other half-hearted and double-minded kind of beggars would not "survive" in the struggle. It demands the use of a variety of ways and means of presenting oneself to the public. To be an effective, competent beggar, one must be well-versed in the art and skill of begging. Those with ostensibly recognizable outward problem-sickness, deformity, senility, infirmity due to age, pregnancy, handicap, etc, may simply win the sympathy of the alms-givers by just presenting their "commodity" to the potential "customers". That is, by exposing or providing their specific problems for "sale" to the passers-by. Those with apparently no outward problem are at a relative disadvantage in the business. Of course, there may be several artful ways of playing the role of a sick, a handicap or disabled individual; cases of a fake blindness, deafness or other outward skin disease problems have been witnessed.

Anyway, an experienced beggar of any category knows or should know how to present himself or herself to the public in order to attract the attention and sympathy of the potential

donators. That is why Kamat (1997) says "the beggars have to master the art of begging as they have to master the art of dressing"

Of the beggarm population observed, most beg while lying on the ground. This seems to be one means used to win the passer-by's attention. The motive of lying is not, in the investigators view and experience, that they all lost strength to sit or stand or move around. The very position of lying helps them to take a humble, inferior position that automatically inherently justifies their begging.

A few of the beggars were also observed exposing a damaged, diseased, deformed, swollen or maimed part of their body. The very sight of the awful, sometimes nauseating nature of the sore or the swelling or the deformity almost coercively prepares even the hardest and most indifferent person to throw five or ten cents to the beggar. The beggar well knows that he or she can at least disturb the conscience of the pass-by, by "selling out" their "commodity". I observed that a beggar in front of whom is a heap of coins or birr is usually one who skillfully displays his "commodity"-the abnormal part of his body. Of all, the most sensitive beggars are those women who beg while displaying their pregnancy. A pregnant woman will say that her previous child has died, and she needs money for the funeral. Her heart rendering appeal fetches good money, yet nobody knows if any of her children has died. Most often, special sympathy was given for the sea of people with disabilities, pregnancy or other outwardly observable deformity in the presence of able-bodied jobless people who are just as poor and needy.

Some beggars exhibit a bizarre form of bodily manifestation. There are those who rhythmically jerk their body while standing. There are those who awkwardly shake their hands- especially a maimed or deformed hand. Included in this spectacular category of beggars who were observed behaving bizarrely are a dozen of fakers who changed their physiognomy in such a way that they purposively makeup the shape, complexion or structure of their body into a seemingly damaged, less useful or less attractive appearance showing that they can't work.



Costume deprivation-that is wearing a tattered cloth and sometimes appearing in half nudity is also a common means of winning sympathy. It can be betted that an average beggar may have at least one better piece of costume than that which they wore on the moment of begging. No passer-by may sympathize with a well-dressed beggar unless the person makes a personal confession, or if he/she has an easily identifiable outward body problem.

The other technique used by beggars to attract alms-givers is using children especially those with disability in order to get the sympathy of the passers-by. These could be their own children or belong to others and in many cases rented or sold for the purpose of using them for making money. It is common to hear police reports regarding their stories on government mass media. According to informants, there are also anecdotal instances when children were purposively injured so as to make them disabled. In fact, this has been reported by MOLSA (1992).

The appeal made by disabled beggars using dramatically sad songs that help them easily win the sympathy of others is another means of capturing the attention of alms-givers. This technique is mostly used by the blind.

In general, most of the beggars seem to have reduced the problem of 'getting by' to an art. They know how to beg with out loss of dignity. They are not docile or fawning. They appeal in a frank, open manner and usually come away with the goods.

#### **4.6. Typical forms of Appeals and Expressions**

The most outstanding part of how beggars present themselves to the public is the expression used. The most typical expression used is frequently mentioning the name of the saint. For example, in ST. Mary's Day, the beggars say, "አለማርያም" meaning "for the Sake of Mary". Other expression statements include; "in the name of Mary "if you believe in Mary", etc. The names of other Saints are also invoked. The most frequent and typical forms of appeals and expressions used by different categories of beggars are depicted as follows.

### Category of beggars

### Typical forms of appeals and expressions

- I. An advocacy beggar with a terminally ill women
  - "for the sake of our mother Mary"
  - "she has no career"
  - "ነግ በኔ እያላችሁ" meaning 'empathize for tomorrow you may be the other person to contract the disease'
- II. An advocacy beggar for a woman with an infant
  - "Don't pas her! She it St. Mary's woman"
- III. Formalized begging in the name of Church building
  - "It is St. Gabriel, Your beloved;  
It is he who says, 'Build me a temple',  
It is he who saves from a spear thrown, a fire burning, the miracle angel..."
  - "It is for church building, for the unfinished temples of St. Mary..."
- IV. A group of monks begging
  - "For the sake of the horseman George', 'for the sake of Medhane Alem,' 'for the sake of Kristos Samra.'
  - "Help us, don't pass over us Medhane Alem will help You-for the sake of the God of our religion, for the sake of the mother of Medhane Alem"
  - “Look at us, we have come from our monasteries.  
We are forced to be here in the street-we are confessed..."
- V. A blind beggar
  - "for the sake of God and Mary; for our mother's sake; for the sake of the mother light"
  - "እመቤቴ ማርያም ወዳጄን ላከልኝ ሠርቼም እዳልበላ ብርኃንም የለኝ" meaning "send me a helper my mother Mary, for I don't have light (I am blind) to work and help my self"
  - "ለምን አላነባ ለምን አላለቅስ እንጀራ

**ሠጥተውኝ አፈሩን ስዳብስ"**

Meaning "why not I cry and shed in tears, for I touch the ground after being offered a bread"

**" ወንድሞቼም ጠሉኝ እኔም ጠላኋቸው ያ ደንባራ መጣ ሲሉኝ ሰማኝቸው"**

Meaning "my brothers hate me and I also hate them, for I heard them saying he who is the blind came"

VI. A stumpy or legless beggar

- **"አረ ጅቡ ጮኸ ልሆን ነው እራቱ እግር ያለውማ ገባ በየቤቱ"**

Meaning "people with legs have already gone home, but the hyena is crying and it is likely for me to be his dinner for I am stumpy or legless man"

VII. A woman begging in the name of avowal

- " Avowal, avowal; for the sake of Kuli bi's Gabriel; the friends of Gabriel; Those who believe in Gabriel..."

-" Avowal, avowal; for the sake of Medhane Alem; ... for the sake of our mother Baith Mariam;" light (I am blind) to work and help my self"

VIII. Youth Team Beggars

- "Father, mother, sister money to buy bread"

- "Give us money for cigarette"

- 'Don't by pass us"

- "If you have coins, give us"

In general the methods the beggars employ while begging are plain appeal, singing and dancing, exposing sores and disabled part of their body. But there are some beggars who appeal to alms-givers in an ill-tempered and unruly manner. The following story is a case is point.

### **Case No.1 Asfaw Bekele, M, 36**

Asfaw Bekele is an able bodied beggar who is born in Debrezeit thirty-six years ago. On the 17<sup>th</sup> of August 1994 E.C (Day of St. Stephen the Martyr), I was coming back home after observing the event of begging. It was around 1p.m in the afternoon. I took a taxi from Abiot Square and I was going up to Sidist Killo where I am living. The taxi in which I was stopped in the middle of the journey at Arat Killo just in front of the science faculty of Addis Ababa University to drop some of the passengers and to take in others. In a while, Asfaw, an able bodied and well-dressed beggar approached our taxi and asked for alms. However, nobody responded to his appeal. Soon after he started nagging at us and even he went to the extent of insulting the driver, his assistant and the passengers. At this time I decided to cancel my journey and I became curious to know the reasons behind asking alms in such odd, ill-tempered and threatening manner. I very smoothly and politely approached him and asked his willingness to spend sometime with me. He gave his consent and we went to a nearby cafeteria for a discussion. After having been introduced to each other, I asked him why he behaved in such an angrily and hot-tempered manner while he asks for alms. In his response, he told me that he is apparently healthy and able bodied, but he doesn't have permanent employment. He engages himself in daily labour but the work is irregular and the money he gets is not enough for him to survive. That is why he begs to supplement his income. But the moment people show him being strongly built and well-dressed, they do not want to show him sympathy. Surprisingly enough, he says, most often people condemn him. This makes him usually very nervous for people do not understand his real situation. For him, a beggar should not necessarily be disabled or wear torn rugged clothes. He contends very strongly that he is begging nearly because he is unemployed and starved.

Apart from mentally and physically able bodied beggars who bum for money in an angrily hot tempered manner, there are also some 'mentally ill' people who behave in a bizarrely fashion. Many passers-by on the churchyards and often on the streets, repelled by the bizarre behaviour of such patients and unaware of the complex process that led to the spectacle they are witnessing, generally seem to show heart-felt sympathy to these unfortunate creatures. These mentally ill beggars may be running through garbage, flailing their arms widely at some invisible being, shouting incoherently in response to voices, or playing and talking with an imaginary companion. They may also be quiet ones, who sit on streets and church gate steps for hours, a fixed smile on their faces, waiting passively alms-givers-quiet ones, who only stare and then move furtively away when someone speaks to them.

#### **4.7. How Passers-by are Addressed**

It is the indispensable part of social interaction to address one another, when speaking to one another. The beggards population use different forms or terms of address to establish some kind of rapport with the potential alms givers. The apparent unrecognition and disregard of the passers-by to the address made by the beggars does not bar the later from using the address anyway.

How a beggar addresses passers-by depends on the age, sex, and outward physical appearance of the passers by and the beggar as well. In this regard, the child beggars usually use the terms "Abaye" meaning "my father"; 'Emaye" meaning "my mother"; 'wondimachin" meaning "our brother"; "Gashe" meaning "elder brother"; 'Etiye" meaning "My sister"; etc. Elderly men and women beggars while addressing younger passers-by usually say "my son", "my daughter". However, the most widely and frequently used terms of address for general purpose are "Wogenoche" meaning "my relatives", "Abatoch" means "my fathers", 'Enatoche" meaning "my mothers," "Wondimaoche" meaning "my brothers", 'Ehitoche" meaning "my sisters".

Nevertheless, mention has to be made about the style of begging used by youth team beggars. These types of beggars are unique in their expressions of begging and in addressing the passers-by. The investigator was unable to observe cases where these youth team beggars ask for alms in the name of Saints or religion or whatsoever. They were also observed to have used different and unique terms of address to establish some kind of rapport with the potential alms givers. The unique terms of address relatively solely used by these young beggars include "Friend", "Jealous" meaning "Friendlier", "Abba" meaning "Kindly, well disposed", "keshitu" meaning "Jolly boy", "Keyo" meaning "one red in his color complexion," "Nefsu" meaning "Soul or sweet boy", "Konjiye" meaning "Handsome boy", "Shebellaw" meaning "physically charming and appealing boy", "Konjit" meaning "beautiful lady," "Emu" meaning "very young girl"

#### **4.8. Reactions: The Passers-By Reactions to the Beggars and the Beggars' Response to Alms-givers**

The passers-by, as frequently used in this paper are those people who are the potential alms-givers to the beggars. The reaction of the passers-by to the plight of the beggards, how they respond, how the beggars in turn respond when they are given alms and other related aspects were also observed.

In general, the passers-by were observed to be generous, sympathetic to the beggards, although some of them were indifferent. In most cases, those who give are adults, and women were observed to be more sympathetic than men. Of these categories of beggars, the formal beggars, those begging in the name of avowal, those with ostensibly severe outward physical problem, pregnant women beggars, the senile and aged, and those with newly born infant receive the attention of the passers-by most.

The kind of alms given is dominantly in financial form. Most passers-by give five and ten cents. Twenty-five cents to one birr are rarely given. Paper money, if offered, is mostly given to formal beggars. Some women donors were observed distributing alms in kind. That is, food and drink; breads were also distributed.

Beggars generally have a hard time to raise some coins per day during most ordinary days. During the ceremonial days, however, they could earn as much as ten birr or even more (during my field work). For commoners, this may look like a paltry sum, but we have to understand that most beggars do not have significant expenses. For most of them there is no rent, no groceries to buy. The leftovers from the hotels and food offered to them are their usual meal; else, every beggar typically has a godmother who never refuses food for him/her. The roadside food courts especially provide discount prices to beggars. Since they do not have a safe place to keep money, they carry it with them all the time. They are also immediate sources for any one who comes to change paper money with coins. Informants told me that they knew of an old beggar man who recently passed away and who

was found having hundreds of currency notes embedded with and sewn into his pockets of torn-rugged garment.

Through a focus group discussion the researcher conducted, an attempt was made to assess the attitude of beggars towards alms-givers. Accordingly, the discussants debated among themselves over the question as to why the passers-by or alms-givers provide them with financial and non-financial goods. Three 'emic' views were pointed out in response to the point of discussion. The majority argued that the passers-by offer them alms because of their compassion and sympathy for the beggars. They replied saying, "they give us because they sympathize with us", "and because they count us as part and parcel of themselves", etc. One informant vehemently argued that "the passers-by give us not because they love us or care for us, but they have their own ulterior motives. They give us because they want to be free from the guilt of their sin." He contended, "ለሠሩት ኅጢአት ብለው ይሰጣሉ" meaning, "They give us because they committed sin and if they give alms they think that they could be free". Another group, with some tone of concern and thankfulness for the alms givers, explained that in giving alms to the indigent, the alms givers believe according to their faith that they could be more righteous than others, and they believed they could get access to heaven. In an attempt to give a sort of concluding remark, an old man from among the discussants who complained of chronic T.B. said "Whatever their reasons may be, people generally do not turn their back on us but due to the rising cost of living they cannot give us as much as before."

The above emic perception may have some grain of truth in it. However, there may be other individuals who offer alms to the beggars for a number of other reasons. Of course, most may give just from humanitarian point of view-out of sympathy. But others may give out of empathy or because it is a religious duty to care for the poor, not just to be righteous or to get to heaven, or to be free from guilt or sin. Others may do it for their own safety; still, others may give alms to beggars because they are noble-minded. When I asked an adult man whom I found distributing a great deal of

money to the beggars in October 26, 2002 at St. Marry church, around Amst Killo area, why most people, including him, give alms to the destitute, he argues in the following manner.

### **Case No. 2 Mesfin Gudeta, M, 48**

Mesfin says that in our society, most people may give alms to beggars perhaps more to earn divine credits rather than out of feelings for the beggar. That is why many beggars congregate at worship places to collect offerings from the devout seeking to buy themselves or loved ones heavenly favour, as their religion teaches, by bestowing benevolence on the less fortunate. For Mesfin, however, since begging is an integral part of life in this country, he sees refusing to give to beggars as tantamount to refusing to become involved in the local situation. In addition, he says that he is quite wealthy compared to nearly all the beggars, and should do what he can to share some of his wealth to the least fortunate he is apparently visiting. However, Mesfin believes giving to beggars, especially impressionable children, handicapped and elderly beggars selectively since there are no private or public organizations which provide such underprivileged poor people with the type of social assistance common in other countries particularly in the developed world. According to Mesfin citizens particularly very small children, too old or infirm to work often have no choice but to beg. He is therefore comfortable with especially joining such destitute and giving what he can at places of worship.

The question of why people give alms to beggars seems to remain something of an enigma to the researcher. This is because of the difficulty to establish an exhaustive list of reasons that may inspire people to offer alms to the needy.

After a beggar is donated alms, his immediate response was a plethora of blessing poured at the giver. The following are some of the blessing expressions "ወላችሁ ግብ" meaning "go to your home in peace", "may God give you", "let Medhane Alem be with you", "May your mind be enlightened!" "May he give you honor", "May St. Mary be to your Soul a means of Salvation, to your body a means of health", "May she be a guarantee to heaven", "May she plead with God for You!", "Let St. Gabriel's blessing and help not depart you..."

Of those categories of beggars, young able bodied, beggars receive relatively lower sympathy and generosity on the part of alms-givers. Surprisingly enough, as far as young able bodied beggars are concerned, silence was observed to follow alms receiving. Quite rarely, the young able bodied beggars were heard blessing alms-givers. In thanking alms-givers the young able bodied beggars



expressions used include, "Yimechih," "Yimechish"; "Yimechachihu" meaning "live comfortably" and "Selam Hun"; "Selam Hungi", "Selam Hunu"; meaning "live peacefully".

With all the above features and characteristics, the beggary problem appears to be an every minute horrifying scene in Addis Ababa embracing the different vulnerable categories of beggars. These varieties of beggars whose period of begging spans from few days or hours to many years had varied reasons to resort to begging. Among the beggars, some are panhandlers and hence beg regularly while others beg on irregular basis. There are also beggars who supplement their income by engaging themselves in other part time occupational activities. Still, some others presently living by begging have plans to cease begging and aspire for non-begging means of livelihood.

Thus, the next chapter discusses the major causes for begging, the beggars over all impoverishment and future aspirations. In doing so, the concern of the next chapter, and in fact, the whole thesis is on destitute beggars who used begging as a means of livelihood.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Major Precipitating Causes for Begging as a Means of Livelihood,**

### **The Beggars' Overall Impoverishment and Future Aspirations**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

The reasons that force people to resort to begging are multifaceted and vary in accordance with the type of beggar and his/her past and present socio- economic, health and other factors and events. Hence, the causes for begging can only be identified through research that takes into account individual cases and those who have a direct experience. Abrahams (1982: 195) had said that one should study events and the experiences of individuals because of their sociological significance as makers of transitions. Accordingly, in an attempt to portray the major causes for begging as a means of survival, the life histories of a fairly sufficient cases of individual beggars is provided in this chapter. To make the condition of the beggars more problematic, however, attempts are made to frame and analyze the cases into the broader socio-economic and historical context of the country in general and the specific urban setting the beggars presently found themselves in particular. This is following Moorthy's (1959) suggestion that the problem of beggary being urban in character has roots in the socio-economic conditions prevailing in the country. Besides, the beggars' multifaceted impoverishment is depicted in the second part of this chapter. Substantially, the present chapter explores the complex, difficult task of probing the precipitating causes and categorizing people under investigation, describes affairs of a variety of beggars amid a cross-country glimpse of poverty.

#### **5.2. Major Precipitating Causes for Begging as a Means of Livelihood**

Today the beggary problem seems to be grave and severe in urban areas of the country in general and in Addis Ababa in particular. In almost every major city, and in some small towns as well, men, women, and children are observed engaging themselves in begging as a way of life. Although the roots are complex and cannot be traced to one cause, what the available literature reveals is that the beggary problem has a lot to do with the poverty situation in the country. Thus probing for the roots of the problem calls for understanding the situation of poverty in the country at large. As such, in the discussion of the major causes to begging, case study evidence is largely used to explore the different dimensions of the beggary problem afflicting different categories of poor and vulnerable people.

Nevertheless, simply examining each cause by itself does not answer the question: Why does the poverty of thousands of beggars today take the distinctive form of nowhere to live? In this regard, it is more worthwhile to discern how these factors have come together and intermeshed with one another. 'Somewhere' a threshold was crossed, and as such, careful and thorough examination of the trajectories of the economy, demography and public policy will show how these developments have moved towards one extremely unpleasant form of chronic poverty-widespread problem of beggary-in recent decades, and particularly in this decade. As such, the attempt and of course, the interest, is in exploring distributions of poverty and deprivations, relating them to the events, processes and structures which produced them, identifying meaningful groups of beggars and their different experiences of poverty in the broader context of the country's socio-economic history.

From historical perspectives, we can trace the main causes of poverty to be the consequences of primitive technology, the past episodes of drought and famines and war, poor economic performance due to unfavorable socio-political environments and economic policies of the imperial regime prior to 1974, the adamant socio-economic policies and programs of the Derg regime during 1974-1991 and policies and programs of the present government.

Many scholars have particularly attempted to provide a broad indicative assessment of the Ethiopian economy in the periods from 1974 up to the present. Many agree that although the preferred policies of the Derg government was to redirect the Ethiopian economy along socialist lines which was hoped to release the productive forces of the country for a more robust and rapid economic growth on more egalitarian grounds with significant transformations in the structure of the national economy, the entire seventeen years of experiment and incalculable human, social, political, and psychological cost to the whole society ended up in failure. Among others, Befekadu and Berehanu (2000) argue that the Ethiopian economy was in fact much worse of in 1991 when the Derg government was overthrown than when it took power seventeen years ago. Befekadu and Berehanu further noted that a new pro-capitalist and market friendly regime that reversed the dirigistic policies of the past was instituted by the present government to stabilize the economy and eventually achieve a healthy and dynamic economic growth. Despite this, the economy has largely been fragile in nature and susceptible to exogenous shocks such as the weather and international commodity prices as well as unstable performance of the recent past.

As such, the prevalence of poverty has been a common observation in the Ethiopian society. It is a common observation in the life of the majority of the peasant households that the produce of

one harvest would not be sufficient to feed members of a given household until the produces of the next harvest are collected. The question of surplus production has been unattainable for most of the households (Hadgu 1995). In this regard, Tadesse (1999:227) noted that although Ethiopia has experienced both capitalist and socialist strategies of economic growth in agriculture for over half a century, all experiments witnessed failures as revealed by most objective economic and other vital statistical indicators, and as a consequence, Ethiopia is far from being self sufficient with regards to food production. And poverty has long been the situation in rural Ethiopia. According to Itana (1998), undernourishment and malnutrition are common characteristics of rural life in Ethiopia. For Itana, highly variable rainfall, the ravages of war and tribal conflicts, dismal economic policies and serious historic underdevelopment have contributed to the rural impoverishment punctuated by recurrent famine. Overall, according to Aklilu and Desalegn (2000: 26), in rural communities, the three major causes of poverty are drought, declining productivity and landlessness.

Urban poverty in Ethiopia seems also no less important than poverty in rural areas. Overall, with the rapid urbanization and population growth rates and stagnation of income, urban poverty has become a serious problem for the country. Several factors have contributed to urban poverty: rural – urban migration, natural increase in population, demobilized soldiers, displaced people, retrenchment and economic slowdown (Hadgu 1995; Muhamed and Simeon 1995; Getahun 1999; and Meheret 2001).

In an attempt to provide a summary of poverty situation in urban Ethiopia, Getahun (1999:50) made plain that trends in urban areas were discouraging. He particularly discusses recent decline in well-being<sup>4</sup> due to unemployment caused by the 1992 demobilization of soldiers, lay offs from government or public enterprises and the civil service, increased school leavers and drop outs, and rising shop rents that forced business to close. Besides, increased casual labour with work opportunities becoming more unreliable, and likely to be paid daily which results in a corresponding increase in underemployed individuals and rising food prices from 1993/94 to 1995/96 for urban dwellers, which had further reduced real incomes, have been the general situations in urban areas.

---

<sup>4</sup> **The criteria used to classify households in the different well-being categories vary in rural an urban communities. In rural communities, well- being has to do with having farm land, cattle, farm input and implements. In urban communities, well-being has to do with owning large business and permanent employment with pension. The poor, on the other hand are described in terms of their struggle for subsistence which includes daily labour or selling fire wood and cow dung. Over the last ten years, the category of the poorest has been added. This group includes not only the landless but also the physically disabled and the elderly (Aklilu and Desalegn, 2000:i).**

Generally speaking in urban communities, the three major causes of poverty are unemployment, lack of health and sanitation services, and inflation.

Among urban areas of the country, Addis Ababa is a city where poverty is argued to be highly prevalent caused by different factors and having adverse consequences. The causes and consequences of poverty in the city as argued by Aklilu and Desalegn (2000: 31) include:

Growing population pressure and increased competition for jobs, the disbanding of the Derg army, migration and economic slow down. Not enough jobs are being created to satisfy demand. Other causes mentioned were lack of medical services, illiteracy or poor education. The consequences of poverty were identified as hunger and starvation, greater health hazard, prostitution, theft and street crime, lack of access to education and above all an immense increase in the number of beggars.

Giving due emphasis to recent trends prevailed in Addis Ababa, Hadgu (1995: 231) earmarked that Addis Ababa now faces "New poor influx" from all parts of the country. These include: a large number of demobilized soldiers and their families; displaced persons inclusive of civilians; handicapped people of the civil war; migrants caused by sporadic drought and ethnic conflicts; those who left the resettlement areas; returnees from asylum countries; the preponderance of migrants who have been categorized as urban unemployable such as the aged, the disabled and destitute children. These categories of people according to Hadgu (1995) made their way to Addis Ababa and other major urban areas on the expectation that they would get relief for their livelihood. Specific to Addis Ababa, Hadgu further argues that besides the "New poor influx", the city has been encountered with widespread urban poor who have been engaged mostly in the informal sectors of petty trading dominated by female headed households and all sorts of odd activities of survival strategies plus those vulnerable to the policy reforms and those affected by food price rises. As the consequences of the "New poor Influx", Meheret (2001:1) disclosed, there occurred different appalling observations in the city. These include: " a fast growing population of street children, homelessness, prostitution, begging, a rising army of unemployed, overcrowding and congested living conditions that serve as breeding grounds for diseases and crime"

In view of this background, migration particularly rural-urban stands out to be one of the major precipitants of poverty in general and the beggary problem in particular in the city. In conventional rural-urban migration, people leave their place of origin for varied reasons: seeking job for better life and the perceived socio-economic prospects in the place of destination as compared to

the place of origin. The reasons may also include avoidance of social conflicts, getting away from drought or famine and gazetted areas. In general, the combined forces of push and pull factors are reasons for peoples' migration from rural to urban areas (Davis 1967; Houser and Schnore 1969; Butterworth 1988 and; Assefa 1993). Such movements have been phenomenal in African countries in which the influx of population has been mostly towards the primate cities, like Addis Ababa (Hadgu 1995).

In Ethiopia, famine comes at the forefront in inducing people to migrate. According to Alula (1988: 65), evidence for an intimate link between famine and migration is plentiful. For him, there is no doubt that famine- induced migration played an important, if largely invisible, part in Ethiopian history. Alula (1988: 69) further argues:

Once drought becomes temporarily protracted and spatially widespread and especially if it is compounded by additional factors such as animal and crop pests, diseases and warfare, "traditional coping mechanisms" are bound to break down. When exchange options disappear, as neighboring populations become similarly affected, prices of grain become prohibitive and precious little remains to exchange, partial or wholesale migration becomes the only viable alternative to mass starvation. Famine victims migrated to areas where they hoped to find food, help or work. They visit exchange partners or relations in neighboring areas and travel to regional markets and ports in search of food; they migrate to unaffected areas in search of work or land or they go to royal escarpments and urban centers to beg.

Historically, new famine-induced settlers migrating from rural to urban areas have mostly become worse off at their destinations. More and more have been moving to urban areas, increasing the numbers of the urban poor. Specific to Addis Ababa, Hadgu (1995) argues that the existing infrastructure facilities, employment opportunities and the financial foundation of the city has been too weak to cope even with the existing population size. The situation further deteriorated with the new influx of migrants, which resulted in ever-increasing demands for social services and jobs. Apparently, it became a common scene for every Addis Ababa citizen to see a large number of homeless and poverty-stricken people. As such, poor people inclusive of beggars are usually the impoverished migrants from the most depressed areas of the country. A case in point is the account given below.

Case No. 3 Mahiwa Hussien, F, 43

Mahiwa, aged 43, was born in Wollo province in a particular place called Choresedoma, located about twenty-five kilometers east of the town of Mersa. Born from a peasant family, she has never gone to school and as a result she doesn't read and write. Mahiwa begs together with her husband, two daughters and a younger sister left their place of origin in September 2000 induced by famine. Before they came to Addis Ababa, they have been to places like Mersa, Dessie, kemissie and kara kore on their way to the capital. In all these places, they were living by begging. It was in October 2001 that the whole family gradually reached Addis Ababa. Mahiwa says that soon after their arrival in the capital, her husband left the family and once more went to a place called Humera in search of cotton picking and she doesn't know his present state of being. Mahiwa begs together with her sister and two daughters, one eight years old and another four years old. Although Muslim by religion, I found her at St. George church while begging. In most of the cases, however, she is a mobile street beggar and she usually begs around Habtegiorgis bridge, Churchil road, Piazza, Arat killo and Sidist killo areas. I interviewed her during one of the Muslims fasting time, Ramadan, and she says that she is currently earning a relatively good deal of alms, through Zeka<sup>5</sup> both in cash and in kind. Mahiwa says that she doesn't like the profession, as she is engaged in it induced by her poverty situation. At the same time, however, she says that she has no other alternative than to keep on begging. But she doesn't exactly know for how long she will continue living by begging. One thing which she feels is that going back home is not only unnecessary but also unessential. For one thing, according to her, her place of origin is known for its recurrent drought and mass starvation due to severe shortage of rain fall. Even if rainfall is available, it is usually untimely and irregular. Besides, the productivity of the land is very low because of the infertile nature of the soil. Above all animal diseases and crop pests are inherent aspects of the nature of the area. In general, she says that the area where she came from is not suitable for agriculture to which a peasant society could not adapt and tolerate. Hence, in her own views, she doesn't imagine she will be there again. Nevertheless, Mahiwa says that the overall destiny of the whole family has a lot to do with her husband. She is hoping her husband to return back to Addis Ababa and decide matters pertaining to the future of the family.

The case presented above exemplifies many other rural migrants who flocked to the city and who find it increasingly difficult to survive by other means other than begging. In fact, historical studies of the vast migrations that peopled the urban cities have pointed up, in a fairly general way, the great impetus to migration created by famine and disaster. Many studies have also observed the unfortunate economic and social position of the new comer to urban areas. Biographical reports of the experiences of migrants usually submerge the difficulties and tribulations of entering a new area and society. The hosts of studies that investigate a broader range of in-migrant population document

---

<sup>5</sup> According to a Muslim informant, Zeka is offered to orphans, disabled persons, the extremely poor who are embarrassed to beg and those who could not care for their children because of their poverty.

the enormous set of problems, pitfalls, and often tragedies associated with movement from one society to another.

Even at present, famine is becoming a serious problem that requires an immediate solution. The present government of Ethiopia has disclosed the severity of the problem of famine prevailed in the country which is reported to have severely affected an estimate of 14 million Ethiopians. Due to chronic shortage of food, many people from the rural areas are believed to have flooded in to urban areas notably to Addis Ababa, although the exact number of the famine victims who have moved to the city is not precisely known. Because of the limited labour absorptive capacity of the towns and cities coupled with low level of education and lack of skill on the part of the famine induced rural people, work opportunities are extremely slim and as a consequence many manage to get their livelihood through a variety of odd jobs including begging.

Nevertheless, famine should not be considered as the only leading factor which induces the displacement of people under investigation; it is rather a precipitating phenomena. Most of the reports of my informants clearly revealed the complex matter and the interplay of a host of factors causing their spontaneous migration. Assefa (1995:xix) seems correct when he succinctly notes about factors of spontaneous migration in one of his studies on the issue:

....Usually spontaneous migration and settlement is attributed to drought-induced famine.

However, the data built up from this research clearly reveals that other factors such as scarcity of arable land, degradation and fragmentation of land, lack of oxen, and other personal problems are dominant. Famine as a result of crop failure, caused by shortage of rain, is reported to be only a precipitating factor.

Whatever the reasons may be, displacement has increased the number of the “new poor” who have in fluxed in to the city of Addis Ababa. Displacement can occur as a result of eviction, landlessness, and other factors that reflect changes in the economy and in government policy. Dislocation can also occur as a consequence of domestic violence, war, natural, and man made disasters, or the break up of the family. It is just a calm word for a frequent and shattering experience: people leaving their homes against their will. Displaced people move in large numbers usually with little or no prior notice and during the transition face a number of problems, which make them vulnerable to poverty. They are observed to have food scarcity, poor sanitary conditions, overcrowding leading to poor drainage, poor refuse disposal, low levels of income or none at all, poor or no social infrastructure (schools, health centers; markets) and limited production. The most recent examples are the evictees owing to the Ethio-eritrean conflict.



Presently, in the capital, there are an indeterminate number of displaced people from many causes including evictions, civil conflict and war. They contain, from the scene, a high proportion of women, old and children and usually live in camps characterized by squalor, poor sanitation, shelter and nutrition. They have suffered widespread physical destruction and severe economic dislocation causing losses in agricultural production and psychological traumas. As a result of such major crisis in their lives, the displaced people are seen in the city adapting themselves to a range of livelihood strategies, although not necessarily in a particular order.

In Ethiopia, among others, war has forced many citizens to leave their homes against their will. Most areas of the country have suffered during the civil unrest, although the northern areas were particularly ravaged. In north part of the country, many families and communities were so disrupted that they ceased to exist as coherent units. These war affected people since a distant past have been flooding to cities and towns most often to Addis Ababa. As is generally the situation for most displaced people, a number of war induced displaced people are observed in the city developing a variety of survival strategies through their own efforts to cope with stress from civil strife. Significant numbers often elicit business through petty trade, exchanging their labour for little money and above all eking a meager living on the street through begging. The following life history may attest to the socio-economic situation, which displaced people may find them selves in.

Case No. 4 Tirhas Gebremichael, F, 35

Tirhas was born in the town of Zalanbessa (Tigray) about thirty five years ago. Her father was shot to death by Eritrean thugs for no apparent reason, while he was working on his land a few kilometers away from Zalanbesa. She lost one uncle in an Eritrean bombardment. Her family was forced to migrate to Adigrat during one of the Eritrean first attacks, in the spring of 1999. Her family house was destroyed. After the death of her father, Tirhas's paternal uncle sent her mother away to live with her own family. He did not allow Tirhas or her brothers and sisters to see their mother or maternal family again. Her maternal uncle could not help her for his only source of income is from sentry and is extremely poor. Tirhas must find another alternative to survive. Accordingly, she came to Addis Ababa in March 2000 with a friend of her seeking better life. But during her arrival, the situation was not as she expected. She couldn't get job and hence she must find her own food by begging. Her daily income ranges from a small heap of coins to four birr. She has no regular time for her daily meal. She eats when she gets alms. She lives with a friend who is also a beggar, by renting a house. She is weak, thin and complains of stomachaches. Although illiterate, Tirhas is alert and smart. Her clothes are torn and dirty and she is barefoot. Her most vivid memories are her father's death, her family's forced migration and her separation from her mother. With tears in her eyes, Tirhas raises her hands and curses the Eritreans with a seemingly loss of hope and helplessness. At the end of the interview, while crying, she added, "in the begging when I wanted to beg my voice would stick in

my throat, and when I asked for alms, my hands and feet would start to shake. Now that I have begged so many times, it is not that way any more."

In general, large numbers of non-voluntary groups of settlers or the displaced are observed thrown in to a panic, as no one seems to be prepared to take responsibility for them, creating an atmosphere of insecurity. There is often sympathy but local communities do not have much to offer. Hunger emaciates these new poor sooner or latter and as a result many of them resort to begging. Tirhas's case is only one of many exemplifying the situation of people who have involuntarily moved to the city from different corners of the country

It is also a well-known fact that Ethiopia had one of the longest wars in Africa that brought plight with it. The war was ended recently, but the problem became fostered throughout the country because the biggest military force in Africa was found in Ethiopia, which ultimately and nearly at all got demobilized<sup>6</sup>. In effect, such forced redundancies have caused tremendous social unrest. Despite the efforts made by the present government, EPRDF, a number of ex-service men are observed opted to a number of marginal jobs. This is because of lack of significant compensation and because many of the demobilized soldiers remained unemployed for a long time. In fact, among the new poor, most of the demobilized soldiers have become subjected to abject poverty. Most of these people are dependents or have no one else to turn to and number among the very poorest. At present, it is not a strange thing to see individuals and a group of beggars with military uniforms particularly during religious holidays. A description below would substantiate the case in point

Case No.5 Kumelachew Lakew, M, 48

kumelachew is an ex-military service man born about forty eight years ago in the periphery of the town of Gondor. He has attended primary level education and has completed grade six. Kmelachew joined the Derg army in 1977 after having taken a body is covered with scabies and he scratches every now and then. He lacks vitality and he seems to be underfed. Kumelachew is disappointed of the Ethiopian peoples and very sadly military training in Tatek military camp. He has served his country as a soldier for about fourteen years in different places until the fall of the Derg

---

<sup>6</sup> Different writers have attempted to define the term demobilization in different contexts. For Cilliers (1995) demobilization is a process through which forces of a government and opposition parties shed themselves of excess personnel after a period of conflict. As such, it involves assembling, disarming, and discharging of former combatants and provision of some assistance. Demobilization on the other hand is also considered as the process by which the armed forces (government and /or oppositions or factional forces such as guerilla armies) either downsized or completely disbanded.... In many countries, demobilization is a much broader transformation from a war to peacetime economy (transfer of resources to non-military sectors, restructuring infrastructure, restoration of security)... (and are often accompanied by a structuring of the armed forces (World Bank, 1993)

regime in 1991. Soon after the overthrow of the Derg regime, Kumelachew traveled a long distance and he directly came to Addis Ababa with a view to get gainful employment. At the beginning, Kumelachew says that there were very few jobs he could do in the capital, his limited educational attainment being the major hindrance. The only jobs he found were those involving menial labor. Thus, in the first few years after his arrival, Kumelachew worked as a laborer in many of the market areas and construction sites of Addis Ababa. As time goes by, however, his health condition became deteriorated and he became unable to work. Kumelachew resorted to begging as of 1997 forced by his poor health condition. Now he claims to be a T.B. patient. He also says that he has been wounded for about seven times while he was fighting in different war fronts. He complains that a bullet or shell fired from a gun is still inside his body. His daily income through begging ranges from two to five birr. He is homeless and sleeps at St. Mary's churchyard. He is poorly dressed. He is skinny and he angrily contends that he should have been compensated for his bones crushed and the blood he shed in different wars.

As such, apart from migrants and displaced persons inclusive of civilians, a large number of demobilized soldiers and their families have always been another category of people recently victimized by chronic poverty and most of whom, involve themselves in begging as a means of livelihood.

As it was frequently exposed earlier, owing to the influx of the “New Poor”- migrants, the displaced and the demobilized soldiers, many argue that, among others, there occurred two remarkable observations in the city. The first one was that the number of homeless people has been increasing from time to time, living in squatter shelters made of plastics, and ragged clothes. The second remarkable phenomenon was many children of the homeless households including those of other poor families are out on the street, most of them engaged in begging.

Hence, in Addis Ababa, it is a common scene to observe an indefinite number of vulnerable children who live in difficult circumstances. The categories of children at risk include orphans, disabled children; displaced or migrant children. There are a number of reasons why children go on the street. Some are orphans; others come from divorced families. Children may also be sent on streets to earn a living growing out of poverty.

A large proportion of these children are very vulnerable to unsafe sanitation, poor shelter and little or no access to health and educational opportunities. They are also vulnerable to neglect, exploitation and lack of resources for food and other basic necessities. A number of these children, particularly women, become victims of sexual exploitation, and their stories are a common fare in popular dailies and sympathetic media portrayals. These small children have fewer coping strategies. The more visible of them are seen trying to eke out a living through a variety of odd jobs such as

scavenging at dump sites; exchanging their labour for little money and food in areas like washing or watching cars, house keeping, or restaurant attending; hawking or engaging themselves in petty trade such as vending cigarettes, lottery or newspapers; and quite a lot of them living by begging. As such, although the traditional extended family system cannot be argued to be entirely incapable of coping with the current burden of these small children, there seems to be a visible sign of failure. In fact, in a country like Ethiopia where millions exist in abject poverty, family network has obviously been strained beyond the breaking point. Regarding the disruption of traditional social and economic structures, MOLSA (1992:10) notes:

One of the most important social structures that suffered such disorganization is the extended family system. Disabled persons, orphans, and the old were all taken care of within the family system. Thousands of people including unaccompanied children, the elderly, lactating mothers and handicapped soldiers fled to cities and towns in recent years. The family support system could not be maintained especially by those who migrate to cities and towns far away from their relatives.

It seems almost taken for granted in Ethiopia that a father is not only the main provider for the family but also the motor of parental guidance and family stability. Loss of the father leads to physical deprivation<sup>7</sup> decrease in income, often an end to education for children, vulnerability to social and legal exploitation, which might include child labor, sexual abuse, an emotional vacuum and above all a meager living on the street through begging by delivering a disturbingly desperate tone. A case presented here after is evidence to this fact.

Case No. 6 Fasika Kebede, F, 10

Fasika is a girl of ten years, born in Addis Ababa. Her mother who is a deaf at present is also a beggar. Fasika has no father but a step- father. Her father was a mechanic and died four years ago. All the family members including her mother started to beg soon after his death. Her mother was a cook previously, hired on daily basis. She stopped working due to her sudden illness, which occurred before her husband's death and which gradually made her deaf. In the family, there are five children, two older sisters from one father, Fasika and her one sister from another father and, a step-brother from her current step father. All of the children except one of Fasika's sisters are not attending school. The one, who attends school is supported by her mother's relatives. Fasika knew that her father was their source of living. After his death, Fasika says, she and the whole family had no alternative except to turn to begging. Fasika usually stays in one place when begging, Arat killo, except she goes to restaurants and hotels to look for left over food. Fasika very

---

<sup>7</sup> **Physical deprivation includes deprivation in terms of health, nutrition, disability, human capital, emotional deprivation and lack of confidence. Deprivations experienced at one point in time can become part of a person's heritage with long run effects (Bevan and Ssewaya, 1995:21)**

sadly says that she has no hope for education or any other future prospect since she has no possibility to do so. She and of course all her family members are always thinking of their daily bread which should come from begging. Every thing is just for the day and she has nothing to look forward for a healthy or brighter future. Fasika particularly regrets not being able to go to school. Attending school would mean death for her family, as she and her brothers and sisters, are the sole breadwinners for their families. In the course of the interview, the writer observed her weeping specially when she talked of her father's death.

Fasika's case is an illustrative example of the enormous child beggars having a multitude of problems. As such, it is particularly irritating to see very small children on the streets, churchyards or other quarters living by begging merely because of lack of proper guardianship and abject poverty. These under aged children who are reduced to destitution are with out food, clothes and other things necessary for life. They are the unprotected and uncared children for whom the street has become a substitute for school and a place where they ultimately turned to in order to fill their stomach, if they are lucky and successful. For them, the street is their little world, so to say, which is an immediate source of help and which responds to their very basic and urgent need, food, when society turns its ears to their deep and sorrow utterance of words of request or crying voice.

As the number of poverty-stricken grow so does the number of children spending their full time in the streets without adequate health care, education and with little sense of what it means to be part of the family. The etiology of the circumstances among these children interviewed seem to have involved more trouble backgrounds. A number of children interviewed seem to suffer from profound emotional distress and severe lags in developmental milestones. In fact, most of the child informants cannot understand how there parents become different. Their parents are too distraught and traumatized by their impoverishment and incapability to offer either the emotional support or the guidance that all children need in order to become mature and independent adults. They seem, at least temporarily, unable to care for their children themselves, but this remains a goal for many of my informants. According to women informants who have children and presently live by begging, they need to focus on the needs and concerns of their children. I am reminded of a conversation with one mother whom I found her begging together with her two small children at St. George church as a result of her husband's death. She said: "I always feel as if I did nothing to my children. In fact, it is true. The fate of my children worries me much. Imagine what it would mean to be a mother who is too poor and helpless for her own children. I do not want to die before I see the condition of my children improved. I pray to God to help me and I am longing for appropriately caring for my children".

Although the beggary problem could be precipitated and aggravated by the new settlers such as migrants, the displaced and demobilized soldiers, the urban poor have also been another vulnerable category of people thrust to take up begging on the streets of the city as a result of urban poverty fundamentally owing to unemployment. In this regard, recent studies pertaining to the situation of unemployment (e.g. Aklilu and Dessaleng 2000; and Abebe 2001) revealed that unemployment nowadays has become one of the critical challenges confronting the city administration. Although most of the unemployed are those with little or no education, in the last few years, however, unemployment has been spreading rapidly among young people with high school and even university education.

The unemployment problem in the city is blamed on a number of factors ranging from excessive in migration and internal displacement to government's lay off policies. The unemployment problem in the city is also argued to be accentuated partly because employment opportunities in the high-paying formal sector of the urban economy are very limited. As it was exposed earlier, the growth of the informal sector is thus seen as a response to the dwindling employment prospects of the poor in the formal sectors of the economy.

To these effects, the majority of the urban poor, in this particular case, the poor residents of the city, are unemployed, casual workers, or in petty trade. Many of these urban poor work in the informal sector where employment is impermanent and unstable and wages are often below subsistence. Unemployment being a wide spread problem in the city, a number of the city dwellers illiberally resort to illicit a livelihood through all sorts of marginal activities. As such, beyond those who earn a living through involvement in the informal sector, many people are observed coping through a variety of odd jobs, for instance prostitution and begging among others. Thus, one of the cardinal reasons for a number of the city dwellers to eke out a meager living through begging is unemployment. That is why a lot of the unemployed and able bodied individuals, men and women, are visibly seen being engaged in begging as a means of their livelihood. Though not as such a unique case, the story presented below exemplifies this fact.

Case No. 7 Salelesh Alemayehu, F, 25

Salelesh was born from a Dorze family in Addis Ababa about twentyfive years ago. Salelesh says that both her father and mother were beggars. Salelesh's mother died five years ago and her father two years ago. She and her sister were accompanying their parents for long while begging and they never went to school. After the death of their parents, Saleslesh's sister became a prostitute and now she works in one of the hotels here in the capital. Saleslesh is a strongly built woman and when I asked her why she couldn't work, I was told that she lives by begging merely because of

lack of gainful employment. Salelesh lives in her parent's kebele house located around Hamelie 19 park.. Her daily income out of begging ranges from one to three birr. She hates begging and she wants to be like other working and self-reliant women but at the same time she knows that it is not easy to get job and she has no any alternative than to keep on begging in which she has been for long, from early childhood. Salelesh presently doesn't know for how long she will be in this profession and she cannot envisage her future plan. Salelesh is very much suspicious of other people. It was after long hours of persuasion that she agreed to give her consent for the interview.

Salelesh's case may also provide an insight into the fact that advantages or deprivations could be handed down through intra-generational transmission. Poor parenting may be associated with lack of access to education, which in turn exposes adolescents and young people to multiple economic hardships when they cannot find employment. The fact that many young and adult beggars raising families today are suffering from post-trauma psychological problems puts stress on families, which can produce inadequate parenting, including lack of food, shelter, love, nurturing and protection.

By and large, the negative effects of urbanization is reflected in population growth, high inflation rate, shortage of basic necessities like housing and fuel wood, unemployment and lack of education for the young child. The most vulnerable groups of the society, by the degrading socio-economic situation, are the immigrants and the urban poor who live in poverty. Owing to the accumulated and multifaceted problems and in their struggle for survival, many resort to begging. Among others, we see many aged people who engage themselves in begging because they are mentally or physically unable to compete in marginalized jobs available in the city. All sorts of disabled people are also observed undertaking their daily routine, begging, as a result of the incapability to work. The other group among the street inhabitants is young unwed mothers engaged in begging with their young children by their side.

It should, however, be made plain that the socio-economically marginalized individuals<sup>8</sup> in our case, beggars, we see in Addis Ababa are but the manifestation of severe economic problem in the entire country. Very often, in fact the problem of beggary is a direct result of rural conditions, because many of the individuals who end up by eking a meager living by begging on the streets, church or mosque yards and others collective quarters of the city have come from the country side where there was no place for them. As such, people voluntarily or involuntarily came to Addis Ababa

---

<sup>8</sup>According to the 1992 report of MOLSA, a little more than three fourth of the total sampled population (77.4%) of the beggars have migrated to Addis Ababa for different reasons. Accordingly, 21.2 % came because of economic problem, 18.9% because of illness, 18.1% are displaced due to natural and man made

in search of better life but when they failed to get a better life situation returning to their place of origin becomes embarrassing and therefore they decide to stay irrespective of the degrading life situation engaging themselves in begging. As such, the life of these urban margins largely reflects the poverty of the rural alternative

Nevertheless, an individual or group of beggars might be affected by a number of causal agents at a time or through a long period of time. Therefore, it is difficult to attribute one single reason for an individuals or groups resortment to begging. Even with an individual's life time, it is not a single factor or cause, rather a multitude of but interrelated factors or causal agents which lead people to resort to begging as their last resort and means of survival. The following reconstruct would suffice the overall argument.

#### Case No. 8 Kebret Belayneh, M, 75

Kebret Belayneh is an elderly father born about seventy five years ago in Bulga Awraja, Kesem Woreda, in a particular place called Tulofa Kebele. His parents were illiterate poor peasants, and as a consequence, kebret never went to school. At about the age of twenty, as was the custom in Bulga, Kebret's parents arranged a marriage for him with a local girl. In the ensuing years, Kebret's wife born him four children. Two of his children, a son and a daughter, and his wife have died while two of his sons are alive. During the time of Emperor Hailesilassie, which Kebret didn't exactly remember, he went to the then Bale province in search of land in a particular place called Arena Workie. After having lived there for about fifteen years, the Derg regime took over power by overthrowing the Hailsesilasie's government. Because the Derg regime immediately proclaimed "land to the tiller", Kebret says, he lost all his land and became a landless person. As a result, Kebret returned to his place of origin. Soon after his return, he was given a small plot of land by the Derg. Accordingly, he lived at Tulofa for about nine years cultivating his land. Mean while, Kebret says, because the plot of land he was given was too small and the productivity very low, he found life there quite miserable. Worse enough, he couldn't cultivate the land by himself for he has now become old and weak. As a result of his old age and the inability of his land to support him, he had to leave his birth place for the second time. Two of the survived children of Kebret were soldiers in the Derg regime, one of his sons was living in Addis Ababa and the other in the Northern war front. A soldier who went to Kesem woreda to visit his relatives gave Kebret the address and telephone number of one of his sons who was living in Addis Ababa to contact. He then came to the capital about seventeen years ago. Soon after his arrival, Kebret made an immediate contact with his son. According to Kebret, his son was able to rent him a house and took him to a place where he could find cheap accommodation. His son was also assisting him financially apart from paying for the house rent "But the money Kebret gets from his son was not enough to live properly and

---

**disasters,, 9% are forced comers or come to the city to visit relatives 6.2% because of death of parents, 5.2% disagreement with family, 3.4% in search of education and 1.35 gave no responses.**



hence he had to supplement his income through engagement in other activities. Accordingly, Kebret has worked as a house guard for years. In 1991, when the EPRDF government came to power, Kebret lost his only support for his son become a demobilized soldier. Besides, Kebret says that, because of his age and his poor health, he couldn't find working as a guard an easy task as it was before. Consequently, he gave up working as a guard and he resorted to begging as of 1992. Now, Kebret is a full time beggar. He begs from dawn to evening in one of the city's churches (St. Stephen). The daily income for Kebret ranges from less than fifty cents to four birr. He is a homeless, helpless and elderly beggar.

A look at Keberet's story, as it is also the case for many of the beggars, show the difficulty to attribute one single reason for an individual's resortment to begging. Kebret took up begging because of lack of former support (i.e., a son owing to demobilization from the Derg army) and his incapability to work and earn a living as a result of poor health and old age, all of which occurred more or less at a time. As such, the case is an illustrative example of the fact that people may resort to begging forced by a spectrum of casual agents suddenly or through a long period of time. Indeed no single cause can be found to explain how a man may be reduced to a status of a beggar. In any given case many of the factors analyzed above may have entered into the process of economic and social degradation. In fact, the conjunction of several of these causes is necessary to explain the extent and the nature of poverty in this country.

In general, all the individual case studies portrayed in this chapter are not unique in their character as compared to many of the beggars littered on to the churchyards and the streets. However, their accounts of affairs does exemplify some of the major processes, structures, or events that violently precipitate the overwhelming majority of the poor to similar consequences and to follow a course of life against their will. Besides, the cases provide an insight into some of the most vulnerable categories of the urban poor who eventually end up in begging.

To this effect, regarding the major causes for begging, it can be said that poverty in terms of its major precipitating factors and events such as negative effects of urbanization due to internal migration and mass displacement, old age, ill health, disability, or destitution which in one way or another owing to unemployment and/or underemployment force most people to resort to begging. As such, the precipitant causes are largely exacerbations of endemic situations rather than wholly unfamiliar catastrophes. And they are not only necessary conditions for explanation but also are fairly sufficient to the task.

To these ends, I am arguing here about the major precipitating causes that thrust many people in to the streets to seek alms essential for survival. This is because it is very difficult to talk about the

ultimate causes for every case of beggars is not a simple result of one or utmost two circumstances. In this connection, Hope and Young (1986:22) vehemently contended the trouble in attempting to talk of the ultimate reason for people who are impelled to live in a more or less similar socio-economic environment-street corner life. They said:

The ultimate cause may be different from the precipitating cause, yet they can be hard to distinguish. In deed, how far does one go to determine ultimate causes? If a homeless man lost his job because of drug abuse, is the latter the ultimate cause? Or does one search back to the poor housing, second class education, inferior health care, inadequate nutrition, crowded conditions and general hopelessness that may have characterized the neighborhood in which he grew up?

Overall, life in the city being relatively unstable and unpredictable, it seems that most of the new poor- the migrants, the displaced and the demobilized soldiers- find it impossible to secure jobs nor to find shelter. When all hopes are lost and when they become desperate they resort to begging to get their daily bread and as time passes most of them adapt to begging as means of their livelihood. Even among the city dwellers who have been there for a long time, most find it difficult to get employment or the support of family or friends at times of difficulty like loosing a job, retirement, becoming orphaned, widowed or disabled. As such, they see no alternative than to depend on the practice of begging.

From 'etic' point of view, however, it seems that not all beggars involve in the life of begging because it is the only last resort for them. It was argued that some beggars are so used to the life of begging that it becomes difficult to cease the life of begging even if a viable, alternative means of livelihood were provided for them. In a small article entitled "Old Habits Die Hard", Kamat (1997) argues that able- bodied working people take up begging because it is not easy to give up the skills and habits of earning a livelihood. However, my informants' response to the question, "would you cease begging if you were provided with another non-begging means of life?" contradicted this argument. All informants I interviewed and discuss with responded that they would immediately drop begging if they were given a better alternative. They strongly put the blame up on circumstances and external conditions. This may indicate their negative attitude toward the life of begging (see some of the informants <sup>9</sup> <sup>10& 11</sup> views just as an example). But this is in no way an attempt to generalize that

---

<sup>9</sup> **Assefa Alemayehu, 22, is a migrant who came from Adet (Gojam) and who is living by begging around the churchyard of the savior of the world (around sidist killo) for four years now. He said that people generally do not want to beg. It is the severe economic problem as a result of lack of employment opportunities in the city, which urge people in general, and able bodied individuals including him to resort to begging. However,**

all beggars are despondently engaged in the activity because of lack of any other alternative and hence are all genuinely needy people. Although the overwhelming majority can be argued to have been taken to begging because of helplessness, there are obviously some others who use begging as an easy means of securing begging. According to informants, there are a few 'lazy bums' who are so accustomed to street life that they eschew available menial job and who prefer to live that way. Thus, the image is a confused one, for the overwhelming majority of the beggars may be seen as needy, yet somehow ingenuine enough to manipulate honest people. In fact, it is also assumed that there are some beggars who make large sums through beggary and living luxuriously as respected citizens (MOLSA, 1992: 5).

Crises in the life of the person, as family conflict, for example, the feeling of failure, disgrace or embarrassment, the fear of punishment for the commission of an offense may cause a person to desert home. With the severance of family and social ties the boy or the girl is the more likely to drift aimlessly from home to the street, and at last perhaps find himself/herself permanently in the group of beggar men. Not infrequently boys run away from home because of difficulties with their people. One young informant says that his father tries to tell him "where to head in at," and he "wouldn't stand for it". Another boy couldn't get along with his brothers who were older than he. These beggar men manifest no strong desire to beg but are temporarily or permanently cut off from their home

---

Assefa made plain that there are people in the city who are observed begging by confessing temporary reasons such as shortage of money for transportation after a visit to relatives or after medical treatment; loss of money as result of theft, robbery, etc.

<sup>10</sup> Melaku Baye, 30, is a demobilized soldier who has been living by begging for the last five years. He is a strongly built man and argues with much stress that, most able-bodied beggars resort to begging because of chronic shortage of gainful employment in the city. Melaku, however, noticed that in the capital, there are many young people who simply start begging and gradually become delinquents and do not want to live with their families. Melaku confirmed that with the exception of these delinquent people most able-bodied beggars live by begging as their last resort and not because they like the life of begging.

<sup>11</sup> Getahun Haile, one of my key informants, 36, is born here in Addis Ababa. He is an able-bodied beggar and has been living by begging since April 1997 usually around St. George church. Getahun asserts that Ethiopians do not want to beg for begging is a shameful act. He argues that if one faces a problem and hardship, which by himself/herself cannot withstand and runs out of any alternative, there is no doubt that he will resort to seek charity and public assistance to survive. In his opinion, this is true for most of the plethora of beggars concentrated in the city. For him, people generally resort to begging as a means of their livelihood when they are sick, aged, disabled, destitute, unemployed and hence they face economic problems. Getahun, however, pointed out that it is also common to find young lazy bums who resort to begging because of bad behaviors such as smoking and drinking. Besides, Getahun, said that we find many people engaged in begging due to whole sorts of cultural or religious reasons.

associations as are the migrants and the disabled and. These beggar types have had trouble with their parents and relatives.

By and large however, as is stated earlier, the natural and man-made calamities, which resulted in worsening of the situation of the country, have brought the poverty of the countless Ethiopians. Thus, it is a natural consequence of this fact /situation that all sorts of persons –the aged, the young, women and children, the disabled and the sick go out to streets, churches, mosques, etc for begging. This is the activity which in no way most people want to undertake but which they must do due to lack of any other alternative, what so ever to winning bread. Thus, begging seems the order of the day in this country. The argument is that although many of the conditions that spawn the problem of beggary have existed for long, it was particularly during recent periods that the relevant factors fell in to place and their combined force gained momentum manifesting a multifaceted impoverishment for those who are engaged in it as their means of survival and livelihood.

To these ends, it seems significant that the contemporary socio-economic position of the impoverished beggars, their multidimensional deprivations, result from conditions and circumstances beyond their control, but not from the beggars' internal deficiencies. In this regard, the socio-economic history of the country overwhelmingly would certainly have to share a good part of the current problem of beggary. This fact strongly disagrees with the cultural image and its self-perpetuating lower class poor people prefigured and constructed in the literature. The present situation of the destitute beggars reflects the urgency of dealing with the national crisis of poverty and related forms of social disadvantage. To this effect, to use Valentine's phrases, it is highly doubtful that any 'culture of poverty' is the main force perpetuating economic inequality observed among the beggars. And as long as the war on poverty is focused mainly on changing the supposed customs and values of the poor, in our case the beggars, - rather than on altering the economic and political structure of the nation- it will have little effect on poverty.

### **5.3. The Beggars Overall Impoverishment**

As it is frequently argued in previous sections of the thesis, matters of definition regarding poverty are debatable and problematic. Despite this, poverty can be generally viewed as having disturbing and irritating scene, manifesting deprivations of social and material aspects of life (Valentine 1968; Jhon 1994, Alock 1997 and; Dixon and Macarov 1998). Poverty is vividly reflected in the way the victims are clothed, fed and sheltered and the extent of their deprivations in getting social services such as health, education and other amenities of life (Hadgu 1995). Nevertheless,

Getahun (1999:38) argues, "It must be stressed ... that the concept of poverty is fundamentally relative." As Getahun (1999) further elaborates, and as it is also frequently stipulated in earlier sections of the thesis, the concept of relative poverty is primarily concerned with inequality, in terms of income, material wealth and living conditions among populations.

The general living conditions of the destitute beggars is one of a striking and irritating scene for it vividly reveals all sorts of multifaceted evils bestowed up on them in terms of material as well as social aspects of life. Most informants reported the multi-spectrum socio-economic hardships they presently find themselves in.

First and foremost, they are unable to secure the minimum basic needs required for human survival. Their uncontrollable seems to have decided their inability to attain an income or consumption level considered to be minimal to lead a normal life by the standards of any given society. Their daily meal depends on the money they get on a day's begging and food and drinks offered to them from alms givers. All the time beggars live perilously at the margin of permanent dependence. It is usually extremely difficult even for full time beggars (panhandlers) to make good of a meal a day. And most often a beggar with out enough food becomes desperate towards the end of the day. There are those who do not eat for a day, who eat from garbage cans, and who eat leftovers of hotels. The left over food is entirely unhygienic for we see dirt, tissue paper used to wipe out saliva, sputum, blood, hair, cigarettes and paper mixed with it. Some buy cheap food from street vendors. Still some others cook in dirty tins picked from garbage.

For most of us, home has a special connotation of warmth, security, and retreat from the pressures of the world, for most of us then, it is hard to imagine what it would be like to have no roof over our heads, no place to return to at night, no place to close the door and withdraw in to the quite recesses of the self. To use Hope and Young's (1986) words, to be homeless is something more- or rather, some thing less- than to be poor. It means sinking to another level of precariousness, where there is nothing to hold on to. In this regard, most informants reported that they are homeless. As housing is not a mere shelter but part of the closely woven fabric of neighborhood life and of the whole social milieu, it touches up on many facets of the beggars' problems. Although some beggars managed to live in either rented or owned houses, quite large number of beggars are observed sleeping outside either on the street, church or mosque yards, plastic shelters or other collective quarters. Their housing is very poorly maintained and very dirty. The plastic shelters, though not as such common these days, do not have any guarantee that they will stay up for more days; they will be

torn down or demolished, very often by government people, as it has frequently been the situation. Their shelters are especially vulnerable to accidents, damage and collapse and there is a high risk for fire and flood. Such shelters rarely enjoy the security of continuity.

In any way, it is the open places such as church or mosque yards, streets or verandah, which most beggars forcedly take as their permanent residence places. In these places, a number of undomiciled beggars generally live a very unhygienic life style, cooking, sleeping and even defecating in the same area. In general, beggars congregate in specific streets; sleep in churchyards, market stalls and underneath garbage can. According to informants, there is anecdotal evidence that, every winter; many beggars literally freeze to death on the streets and churchyards. Some have perished even within the sight of government people. That is why many beggars prefer to go to places of cheap accommodations, often to locations on the floor of an empty room for fifty cents per day particularly in winter. There they found warmth and companionship as well. Yet flops are unwholesome and unsanitary. According to informants, it is not also uncommon for some beggar men who can't find and afford a warm place to sleep to walk the streets at night; snatching a wink of sleep here and a little rest there. They usually try to snatch a bit of sleep during the day in places they don't have access to in the night time.

Destitute beggars do not have access to water for washing or even if they do they cannot afford and /or want to pay for the water, they rather want to pay for their most basic need, food. Their clothing is usually dirty and torn rugged, they are poorly dressed. Death, disease, physical disability and in sanitary living conditions seem to be, as things generally are, the natural and inevitable consequences of the risk taking and irregular life of the impoverished beggars. They are ill nourished, ill housed and ill clad. They are often ill with stomach pains, cough or colds and have sores, scabies, etc.

Because of the situation of their poverty in which they found or find themselves in, destitute beggars either never went to school and hence are illiterate or had been in school sometime before and have now interrupted their schooling and cannot pursue it again or are unable to send their children to school. By and large, destitute beggars have quite low educational status, which is in fact the major hindrance of most poor people to have access to employment.

Most beggars are immobile poor who are the aged and who cannot earn enough to support themselves above the poverty level. They are also the underemployed and the unemployed who lack skills to enter the limited labor market so that they can stay above the poverty line. Included in this

group are mostly the displaced and the migrants who eke out a meager living by begging on a marginal land. As such, a large number of these people are the new poor people who enjoyed steady employment and a normal life until their jobs and stable existence rendered obsolete. Others are the old poor whose lives have been characterized by instability to find regular work.

The life of beggars is characterized by economic as well as social deprivation<sup>12</sup>, which involves all sorts of serious barriers to participation in social, political and economic life, which all in deed tend to go together. It can generally be said that they seem to live on the edge of destitution, where one or more pieces of bad luck have ended up with whole lots of difficulties in a kind of downward spiral. This, of course, sounds true from both 'etic' and 'emic' dimensions in relation to externally imposed criteria, or in terms of what they see themselves in relation to the community they use as a reference group.

Overall, the general living conditions of the destitute beggars or the socio-economic situation of destitute beggars clearly entails a multifaceted impoverishment via induced landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalization, increased morbidity, food insecurity, loss of access to common property and social disarticulation. As such, in all the research sites of the study, it seems indisputably clear that a significant number of the beggars, perhaps the overwhelming majority, presently found themselves in a wide range of impoverishment. But this does not mean that they do want to keep on living by begging. Too, it does not mean that all beggars have given up hope, find comfort and peace in adapting themselves to things as they are. As it was exposed earlier, most beggars, perhaps virtually all, extremely hate the socio-economic situation they presently found themselves in general and their means of livelihood, begging, in particular. To these ends, most beggars have varied sorts of aspirations for their future.

#### **5.4. Beggars Future Aspirations**

Many anthropologists have reached the conclusion that the poor have low need achievement and low levels of aspirations for the self. In this regard, Lewis (1966: xiv-xivii) among others argues: "people with culture of poverty are aware of middle class values, talk about them and even claim

---

<sup>12</sup> **Poverty is most often analyzed in terms of economic deprivation, which has a range of dimensions. In surveys used to assess poverty economists have tended to measure consumption (over month), a week or income, sometimes assets, and access to health and education services. Social deprivation, on the other hand, involves barriers to full participation in social, political and economic life, which tend to go together. They are maintained by institutional structures, community processes and cultural values and beliefs held at social and individual levels (Bevan and Ssewaya, 1995:21)**

some of them as their own, but on the whole they do not live by them.” For him, this knowledge of the dominant values of the wider society is, contradicted by actual behaviour, which is conditioned by local socialization. On the contrary, however, there are many anthropologists who reacted against this assertion. Of these, Valentine (1968) argues that many common values are shared with the dominant strata or the total culture, but specialized alternative values are accepted where contradictions between cultural ideals and situational conditions are sharp for the poor. Valentine further contends that behaviour will generally be consistent with either shared values or specialized values depending on the context.

Regarding the very poorest beggars under study, it can be said that most beggars have future aspirations and plans though their aspirations vary from beggar to beggar. In this respect, with the exception of the very old, those with incurable diseases and disabilities who are incapable of working, most informants would like to work even if the income they would get from working might not be as good as they get from begging. As such, there are those who think of going back to continue their past lives as farmers or involve themselves in some other activities. There are others who are thinking of about starting a mini-business. Some other beggars have a plan to go back to start businesses they used to do previously. Still, there are others who have an intention to continue their schooling. The major factor that has been hampering the poorest beggars from achieving their goals is obviously shortage of money. In any way, those who have been saving money and capable of working seem to be on the way to changing their lives through engagement in different activities other than begging. To use Valentines statements, groups of the very poorest beggars adhere to at least some of the value orientations as every individual in society: material comfort a desirable goal, self-sufficiency an admired mode, education an instrumental desideration, and competition and cooperation to different contexts.

In general, most of the situations in the beggar communities reveal the fact that these street corner men do not appear as a carrier of an independent cultural tradition. Their behaviour appears not so much as a way of realizing the distinct goals and values of what is called a subculture, or of conforming to its models, but rather goals and values of the larger society as their way of trying to achieve many of the goals and values of the larger society as best they can, of failing to do this, and of apathetically accepting their failure with some degree of alienation and wishing to live for a remote tomorrow with out concealing their envy of the ‘successful’ others. In a nutshell, the situation



of the very poorest beggars suffices to Anderson's observations regarding people in a more or less similar kind of life situations. Anderson (1961:262) discloses: "Even the homeless man has aspirations above the satisfaction of his physical wants; he desires to live in a larger, more complete sense."

Despite their future plans and aspirations, presently, the beggars are bestowed with all sorts of multidimensional impoverishment. To these ends, destitute beggars, being extremely poor and socio-economically disadvantage groups, they seem to be relatively deprived of participation and interaction from the different spheres of the larger society heavily restricted to and limited by their own habitat or the social milieu, in which they are surviving by themselves. Hence, the next chapter discusses the beggars' modes of social interaction both within and outside their own world.

## Chapter Six

### *Modes of Social Interaction*

#### **6.1. Introduction**

The modes of social interaction of the beggars are not as such multifaceted. This is particularly true of the interaction of the beggars with the larger society. It is their exclusion and marginalization, which is far more revealed than their integration. Nevertheless, social interaction among the beggars themselves is multidimensional, lacking depth in both past and present. Besides, since the population of beggars is very mobile, social network as reflected up on the beggars is in many ways fluid and ad hoc, characterized by continuous ebb and flow, out of it and into, and which in fact, defies identification. With such general characteristics, the modes of social interaction of the beggars can be divided in to two broad categories for analytical purposes. These are interactions among themselves and their relations with the society at large. In this chapter, the study has sought to see beggars, first of all, in their own habitat; in the social milieu in which they are surviving by themselves with in the limits of the larger society by which they are surrounded, but from which they are, in large part, an out cast. Next comes the social interaction and participation of beggars outside their group boundaries. Accordingly, interpersonal and associational activities in one hand and peoples' limited participation but greater exclusion from various self-help associations is touched up on. To this end, the role played by ethnicity, age, gender, love life, leisure and entertainment activities are exposed.

#### **6.2. Interpersonal Relations.**

Anthropologists like (Barth 1969; Mitchel 1969; 1972; Kapferer 1966; Roosens 2000; Lourenco-Lindel 2001) have discussed the nature of social interaction and network relations at individual, family or group levels. For Mitchel (1969) social networks emerge from the existence of recognized rights and responsibilities between individuals. He argues that the fundamental *raison de*

etre for social networks is for resource mobilization to climb the social or economic ladder of success. Based on Mitchel's "Network and situational Analysis" which he noted for the Copperbelt, Kapferer (1966:60) has observed that "social relations among Africans in towns exist in accordance with principles of similarity and difference." Here, the "principle of similarity and difference" implies the common cultural or linguistic background of people. This principle holds true and seems applicable to the beggar communities.

Louren co-Lindel (2001) regards social networks as more flexible and responsible to individual needs than associations. She emphasizes the fact that the poorest may find it unaffordable to gain entry into associations, makes the operation of personal relationships for support all the more important. In this regard, the beggars are not as isolated individuals as one might incline to think. Among others, three factors are in constant interplay at the core of the personal relationships and social interaction of the beggars. These are ethnic background, gender and age. Of course, regarding the need and importance of these three social attributes in studying the state of impoverished urban underclass continuing to live or exist, often in spite of difficulty or danger, Bevan and Ssewaya (1995:24) put it as: " at the bottom of the income consumption/distribution there will be a group of destitute people with no means of producing even enough to subsist. It is important to...identify them in terms of social variables such as geographical (and ethnic) location, gender and age, and to explore...how they are surviving at present."

### **6.2.1. Ethnic Background**

The common element that put beggars as one category of people is the socio-economic situation or the situation of poverty they presently found themselves in. As such, their life nearly entirely depends on the good will of alms-givers, they dress in a similar fashion, i.e., they are poorly dressed, they are malnourished or essentially eat the same type of foods basically for economic reasons, most of them are homeless & illiterate, most often they get sick, they beg and live in similar

environments. It is in these regards that they share a lot in common, yet, there are internal segmentation and diverse patterns in terms of interactions among themselves.

Although the beggar community seem random collection of the poor from the outset, beneath it contains distinct and specific ethnic<sup>13</sup> groups. The begging constituencies are more of social than physical realities. The same churchyard, street or other collective quarter serve people from different ethnic background- women, children and the aged. But, along ethnic lines, the beggars attempt to enforce boundary maintenance. Although “social boundaries” may not correlate to physical entities (Barth 1969), people attempt to enforce boundary maintenance along ethnic lines. In explaining the role ethnicity plays in the social interaction of poor people in slums, the crowded neighborhoods or in the littered streets, Glazer (1968:85) says:

We will get nowhere if we talk about ethnicity and refuse to recognize differences between groups and instead try to explain everything by what happens outside the group: whether people like or dislike them discriminate against them, or not whether the economic situation at some moment is good or bad. Of course, these factors play a role but the character of the group itself, what it is and how it is shaped by history plays as large a role.

Despite the accessibility of begging spaces notably churchyards, streets or other collective quarters to all beggars irrespective of ethnic lines, there are different internal divisions on the basis of ethnic backgrounds. Space divisions along ethnic lines are entirely non-existent and as such, ethnic backgrounds do not define processes of internal physical boundary maintenance of groups. However, ethnic identities serve as defining units in their interaction with the other groups. This can be either explicit or implicit depending on the situations. To use Bevan and Sseway’s (1995) phrases

---

<sup>13</sup> **Concepts of ethnic group and or ethnicity are difficult to define, elusive and often controversial. The issue of ethnicity has vast literature, but there is no conclusive agreement up on its definition, scope and understanding. For the purpose of this study, however, ethnic group can be conceptualized as a human collectivity, having real or putative ancestry, mostly speaking the same language, with a more or less similar culture as reflected by social values and with the association to a specific territory.**

ethnic pluralism involves among the beggars multiple centers of interests, identities, loyalties, patterns of action and power.

Among others, quarrels between beggars alarm emotional alliance along ethnic lines. Amidst the engagement in petty loggerheads quarrel people could be heard verbalize and speak out their hidden and covert prejudice against those who belong to other ethnic groups. During such open quarrels every ethnic group air out long established prejudice against his/her antagonist. Among the Amharas, Gojames are called *buddas*<sup>14</sup>, which literally means ‘evil eye’, and, Wolleyes are labeled as cursed and ever poverty-stricken people. Oromos are known as *gallas* which commonly but mistakenly is used to refer to a lower status tribe and; Tigres are known as noisome and extremely unpleasant. Such verbal attacks are exchanged between women who meet in conflict over their small kids or among men in the begging zones or spaces who have feeling of ill-will, resentment, envy or spite before.

Nevertheless, as it is exposed earlier, there are no clear visible boundaries between the different ethnic groups. It is common to find beggars from the different ethnic groups congregated in a small, congested begging zone. Despite this, divisions of people by regions where they originally belong seem to exist. This is widely seen among the Amhara beggars inspite of their language similarities. Accordingly, the Amhara larger group is further divided in to Wolleye, Gojoame, Gondere and Shewa.

The implicit and explicit boundary maintenance and ethnic segmentation would provide people with the frame of reference to develop certain peculiar patterns of interaction between one another. Mostly people support one another at individual level on the bases of similarity in ethnic

---

<sup>14</sup> In fact, Kortzen (1969:73) has observed in some parts of Ethiopia that “fear and distrust of strangers is heightened by the possibility that they may be *buddas*, i.e, possessors of evil eye”. And he stated that people believe that “such persons are believed to have a variety of supernatural powers such as the ability to drink away the blood of their victim through their eyes and turn in to hyena at night.

background. As it is commonly reflected in the society at large, place of origin is given priority in terms of interlocking the beggars. Among beggars of the different Amhara sub groups, for instance, *Yewenz lij* or *yager lij* which literally means originally coming from the same river or region respectively is given due importance. Beggars primarily tend to share their personal secrets and seek help in time of crisis from their *yewenz lij* than to turn to some others. When I asked three young beggars,<sup>15</sup> in the churchyard of the savior of the world, whom I observed sitting close to one another, engaging in a pleasant chitchat and do the begging together throughout most of my field work why they seem very intimate, their response was obviously because they are *yewnz lij* or *yager lij*. These kinds of regional sentiments as a source of common characteristic spirit, reveals itself in the interpersonal interaction of the beggars. Important information would flow through such established regional and/or ethnic channels. Beggars share secrets about the amount of alms they gained in a day's or so begging. They talk about new beggars joined the beggars zone although it is very difficult for a new comer to easily become part and parcel of beggars of a certain specified area unless he has some body whom he knows. They help their *yewenz lij* by lending money at times of problem. Most often, left over food is also shared among *yewnz lijs*. It is also quite common among *yewenz lij* to rent and share a house or to go to *Tella Bets* (a house selling a traditional alcoholic drink called tella) and *Tej Bets* (a house selling mead) together during their very rare entertainment activity.

In fact, the beggars' occasional visit and attendance to the *Tella Bets* and *Tej Bets* also gives them opportunities to have few personal ties with other persons of the same district and/or ethnic

---

<sup>15</sup> Sibhat Menkir, 16, is a young able-bodied beggar with a smiling face. He was born sixteen years ago in a place called Densa Tsion Mariam, a small village close to the town of Baher Dar (Gojam), He has been living by begging for the last two years. Assefa Alemayehu, 22, is a young man who was born twenty-two years ago in a small town called Adet (Gojam) and who has been living by begging for four years now. Deresse Aweke, a one-legged man, aged 27, came from the town of Debremarkos (Gomjam) and has been living by begging since the last three years. According to these three informants, they make frequent contacts and personal ties among them are so intense. This is primarily because they see one another as brothers originated from more or less similar place and in effect should get together and help each other and thereby enhance their relationships in such an environment where they have no one to turn to.

background. This is because the beggars often discriminately go to such commercial establishments where the owners as well as the majority of their clients are usually of the same ethnic and/or village background. This account of the affair agrees with what Kapferer (1966) has observed in most of the African towns and cities regarding informal social networks. Kapferer (1966: 29) concludes: “district and tribe are important bases for association in town and people from the same district or tribe find a common bond which unites them in the many activities which urban people pursue. Groups of friends or clusters of people in a beer hall often have their basic core in persons of the same tribal category or district.”

In general, among other factors, ethnic and /or district background are important bases for informal group composition and determine the choice of friends, influencing the patterning of the social relationships of the destitute beggars in the urban context.

Despite their internal difference and divisions, exaggerated prejudice and rivalries, there are times when beggars get organized and stand together. In times of crisis such as illness, death or outside threat, which may occur in the begging zones, beggars themselves are immediate sources of support. When somebody is seriously ill, they contribute money and call for a philanthropic organization. When somebody suddenly dies, they immediately inform the police or a nearby government body. They show sympathy and kindness to the seriously ill who helplessly slept by their side by visiting him and sharing food. In such a crisis period, ethnic and/or regional boundaries get confused by showing indistinct relationship and internal segmentations become diffused through the power of emotional attachment and cohesion of the beggars emphasizing a common human predicament. This is to empathize the unpleasant situation from which escape seems difficult

In a situation when an unassumed new comer from somewhere else stuck out his hand in front of the temple, he is chased away and had to go to another place again to see his chance. Despite

internal differences, the beggars guard their constituencies with great care. It is common to fight over territories. They look at new beggars with suspicion and try to find his/her over all situation by typical questionnaires. They have to defend their territories, as they are the only means of survival. In this respect, the beggars are fairly well organized. Usually such land disputes came into being between a new comer who starts begging close to one or two beggars around whom the new beggar starts begging and who took notice of him. In a short period of time, however, the dispute gets precipitated bit by bit through the involvement of most of the beggars around.

During one of the days of my field work (Sept. 6, 2002) at St. George Church, I observed many beggars blowing a plethora of insult up on an elderly beggar in an attempt to chase him away. In such situations, it is immediately apparent that the various individuals involved in the dispute invoked a number of norms in the situation to support their own particular stand. These expressed norms also relate to the varied social factors, interests and beliefs, which lie at the root of the social mosaic formed out of intermeshing relationships. According to a woman informant, it is common to organize themselves and engage in this similar kind of act basically to minimize the risk of mistrust, theft, fraud or criminal deception. The following story is an illustrative example.

Case No. 9 Yebezuwork Kifele, W, 25

Yebezuwork Kifele is a young woman born twenty five years ago in a place called Mehalemeda, which is part of the area called Menz. She has been living by begging for three years now. When I asked her why she involved herself in the act of chasing away a new beggar, she told me that it is usual for a dozen of new comers to join them in their begging constituencies and smoothly and peacefully engage themselves in begging for a day or so. After having stayed for a short period of time, however, many of the new beggars rob all of their properties – clothes and shoes and money as well. And this has been an act most notably undertaken by temporary beggars. According to Yebezuwork, therefore, it is merely to prevent whatever properties they have from being robbed of that they frequently chase out new comers who attempt to join their begging colonies. As such, according to Yebezuwork, lessons that have to do with theft and robbery are the cardinal reasons that influence them to never entertain new comers.



But according to an informant against whom the beggars reacted and tried to chase away, the reaction against him is very cruel and cannot be justified by any other parameter except cruelty and selfishness. The following case provides elaborative evidence to this fact.

Case No.10. Bialf Asazenew, M, 55

Bialf Asazenew, aged 55, is a newly comer. He told me that he came two weeks before the day I interviewed him from a place called Debrework (Gojam) seeking medical treatment. He says that he came to Addis Ababa to get medical treatment free of charge having a letter that indicates the inability of him to afford for medication from his local kebele. But, he couldn't get help from people in Black Lion Hospital for he has no a referral letter. He says that, he came to the capital with a small amount of money and now his pockets are empty and has to beg to collect money for transport. But, beggars in the different parts of the city could not allow him to do so. He very sadly contends that the beggars reaction against him chiefly emanates from a motive of inhuman thinking and interest in one's own needs and welfare, without care for others. He feels that this is an indication for the increase in mankind's selfishness and small- mindedness.

Whatever the arguments may be, beggars achieve a relative internal cohesion at the expense of outsiders, who are treated with suspicion, hostility or outright hatred. Nevertheless, the act to fight over territories in churchyards during holidays until the ceremony is over; and in most streets both during ordinary days and saints day is relatively low. In the churchyards, during the saint days, innumerable number of people including traders, peddlers, worshipers, itinerant preachers, pickpockets, policemen, alms givers and beggars come together congestedly, and as a result beggars cannot control the situation. Besides, since the holidays are dreamt about by the beggars, they become very serious to their begging being very busy and do not worry much about other beggars. Here individual matters are given due priority. In this social scene, what deserves much importance and care is their attire just like actors and performers, attracting the attention of alms- givers through a variety of distinct means and styles. But after the ceremony is over and in most ordinary days, the beggars of the churches and temples need not travel and use the church yards as a sleeping place, store whatever property they hold and do their daily routine and hence they feel that the already

occupied begging places solely belong to themselves thereby defending their respective constituencies becomes much more strong. Since the beggars of shops, households and streets have to wander a lot, serious clashes over claims of begging space is not common. Besides, since most streets are by far less congested by beggars, problem of space is not a matter. As such, streets are most often open for any beggar-permanent or temporary- and hence are not much competitive and aspired for.

Although very rare, when conflict occurred with the local people, the problem becomes a common concern among most beggars in the churchyard or streets. Mostly, quarrels between two individuals from both sides tend to call the attention of the whole group. If any of the members of the beggar is attacked by the local people, most notably the passers- by or young people who play football close to the begging zones or shoe shine boys working around the churchyards and streets, most of the beggards usually get out of the constituencies to enquire about the dispute though not for a revenge in the strict sense of the term.

Interestingly enough, the role of ethnic divisions get blurred when beggars involve themselves in some voluntary associations most notably in *iqub*, the only form of saving institution to which the destitute beggars have access to. This dimension often bridges differences in kinship, ethnicity, village background or any other form of social characteristic.

Besides, ethnic divisions get out of consideration when different groups of beggars complained of similar matters irrespective of ethnic identities. The elderly and disabled beggars complained of the young and able- bodied beggars for competing with them unnecessarily for they could have worked, and earn a living. On the other hand, the young and able-bodied beggars complained of the elderly and the disabled beggars considering them as the major reasons for the less sympathy they receive from alms givers and a consequent small amount of money. Moreover, ethnic identities appear hazy and indistinct, when people who beg for their livelihood stand together and lodge complaints about the formalized, religion covered beggars.

Above all, the ethnic division gets minimized when the whole group of beggars held an informal discussion on the security matters about external intervention that might result in the

disruption of their entire existence. Their greatest concern according to an informant<sup>16</sup>, is fear of intervention by formal government agencies be it a *kebele*, police, the army or any other.

Ethnic background of people is also an important factor for interactions with the society in the wider urban context apart from its internal dynamism. A question of mother tongue would give more accurate readings of the ethnic composition of the city. The question of language spoken does have an anticipated advantage since language spoken in the home is an indicator of a tribal or regional identity. Most of what is observed in the beggar communities is a reflection of life from the broader context. As such, the ethnic or regional characteristic spirits the beggar community have two potential sources. The first emanates from the origin (ethnic or regional) of people, which in turn exaggerated by socially recognized elements in the new social context. Secondly, Addis Ababa itself consists of different ethnic quarters (*safars*), which subsume those who claim similar ethnic origin. But this doesn't mean that there is an obvious and distinct physical boundary in the city along ethnic lines, social class, commercial or residential properties. That is why Kubat and Richmond (1976: 222) said: "although there is some variation by social class level among districts, there is no clear idea of residence from the elite –or for the very poorest beggars."

Nevertheless, the ethnic background that is reflected in the narrow sense of the special context of the beggar communities gains its broader replica in the socio cultural context with in the urban and rural parts of the country at large. It is in this connection that Mitchel (1969:44) made an

---

<sup>16</sup> Alemayhu Endale, 22, is one of my young informants. He came from Nekemt (Wollega) and is living by begging at St. George church for three years now. He reminded me of the frequent actions taken by the government. According to his view, by virtue of a pretext to keep down the number of idle men in the city, the present government has been dislocating the poor beggars with out due consideration to the age, health condition, disability and above all chronic poverty. For him, the destitute beggars having no one to turn to have been facing and receiving all sorts of harsh treatment for long. And he added that even these days there is a wide held rumors that the government is going to bear the usual vigorous pressure up on the poor on the streets. He told me that, days in and days out, the issue of forced dislocation by the government is what worries the street corner beggars much. He sadly concludes, "In many ways, a beggar is a man with out a country."

important point, which illuminates the relationship between the social structure of a community and the total network. He writes: “since the links in the social network may be social contacts in terms of such a variety of different interests, it is almost certain that some of the links may simultaneously be part of groups or social categories in a larger context of interaction such as membership of an ethnic group”

### **6.2.2. Gender and Age**

Alliances and friendship within the beggar communities through gender<sup>17</sup> and age relations cut across ethnic boundaries. Relations appear as a relationship between two or more beggars who, in an important sense, stand unrevealed to one another. Lacking depth in both past and present, alliances are easily uprooted by the tug of economic or psychological self-interest or by external forces acting against it. The recognition of this weakness, coupled with the importance of interaction as a source of security and self-esteem, is surely a principal source of the impulse to enhance relationships, to upgrade them, to elevate what others see as a casual acquaintanceship to friendship and friendship to close friendship. It is as if friendship is an artifact of desire, a wish relationship, a private agreement between two or more beggars to act.

To this end, most women beggars share the same kind of problems as wives, mothers, divorcees and widows. The interpersonal interaction is based on mutual interaction of the female beggars within their begging constituencies. Among women beggars, folk information flow is dynamic. They usually share and empathize their common problems. They share the pain of child bearing, rearing and most of all the burden of economic condition of the family. In this regard, the

---

<sup>17</sup> **The appropriate use of gender and sex has probably raised the greatest controversy. Some authors argue that sex should be restricted to a person’s biological maleness or femaleness, and gender for the social traits and characteristics that are associated with each sex. The term sex implies a biological basis for behavior when non-necessarily exists. Still others on the other hand believe that sex and gender should be used interchangeably because biological and social distinguish between the two. Here I used the term gender without any assumption that sex implies biological causes or that gender results from socialization. The intention is merely to show differential personal interactions between male and female beggars observed.**

culture of reciprocity is common among them. Information pertaining to their socio-economic history, family background, future aspirations, and the future of their children are reciprocated. Although most often women beggars take their children with them while going to other places and using children while begging is one means of attracting the attention and sympathy of alms-gives and hence is uncommon to see a mother begging alone, in rare cases, mothers leave their children behind and go for begging. In the absence of one of the beggars, the others take the responsibility of 'child rearing' giving necessities such as food and drink. Besides, women take the primary responsibility to protect the child from car accidents and other external attacks. Sharing of left over food and drink, not money of course, are also common day-to-day dealings among the women beggars.

Most men also share similar kinds of problems as husbands, household heads, and daily laborers apart from begging, ex-military service men, visitors of *tella bets* and *Tej bets*, *chat* chewers and smokers, visitors of prostitutes, vagrants and criminals. Huge information flow and exchange is quite common among them. They extensively exchange views regarding their past socio-economic condition, experiences as veteran soldiers, patriotism, prison experiences, and entertainment and love life. In general, it is common to observe horizontal relations between genders in the beggar community.

Age is another social characteristic that put an influence upon the beggars' alliances and oppositions in a set of social relations. In most afternoons and at night, street life in churchyards and adjacent places get warmer and livelier. Young men congregate around street corners chewing chat, smoking cigarette and engaging themselves in a pleasant chitchat. Adult men and the elderly enclosure themselves in the churchyards and open squares or stroll around with their equals. Most often there seems to be a visible order to harmonize various age groups at different time intervals.

In sum, the open nature of street life seems to support easily flow of rumors or information. The kind of rumor held up usually differs along with age and sex lines. Through the help of

informants<sup>18</sup> rumours are classified along age and sex lines in the following manner. The themes are, however, hardly restricted to one category of people. The list is also not as such exhaustive.

To these ends, young men discuss about issues pertaining to quarrels, gambling, other boys who are rival to them, theft, drugs including chat, alcohol; about ladies who passed by the streets, rape, about a prostitute with whom they had previous or present acquaintance, sexual matters, health issues including HIV/AIDS; stories about family background, causes to be on the street such as family conflict, parent's death, family breakdown through divorce, evictions, etc., on job opportunities. Adult males talk about displacement or migration history, relocation and future aspirations and destiny; about the increase in the number of beggars, theft and robbery, about security matters, about the coming saint day. Adult women exchange views on household problems, children's health and diet and the future of their children; about security matters, about the coming saint day. And the elderly reciprocate information about the increase in the number of beggars, complains over able-bodied beggars, complaints about fakers who pretend as disabled, security matters including savings, about anti-social elements such as disease, illness and death; about their past socio-economic history, religious matters, about the coming holiday or saints day, on the sympathy of people, e.t.c.

In general, the average beggar of the road and the churchyard a variety of experience and not a little adventure. In the churchyards there is always an audience for any one who wants to talk, whether of his thoughts, his experience or his observations. There is plenty of opportunity to tell stories. Talk in the churchyard is of the open road and the day to come, and in that there is sufficient matter to occupy them. Beggar populations are ever changing. Every day new faces appear to take

---

<sup>18</sup> Getahun Haile, 36, is one of my informants who has helped me to gather subjects about which the beggars are usually interested to talk about. Here, the procedure I adopted was to follow my informant in his movements and in his experience as a beggar around the city, and trace out the nature of the various matters

the place of those that have passed on. They come and go without ceremony, with scarcely a greeting or 'fare you well'. Every new member is of interest for the news he brings or the rumors that he spreads. Each is interested in the other so far as he has some thing to tell about a disaster occurred in his country of origin, the road over which he has come, the behaviour of the police, or other significant details.

In every permanent churchyard or begging colony there is likely to be a permanent group that makes the colony its headquarters. Very young boys, women, sick men, the disabled and the elderly including some nuns often congregate and discuss personal relations and connections. Here is a place where every man's past is not a secret. Although some men may brush elbows for days and even weeks without ever learning one another's names and lead closed lives and grant others the same privilege, most of the less transient and permanent beggars have multifaceted personal relations in their vicinities, often in the churchyards. In fact, even among these beggar men, there are a few who are very much alone and contacts with their fellows are relatively formal and distant. As such, even in a world where the conditions of life are so 'elementary', prudence seems to dictate a certain amount of reserve and hence formality and convention in the relations of some men.

Amid these different smooth and pleasant reciprocal relationships, it is apparent that disputes become part of the beggars' daily life. Thus the churchyards and other beggar colonies are not at all times harmonious nestling grounds for the destitute they constitute. They are also veritable conflict or 'battlegrounds' of contending factions.

### **6.2.3. Conflict and its Settlement**

Although not as such very significant, dispute settlement is one aspect of the social life of the beggars. It is quite natural that people living together adjacent to one another usually tend to meet in

---

**beggars usually talk about. The emphasis here was on the network seen simply as a series of social matters or points of discussion, gossip or rumours. Here the concern is more with the content of interaction.**

conflict, the difference being one of kind and degree. In this respect, beggars never make short of conflicting situations and circumstances. The sources for most conflicts between beggars seem trivial. In most cases, children play together different games often rounds of hopscotch close to the begging zones and such relations mostly end up with quarrels and squabbles. The quarrels between children usually invite families to involve in the course of defending their respective children.

In the beggar communities, theft and robbery are quite common while sleeping causing whole sorts of suspicions by an individual on a group over another individual or group. Suspicion over theft usually falls on a person who was found to be a thief some time before and is believed to have a motive for it. Such kinds of suspicions usually bring about verbal attacks on the part of the conflicting parties and rarely lead to physical attacks.

When a beggar earns a good deal of alms, especially when he/she gets a sheer amount of left over food, he/she either shares part of it with close friends or he sells it or gives it to some others on credit basis who are strapped for the moment permitting to delay payment. Sometimes, however, refusal to share the leftover food may lead to conflict between close friends. Besides, when one fails to pay debt it could affect the social interaction, which is mainly guaranteed by reciprocity of items and information among people.

Conflict can also arise over claims of begging side. In the churchyards and adjacent streets, beggars have a specific place where they usually sit in some strategic positions, often and perform their daily routine. Sometimes, particularly during the saint days, where a large number of people overcrowd the church environs, some beggars would prefer to sit near to the main gate replacing other beggars who used to beg in such a location with out their knowledge. In such circumstance, short-lived verbal attacks among beggars seem to be usual. This is because just like everyone beggars need to protect their begging zone and places.



Conflict may arise between a group of beggars in a certain begging constituency and unassumed newcomer over a begging side. It is also very common for conflict to occur between two groups of beggars particularly between those who beg for their subsistence and other formalized beggars who ask for alms in the name of religion. The formalized begging, as exposed earlier, is usually operated in the name of church building, and the beggars are church personalities such as priests, nuns, and other persons licensed to ask for alms. Due to their appealing existence and soliciting money using a loud speaker and revealing pictures of the particular saint commemorated, many people seem to offer money to these people. Particularly paper money, if given, is almost exclusively provided to the formalized beggars. Despite this, people who beg for livings never accept the reasons the formalized beggars appeal to alms-givers; they are increasingly sceptical. They view them as people who beg with a pretext and an over coat of religion and who use the money collected for their own personal affairs. Besides, the destitute beggars consider the formalized beggars as stern barriers for the far lesser sympathy they receive from alms - givers. Consequently, it is apparent and quite frequent that the poor beggars, nearly at all, gear excessive verbal attacks upon those priests and seemingly religious persons who are found begging in the name of religion most notably during the Saint days. As such, most often, people who beg for their livelihood insult in a way that hurts or is intended to hurt the feelings or dignity of the formalized beggars. Many times, the formalized beggars never respond to the objections or disapproval forwarded. They rather gaze with staring eyes at people against whom they lodged feelings of dislike for short intervals and continue begging perhaps taking the act made by the objectors as a pretty naff behavior. The objectors also criticize and complain sharply and briefly merely indicating annoyance and soon turn to their business, begging.

Although the formalized, religion covered begging is not the major concern of the thesis, mention has to be made about its overall situation at this juncture. Particularly during the saint days,

as described earlier, a great many of formalized beggars are quite apparent asking for alms by involving themselves in a scenario of severe competition with the less fortunate destitute who bum money for survival. When I asked Asmamaw, an official in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, about the Church's knowledge and attitude towards the dozen of people who overcrowd the churchyards and the streets asking alms in the name of the Orthodox religion, he lamentably forwards the Church's firm disapproval. The following story illustrates more about the case in point.

Case No. 11. Asmamaw Berehanu, M, 30

Asmamaw says that every year many churches all over the country need renewal as a result of being old, maintenance or reconstruction owing to destruction by fire or other catastrophes; the clergy (servicemen) may need new clothes; and equipment and religious books might be required. During such occasions, according to Asmamaw, it has been usual that faithful members of the respective churches are chosen and responsibilities given for them to ask for alms and to collect money needed for one or a combination of these purposes mentioned. However, license is needed for such actions to be put into practice. For the necessary license to be given to the representatives of the respective church's, in whose name alms is going to be collected, certain formal procedures should however be followed. First the particular church should apply to the district diocese. After careful investigation of the case, the district diocese writes a letter indicating the appropriateness of the particular church's claim directly to the central diocese. Finally, the concerned body of the central diocese licenses the chosen faithful members of a particular church, who are given responsibilities to ask for alms in its name. Most often, many of the represented clergymen prefer to ask for alms here in Addis Ababa, for there are many churches in the name of all the saints and thereby increasing their chances of collecting alms on everyday basis. Besides, there is a widely held belief that citizens of Addis Ababa are devoted Christians and are also generous in offering alms particularly for people who ask for many in the name of religion. Asmamaw says that despite the existence of formal procedures for people to be licensed to collect money in the name of the religion, a great many of the clergymen do not want to follow them. As such, quite a lot of the people visibly seen asking for alms in the name of the religion do their activity holding a sort of sealed letter which they took from their particular church or else it is a forged one. Asmamaw says that although a few of them might be genuine and honest, the overwhelming majorities are indeed collecting money in an illegal way. Since there is no strict supervision and organized network linking them with their church or with the diocese which gave them the license, even the activities of the licensed ones is not seriously controlled. According to Asmamaw, concerning the issue, several discussions have been made at different levels and the Orthodox Church has always been criticizing this illegal activity often through the church's newspapers and magazines and efforts have been made to make the general public aware. Overall, Asmamaw vehemently argues that to a greater extent, begging in the name of the Orthodox religion we see these days is not in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church's

interest and approval and hence has to be severely condemned and a curb should quickly be put. Asmamaw says that the church the government and the alms giver have a collective responsibility to deal with the issue.

From the story portrayed in the above case, it seems clear that attempts to probe the overall situation of the seemingly formalized begging have invariably raised other questions; genuineness of the religion covered alms seekers, issues of accountability, who is responsible to control the situation and how a curb should be put, etc. In any way, however, the religion covered begging seems serious these days needing careful consideration. It could have grave consequences for it might encourage and perpetuate the 'culture' of begging. It seems also unfair to compete with the genuinely needy people who are by far with out options; often conflict and hostilities frequently observed between the religion covered beggars and the destitute who ask for alms essential for survival fundamentally emanate from the perception of the destitute that the act of the 'formalized' beggars is unfair and illegal. As such, the attitude and reaction of the destitute toward the 'formalized' beggars often seem to be tempered with antipathy and antagonism.

In general, minor personal conflicts arise but most often would go to an end after a very short span of nagging, complaints or other forms of verbal assaults. Or they are easily rectified by the elderly, the nun and other people notably worshippers who are found close to the conflicting parties on the spot. Here, order without law seems to dominate. In general, most conflicts, which would arise in the begging constituencies, seem trivially caused, ad hock and part of the day-to-day affairs of the beggars.

Nevertheless, though it is very rare, some beggars, particularly young and able-bodied beggars involve themselves in serious conflicts whatever the case may be. Such serious clashes may end up with exchanging bitter attacks, heavy blowing, slapping or other kinds of physical attacks to the extent that they may affect the social life of others or the majority. In such circumstances, occasionally small clusters of beggars enthralingly collect to discuss or enquire about the dispute.

But the event is more brought fully to the attention of the police thereby the police involve to provide legal control.

### **6.3. Relations through Voluntary Associations**

Although associations<sup>19</sup> of various kinds have been created and evolved through time to adapt and fit changing socio-economic and cultural environment, voluntary associations come to the forefront functioning among rural as well as urban Ethiopian societies. According to Ottaway (1976:359), the stress on the voluntary is important. This is because voluntary associations are not institutions, like the family, village or a neighborhood into which an individual is born, but organizations people join by choice, because they see an advantage in doing so. In most cases, joining the organizations involves paying dues regularly. Further underlining their formal character, voluntary associations often have written constitutions or by laws.

Many scholars have worked on rural and urban voluntary associations in Ethiopia (Endrias and Pankhrust 1958; Hamer 1967; Mekuria 1973; Fecadu 1974; Ottaway 1976; Koehn and Waldron 1976; Kebebew 1978; Aklilu and Dessalegn 2000 and Taddesse 2000) among others. With slight differences notably on when, where and how have evolved, all tend to argue that voluntary

---

<sup>19</sup> According to Macmillan Dictionary of Anthropology (Seymour - Smith 1986:18) associations are groups of persons who join together or are joined together for a particular activity, interest or purpose, have been classified along a number of different dimensions; for example, contractual versus non contractual, voluntary versus involuntary, with or with out explicit purpose, incorporated or unincorporated, formal or informal, open or restricted, to name only the most common dichotomies. The concern of this thesis is however to peoples interaction in voluntary associations, most notably and in fact exclusively, three voluntary associations: "idir", "mahiber" and "iqub" merely for their popularity in bringing inter-cultural collaborations.

associations contributed immensely to national integration both in social and political dimensions. Besides, they contend that voluntary associations have been used to assist individuals and groups. Above all, they are believed to serve as social lubricants that have contributed to the enhancement of social cohesion within the community.

Among others, Fecadu (1974:367) made plain that various types of voluntary associations serving the urban population of Ethiopia exist and still continue to exist. According to him, *idir*, a polytechnic group voluntary association; religious clubs (eg. *Mahiber*, *Senbete*, etc.); rotating credit associations (eg. *Ikub*); ethnic associations; regional development associations; and modern voluntary associations such as sports clubs, YMCA and philanthropic associations. Of these, *mahiber*, *iqub*, and *idir* are the most common ones.

*Mahiber* is originally the term applied to a religious fraternal association common among Orthodox Christians. Each *mahiber* is established in the name of a patron saint to which people gather once in a month in the day of that particular patron saint. According to Tadesse(2000:13) *idir* is another form of indigenous voluntary association which basically involves regular financial contribution by members that should be used towards solving problems of bereavement, sickness, accident and the like. It serves its members partly as a social security institution and most recently, it has also been involved in community development affairs. Tadesse further conceptualized another popular voluntary association, *iqub*, as an institution established for the purpose of saving money. Each member of an *iqub* agrees to periodically pay a fixed amount of money into a common pool and receives, in his turn, one lump sum.

For Fecadu, *idir* is the most numerous and contributes most to national integration. Recent studies, however, indicate that people's interaction and cohesion through *idir* is becoming weaker and weaker. Aklilu and Desalegn (2000) among others observed that there is a strong sign that due to

chronic poverty, many people are being forced to quit voluntary social institutions in particular *idir* because they cannot afford to pay their monthly contributions.

Regarding beggars, their social background in general and economic status in particular highly limits their participation and hence are largely deprived of involvement in such voluntary associations. As it was noted earlier, for the most part, *iqub* stands out as the most important and the only voluntary association in all the sites in the study. In most cases, the beggars have modified a great deal of the traditional forms and functions of *iqub* so as to be able to fit and serve for their particular context and purpose.

Presently, in all the research sites covered in the study, two important voluntary associations - *mahiber* and *idir* are entirely non-existent. *Mahiber*, an important get together that promotes people's interaction and social cohesion is marginal to the beggars. *Idir* as a form of voluntary association is also at the edge of the beggars. Kebebew and Alemayehu (1969) associate the evolution of *idir* with problems having to do with death. As such, *idir* is a burial society where the main concern is that a deceased member receives proper burial. This means that during the three-day mourning period, all the necessary arrangements ranging from digging the grave to feeding the mourners and the members of the society is taken care of by the society. For many, as Aklilu and Desalegn (2000:3) noted, "proper burial and support during the difficult days mourning takes higher priority than any thing else." Tadesse (2000:5) also writes:

The fact that the problem of burial is a central concern to Ethiopians can be illustrated by one of the most valued traditional Ethiopian blessing, namely, *Kabari Ayasatah*, meaning "May not God deny you some one who will burry you." The implication of this statement is that it is an honour to have a relative or some one else who can assume the responsibility of burying a dead person. Besides, the presence of a large crowd at the graveyard at the time of burial is highly appreciated and sought in the traditional Ethiopian culture.

With regard to the beggars, such essential association does not exist. This is not because a beggar does not fell sick or die; in fact, disease and death are the most natural and inherent aspects of the living conditions of the beggars, which are intolerable to them, chiefly a symbol of their

degradation. It is rather their chronic poverty, which defies their participation in such essential associations.

Besides, the mobility and instability of the beggars, which is in fact, both cause and consequence of their migratory existence, unfits them for organized group life. More importantly however, they are propertyless, and therefore the incentive of fixed ownership and fixed residence to remain faithful to most institutions seems to have gone, at least temporarily. While men of property secure themselves best by associating with their neighbor and remaining in one locality, most, most beggars seem to safeguard themselves by moving away from every difficulty.

As such, most beggars are not organized in such voluntary associations such as *mahiber* or *idir*. But there are few members of the beggar community who have involvement in *mahiber* or *idir*. According to informants, some beggars who are born here in the capital, those migrants and the displaced who lived in Addis Ababa for quite a long period of time and who have permanent residence and who could afford to pay for the monthly payments participate in *idir*. Those individuals who could host the gathering in their house and who could serve different kinds of food and drink to other members have involvement in a *mahiber*.

In most cases, those migrant or displaced beggars who are members of a certain *idir* and/or *mahiber* are those who at a distant past settled in different sections of Addis Ababa, where presumably they know people who helped them become integrated more easily into urban life. The ties that derive from family relationships and neighborhood were thus important in facilitating the transition from rural to urban life.

By and large, however, most beggars are not members of a *mahiber* or an *idir*. In this respect, when a beggar falls sick or when a beggar dies, the nearby beggars are the immediate sources of help. When some one dies at the churchyard, street or any other locality, other beggars turbulently inform the police and the police together with people from the municipality take the coffin for

burial. If some one is seriously sick and had to be taken to the philanthropic, the nearby beggars rarely contribute money and telephone to the philanthropic and inform the case; most often, they carry the sick and take him to the philanthropic organizations.

There are no so many philanthropies in the city helping the beggars; only a few missionaries of charities have taken the ultimate step of voluntarily helping the lives of urban exiles - beggars- at times of illness. Around my research site, a case in point is missionaries of charity-home of the sick and dying destitute- located at *woreda* 13 *kebele* 03, on the road to Menelike Hospital. The clients are not only beggars but also all sorts of poverty-stricken people who come to visit, seeking help. As such the elderly and disabled persons, poor families with dependent children as well as the poor young and homeless people are eligible. But the beggars being extremely poor and having no other alternative are of special concern. The missionaries primarily provide medical treatment. Shelter and their meals are also taken care of until they recover from their illness; though quite a lot end out dying. Whatever their perspective may be, the missionaries of charity are a political. They are more concerned with individuals' souls than with the socio-economic causes and poverty and/or the beggary problem. Besides, the missionaries do not enter well in coalitions with government. In general, the missionaries of charity bear a tremendous responsibility in taking care of the ill poor people to insure their survival. However, they cannot do it alone. Other concerned individuals and groups and most of all the government has a massive responsibility to participate in helping the poor and create a real safety net. In sum, it can be said that by and large, the beggars live solely by begging and their efforts took place in an environment in which government and non-government organizations and philanthropic agencies are of less help.

Interestingly enough, *iqub*, a form of saving institution, stands out as the most important institution in all the sites in the study. The reasons are of two fold. For one thing, they do not have a good deal of money, which hampers their aspiration from approaching financial institutions. Second,



the beggars are hardly able to get access to formal financial institutions such as Banks. Even if beggars manage to save and accumulate money, lack of a permanent *kebele* to reside and thereby a consequent lack of ID cards, which is an important requirement to put money in Banks, makes them marginal to formal financial institutions. As a result, *iqub* remains to be the last ideal alternative for them to save money. This also shows the absence of links between the beggars and the government.

The participation of destitute beggars in *iqub* signals cooperation in groups and therefore are related to traditional virtues like honesty, the keeping of commitments, reliable performance of duties, reciprocity and the like which in one way or another are by products of a set of instantiated norms constituting social capital. All *iqub* members embody a certain radius of trust, that is, the circle of beggars among whom cooperative norms are operative. In my view, as it is also generally the situation in all the research sites, group solidarity through *iqub* has a wide radius of trust for *iqub* members constitute of people from different age groups, genders, ethnic and village background and other socio-economic characteristics. The following list of members of an *iqub* at the churchyard of the savior of the world as a case in point may illustrate the fact that the manifestation of social capital through membership in *iqub*, which in turn reveals wide networks of trust.

N0	Name of members	Age	Sex	Place of origin	Ethnicity
1	Assefa Alemayehu	22	M	Gojam	Amhara
2	Tilahun Tessema	32	M	Gondor	Amhara
3	Yeshe Yalalefu	32	F	Gojam	Amhara
4	Getachew Zewdie	35	M	Gojam	Amhara
5	Geremew Adugna	40	M	Shoa	Oromo
6	Addis Agegnaw	33	M	Gojam	Amhara
7	Abaynesh Tesfa	45	F	Wollo	Amhara
8	Fantaye Hadgu	26	F	Tigray	Tigre

*Source: My Field Notes*

In general, among beggars, networks of trust through membership in *iqub* largely resides in people of different socio-economic categories and, not a rather a narrow circle of personal friends, age or sex group, ethnic or village background. Of course, strangers may fall into a different category, as it is difficult for people to trust those outside of their circle. By and large, however, *iqub* in the beggar communities seem to consist of a number of differing social groups that permit multiple, membership and identities.

As Fecadu in Ottaway (1976:367) noted many scholars have argued that one of the major functions of voluntary associations in Africa has been ethnic cohesion and articulation of ethnic boundaries. This paper, however, takes the opposite view and agrees with Fecadu's (1976) and Taddesse's (2000) observations that some voluntary associations cross - cut ethnic divisions, and thereby function as an instrument for national integration. In this particular case, among the very poorest beggars *iqub* as a voluntary association was found to bridge differences in ethnic background. In fact, in Ethiopia, inter-cultural collaborations have been possible through some of the most popular voluntary associations. In this respect, Taddesse (2000:13) concludes:

It is true that almost all Ethiopians are aware of belonging to a particular ethnic/population group and recognize obligation to that group. However, daily life and economic cooperation, partying, mutual aid in times of trouble, are all carried out, above all, with fellow members of the community and co-members of voluntary associations. This is true particularly with the members of *iddir* and *equb*. Membership in these associations is based, in most cases, on spatial and community rather than on ethnic, religious, and gender or wealth backgrounds. This has opened opportunity for interaction between and among Ethiopians of different socio-cultural backgrounds, which is the base for inter-cultural collaboration.

As Korten (1968) observed, conventionally, *iqub* members put their share on a weekly basis. The beggars, however, seem to modify the general principles and activities with regard to the operation of *iqub* so as to fit their particular socio-economic situation. In this respect, there are similarities as well as striking differences along the different begging constituencies and even among

different *iqubs* within the same begging zone. Some make the contribution on a daily basis. Some others put their share on a weekly basis. Still others contribute their share once in every ten days or once in two weeks. The amount of money to be contributed from every member as well varies across different *iqubs* depending on his/her income and consensus among members upon the foundation of the *iqub*. In most instances, members of an *iqub* are those who know each other and who usually beg close to one other in a particular place; the group is more select and less transient-permanent and stationary. These days, however, the entire existence of these permanent beggars seems to be in danger. Abandonment and dislocation is causing these destitute to disintegrate and to move from one run down place to another making them 'urban nomads'.

The destitute beggars do not have a permanent *iqub bet* (house), as it is the usual case in the wider society. Their *iqub bet* (house) is the open field, be it churchyard or street. During the day the occasion is held, mostly all members avail themselves and lots would be drawn. But winners do not call any *wass* (guarantor) who give guarantee to the winners to fulfill his due until the rest of the members get what they have deposited. The security rather resides upon mutual trust. During the occasion, winners do not buy *tella* or any other local drink to invite members. This is obviously because of their chronic poverty. For such arrangements to happen, the amount of money one would collect should be bigger. But the situation in the beggar communities does not allow for most of the usual and conventional activities in relation to *iqub* to be put into practice. The amount of money one would collect is of course equal to what one has been deposited for many days, weeks or months. As such, the sole important function of *iqub* in the beggar communities is entirely saving and not profit making. Socially, however, the impact of *iqub* is not far reaching for it does not play a broader function other than mere saving. In this particular context, to use Ottaway's (1976) phrases *iqub* is essentially a forced savings and credit association, which collects dues from its members regularly, allocating the entire amount, collected each time to one of the members in turn.

It is conventionally argued that the driving force behind an *iqub* is the desire to save money for a specific purpose. The motivations for saving money through *iqub* as described by Imperial Government of Ethiopia (IGE) and as quoted in Tadesse (2000:10) are as varied as the use to which the money is put. And the motives vary in accordance with the kind of people involved in *iqub*: “craftsmen planning to buy the tools of their trade; shopkeepers planning to expand their stock; civil servants desires of owning a house; farmers wanting to buy land, implements or livestock, etc., go for *iqub*.” In our particular case, the motives for saving money through *iqub* are diverse and vary from beggar to beggar. *Iqub* serves such persons a valuable means of forced saving to be used for each individual person’s particular interest. Most often, beggars go for *iqub* for future financial security. Others save money through *iqub* to secure some particular expenses most notably expenses that have to do with house rent. Still, others go for *iqub* to accumulate money and to return back to their places of origin some time after. Interestingly enough, however, the young and adult beggars participate in *iqub* cardinally to cease begging and to start a mini business, especially street vending. In fact, I know of a young beggar man who was a panhandler during the early days of my fieldwork and whom I found vending small articles at the church of the Saviour of the World towards the end of my fieldwork using the money which he saved through *iqub*. Although the latter type seems very infrequent, there are people who temporarily beg and who have a vision to latter engage themselves in other forms of coping strategies other than begging using the money they have collected and would collect from frequent involvement in *iqub*. The following case is an illustrative example for this sort of plan and aspiration.

Case No. 12. Deresse Aweke, M, 27

Deresse Aweke is a disabled young man born twenty seven years ago in a place called Debremarkos (Gojam). At the age of five, Deresse along with his mother, came to Addis Ababa to visit relatives. After a short stay in Addis, his mother returned to Debremarkos leaving Deresse behind to be brought up at his relatives house. Accordingly, he was brought up here in Addis. His relatives were able to send him to school and as a result he was able to complete grade nine. Because of

the disagreement and conflict Derese met with his relatives, however, he became evicted to leave his relatives house and could not further his education. But short after he left home, he was able to get employment as a labourer in one of the factories in Addis Ababa. In due course, an unpleasant event happened to him unexpectedly; one day when he was on duty, a damaging chemical was poured on to his right leg and incidentally Deresse immediately lost his leg. After the injury, the factory in which he has been working gave Deresse a good deal of money as a compensation and Deresse left his work place once and for all for he became incapable of effectively carrying out his menial job. Deresse says that because of his improvidence, he lost the money he received as a compensation merely because of heavy drinking. The moment he lost all his money, he resorted to begging for he has no one to turn to. His daily income from begging ranges from 5 to 6 birr. Deresse hates begging and has a plan to leave begging as soon as possible. He told me that he has now accumulated a good sum of money through *iqub* and has an intention to start a mini business on the street most notably vending socks and other second hand garments for which his capital might allow to do so.

However, it is to be kept in mind that the beggars involvement in *iqub* should not pave the way for generalizing that begging is a game in the sense of a tricky or cunning plan. Most beggars are not putting their money they receive into their financial account or so. They ask for money and save it to purchase specific things they essentially need to exist. For the overwhelming majority, begging is in fact a means of livelihood and survival; often many people bum for money for their most basic need-food.

Overall, among beggars, the roles and functions of social networks and associations are clearly distinguished. It can be said that they are largely isolated from involvement in voluntary associations, which have a far-reaching social and religious bearings being restricted to *iqub* in a limited scope. In this respect, to make use of Lourenco - Lindell's (2001) words, social networks in the beggar community can be regarded as more flexible and responsive to individual needs than associations. And the fact that the poorest beggars may find it unaffordable to gain entry into associations, makes the operation of personal relationships for support all the more important.

Nevertheless, according to informants<sup>20</sup>, in the past, beggars most notably those who used to live in plastic shelters had a well-organized and strong associational ties. In those good old days, active involvement in *iqub*, *idir* and *mahiber* were quite common. In fact, it is true that many of the migrants and the displaced used to set up shacks in the ubiquitous shanty places that surround the sprawling city of Addis Ababa. And in these squatters as some people say the sense of community was strong.

After the shelters got demolished, *idir* and *mahiber* have become marginal. The scope of *iqub* has also become very minimal. Both the numbers of *iqub*'s as well as the numbers of *iqub* members has drastically declined. This is as a result of arrest and dislocation of quite a number of beggars by government people and a consequent lack of permanent residence and insecurity with regards to the beggars tomorrow's destiny. It is, in fact, true that the government has frequently been bearing a pressure on the street corner people. Claiming that the problem of vagrancy is immense in the city, the government people have been and seem to be very energetic in keeping down the number of apparently idle men. Despite the truth or falsity of the claim, the most severely hit group who have always been facing this pressure were the beggars. This is the harshest treatment the beggars have been receiving and still think of it with much tension, stress and above all insecurity. Cumulatively, all these added would make the characteristic of a beggar as pessimists who see every situation with suspicion. By the very nature of their occupation, they are deprived of even the minimum requirement of survival and liable to arrest or forced dislocation for vagrancy, crime and trespassing; to be penniless becomes to tantamount to a crime. The government ignores them generally, but now and again pities or is hostile to them. Often the act of sweeping them of their begging constituencies

---

<sup>20</sup> Among others, Getahun Haile, 36, and Mekonen Alemayehu, 38, were the informants who informed me the success among beggars to organize and participate themselves in voluntary associations notably "idir", "iqub" and "mahiber" in retrospect. The same informants also made me aware about the present situations most beggars found themselves in with regards to their over all security in particular.

made the beggars lamentably tangle their disquieting emotions: anger, frustration, fear, anomie and a lingering malaise. Overwhelmingly their reaction remains passive and apathetic. With no status in organized society, they dream out and long for what can be called a 'classless' society where their multifaceted impoverishment and all sorts of mistreatment and inequalities shall be abolished. One informant expressed the beggars overall position modifying one Amharic proverbial expression "ለአገሩ ባዳ ለሰወ. እንግዳ" meaning one who is marginal having little importance for a place and a stranger to people into "ለአገሩም ለሰወም ባዳ" meaning one who is marginal and who is given little importance by his country and by his people. To the beggar, the act of government, trying to keep him out of his begging area, is an expression of irresponsible, discriminatory, and prejudiced power-and so it is.

The beggar men are not saddled with responsibility for law and order. As they make their way about the city, they do not seem to incur disturbance of public order, destruction of property or violence as such. Although they don't have much to loose and to protect and may not have the same interest with the settled men of the community who have permanent attachments and property they are law abiding. Of course, although most beggars may be physically a part of a community, they actually do not become absorbed into its socio-economic life. As such most beggar men who fail to win a place in the life of the larger community often take their own course. The courses are, however, more often harmless and seem to be in harmony with the interests of the larger society, but is some times counter to them. To these ends, washing these paupers out of the streets seems irresponsible for such an act doesn't stop begging; rather such movements may pathologize the problem.

The researcher is not here to advocate that the beggars should be left as we find them in the city now and to overlook the problems they may create to the society at large. It is not also to mean that we have to contain our destitute citizens in their place forever. It is rather to say that their

situations should properly be handled. Although the beggar communities principally affect their inhabitants because of congested living conditions, poor housing, lack of open spaces and a polluted unsanitary environment, they may also affect neighboring areas and sometimes the whole urban community. Improper disposal of waste can degrade water and air quality. Diseases may spread into neighboring areas and, in epidemics across closer areas. Idleness and vagrancy may result in the spread of crime, etc. Often, it is argued that the beggar colonies are breeding grounds for such anti-social elements. But, whatever their impacts and consequences may be, what we should do dislocating these fellow citizens-urban exiles; but rather we have to improve their situation through short- term and long-term solutions. As such, begging should not be treated as an offence or crime; and the destitute should not be social outcasts and marginalized individuals. More thought needs to be given to the removal of the causes that lead people to begging, which is indeed the crux of the matter in averting beggary. To these ends, the beggars should not be seen as a mere aberration from the normal processes of ‘mainstream’ society, but as crystal clear symptoms of its failures.

#### **6.4 Social Interaction Outside Group Boundary.**

The beggars have not always been beggars. Like most of us, they were reared in a home and are so far a product of home life. They enter up on the life of begging some time later. They bring with them, as a rule, the habits, beliefs and memories gained in the more stable existence in the family and community. Frequently, it has been their incapability to go along with that much more stable existence that let them on the street as beggars. To this end, most of them are disengaged and disintegrated in different spheres of the larger society. There are, however, a few factors, which minimally permit social iteration between the beggars and the society at large. Among others, ethnicity, love life and leisure and entertainment activities are quite revealing.

##### **6.4.1 Ethnicity**



According to Valentine (1968), the lower class poor as a 'sub society' are by definition of course a socio-economic stratum. Their place in the 'whole system' is defined primarily by their relationship to other strata. Thus discussion of the poor generally involve much explicit or implicit reference to these other categories of stratification and at least implied comparison with them. This dimension of sub structural and sub cultural differentiation can then be examined in terms of their relevance to the lower class as such in two ways. First, they will define some internal variations or heterogeneity within the lower class. Second, they will differentiate various aspects of the rest of society, each of which impinges on the lower class in some particular way. For Valentine, one dimension and subsystem variation, commonly viewed as secondary to social class, is particularly important to students of culture and has an especially confused status in the poverty literature. This is ethnic group membership. In terms of network relations, ethnicity is in fact argued to be a spring board which links people and that ensures survival in most societies both in material as well as social aspects of life (Glazer 1968; Barth 1968; Gutkind 1974; and Roosens 2000) among others.

In this particular case, among the poorest beggars, ethnic identities play differential and disproportional social networks within the wider society. Of course, most beggars eke out a meager living on the street merely because of lack of any alternative to turn to. But this doesn't mean that they do not have relatives or kins men or other people having family or genealogical connections in the city. Rather the lower socio-economic situation the beggars relatives or others having connections with the beggars have largely incapacitated them to help the beggars economically and to prevent the beggars from entering into the life of begging or help them cease the street corner life. In spite of this fact, beggars never make short of ethnic relations with the society at large.

Though not as significant as ethnic relations observed among beggars littered on the streets, churchyards or other collective quarters, it is possible to see in ethnicity something valuable, something that can be set off against the beggar communities and is used as a resource to slightly overcome the plight of the beggarly existence. That is one facet of the relationship between beggars and the larger society through network of ethnicity. Some beggars visit people having kin relations in an on and off manner; most notably during holidays and at times of serious crisis in their begging life particularly during periods of chronic illness - whatever the cause may be - disease, malnutrition or any other - or political upheavals that may endanger their existence or any form of external threat. There are some beggars who are given housing accommodations by relatives free of charge or on rental basis paying small amounts. According to informants who lived by begging for long, there were beggars who eventually clear up the begging constituencies and integrated into the larger society. The ties that derive from family and kin or neighborhood relations were important in facilitating the transition from the life of begging into a more stable existence in the city. To use Mitchel's (1956:695) words, ethnicity has made some beggars to get 'stabilized' in the city, influencing them not to make intermittent journeys back to their rural homes. This is not, however, to mean that presently, extended networks exist between the beggars and the society through family or kin ties.

Nevertheless, regardless of the real differences in the content and quality of life within the ethnic group - perhaps relative differences in wealth, in prestige, and in power - social ties exist between beggars and the larger society along ethnic lines. This is in large part a mixed and subtle outcome of the migration of ethnic groups to an open society. This argument agrees with what Roosens (2000:88) have contended in his discussion of the relationship between migration and ethnicity. Roosens says:

In situations of inter-ethnic interaction over many years, as exemplified by the mixed urban areas of Belgium, ethnic identities are closely tied with kinship and family genealogies. The backbone of immigrant ethnic networks and groups established in Brussels seems to be kinship and family, and the feeling of continuity over the generations, which goes with it. The overwhelming majority of immigrants all keep their "home" family network and local community as their first and most important social space of reference. As migration very soon developed into chain migration, family relations on local community relations in the country of origin and in the country of immigration became vital and instrumental'.

In general, beggars are not totally isolated from having kin relations in the larger society. They seem to maintain their ethnic identity, which provides them with a fairly moderate sense of security in an essentially fast changing environment. Most beggars who are born here in the capital held ties with other kinsmen and family members and contacts and interactions are

frequent and relatively intense in range. Some of the migrants and the displaced beggars also go to limited lengths to maintain community ties with their ethnic kin because they are often the ones they can turn to in times of need. Kinship and ethnic relationships help, but are not as critical as in the rural areas. The feeling of ethnic groups and community togetherness, thus in effect, briefly serves as a springboard for survival in the city. Those new comers who do not have the address to locate their relatives or people who come originally from similar regions are, however, exceptions to this general phenomenon.

#### **6.4.2. Love Life**

The majority of the beggar communities interviewed are unmarried<sup>21</sup>. Those who were married are separated, at least temporarily from their families. In fact, most men and women beggars are older than the average man on the road and would be expected, therefore to have had marital experience. As such, they are content to live in the situation in which they presently find themselves in with in their begging constituencies. Their mobile character often increases their and instability and womanless existence. Nevertheless, the beggars never make short of the family life. Often marital ties with out formal solemnization prevail. Many times, the husband goes after his wife whom he misses a lot. When husband and wife go separately, some times they run away with their other lovers. Choosing and changing partners is also common. In many ways, however, the beggars, particularly the young ones, engage themselves in sexual contacts with particular segments of the society at large; most notably with prostitutes.

The younger beggars, especially those on the road and off again by turns, are able at times to save money and put on a front. These younger men are frequently able, therefore, to get into the social life of the larger community in which they find themselves. When they are with money to spend they go to the limit while it lasts, and they go out to beg and save up another stake. Usually they come into contact with a number of prostitutes in the city. Usually they are as transient in their attachments to women as to their begging. Since most of them are unmarried or are living apart from their wives, sex relations are naturally illicit. They do not want and/or succeed in establishing permanent, or even quasi-permanent, relationships with women

---

<sup>21</sup> **According to the report of MOLSA (1992:33) for instance, about half of the sampled beggars in the city were unmarried, only twenty percent were married while the remaining thirty percent were divorced, separated and widowed. Although these profiles may not exactly hold true at present, they may serve as a benchmark for other studies. Infact, the situation in most of the research sites in this study as reported by informants more or less witnessed a proof for the results given by MOLSA.**

largely because of drink, unpresentable appearance, or unattractive personality and above all poverty-penniless. For them the only accessible women are prostitutes who overcrowd the city. In their sex life, as in their whole existence, the beggars move in a vicious circle. As social outcasts, they still want the companionship, which their mode of life denies them.

### **6.4.3. Leisure and Recreation**

There are various definitions of leisure and recreation, and the two terms are often confused. Leisure is defined as that part of the day that remains when work time and time needed for existence and subsistence are subtracted ( Neulinger, 1983,7). It is discretionary time available to an individual to use as he or she wishes. Recreation refers to activities undertaken during leisure time and encompasses all those things a person or group chooses to do to make leisure time more interesting and enjoyable. The essence of recreation lies in the fact that it reflects voluntary participation and personal enjoyment (Heath, 1993:109).

Leisure and recreation are social needs and are as necessary for the welfare of the individual as the more concrete social services such as health or education. Most criteria of social well-being include leisure and recreation, thereby recognizing the importance of non-work activity, including access to opportunities and freedom to enjoy them (Smith, 1977:270). The World Leisure and Recreation Association's Charter for Leisure declares that ' Leisure is a basic Human Right'. This implies the obligation of governments to recognize and to protect this right and of citizens to respect the right of fellow citizens to leisure (quoted in Westland, 1983:12). The Charter according to Westland goes on to state that recreation is a social service of similar importance as health and education. It stresses the need to provide recreational opportunities on a universal bases and to ensure reasonable access to those opportunities. According to Heath (1993:115), however, despite the fact that it is widely recognized that leisure and recreation are essential elements in the development and well-being of society and individuals, access and participation are not easy for the poorer sectors of society. Obviously, Heath says, cost or lack of income is the major constraint affecting outdoor recreation of the poor.

In this particular case, killing time is not a problem or a major concern with the beggar men. Most often they are tremendously busy with their daily routine - begging. Apart from begging, however, the *Tela bets*, *Arake bets* or *Tej bets* and other small establishments are the only forms of commercialized amusements within the range of their purse. Even these are only patronized infrequently and by a few. Practically all beggars drink when liquor is available often in times of memorial feasts such as *qurban* offered by the Orthodox Christians at a particular church. There are some beggar men who get drunk everyday in so far as they have the money. The majorities are however periodic drinkers who have sober periods of a week, a month or two, or even for longer periods. These are the men who beg all day long or who want their money for other expenses or who save what they left with after all survival expenses or else can't afford at all. For the vast majority there is no pastime save the passing show and the crowded thoroughfare. Some of them spend their leisure time shuffling along the street window-shopping. Perhaps they will go to the parks and lie on the grass. The young beggars mostly met their equals to chew chat, to smoke, gamble, to engage themselves in a pleasant chitchat or they visit their lovers down town, usually prostitutes.

The beggars, as they meander along the street, are looking for something to break the monotony. They stand on the curb for hours watching people pass. They notice every conspicuous person and follow with interest, perhaps sometimes with envy, the wavering movements of every passing drunk. If a policeman stops any one on the street they also stop and listen to. If they notice a man running into an alley their curiosity is aroused. Wherever they see a group gathered, they linger. They will stop to listen if two men are arguing. Most of all they spend hours sitting on the side and the street or in front of the gate of the church or around the yard talking with each other in the open forum. This open forum, obviously outdoor, is a place where beggars gather in a seemingly formal meeting to discuss topics of interest. In fact, it is not necessary and thinkable as well to have a hall and govern themselves by some sort of organization. Interestingly enough, however, the forum is usually well maintained. This is a usual activity most notably during afternoons and especially during the night where the potential alms - givers - the passers -by- are rarely there for help.

In most of the nights, the beggars get together and exchange views and as such the churchyards and street corner turn to a place of laugh and talk among various members of the beggar community. Information would also come from far off places by a vagrant beggar who stayed away for some time and wander a lot. In fact, a large minority of the beggars seem to be episodically mobile, moving from shelters to streets and back again, and also spending periods of time in different quarters of the city and even in different parts of the country. They are the most mobile in moving from place to place, between city and country, between city and suburb, between city and city, and between region and region. During holidays, notably the saint days, it is common for beggars to move to other churches where a particular saint's day is commemorated and to which they did not have permanent attachment. During most afternoons and most of the nights, they congregate idly and exchange views - all sorts of bad and fascinating experiences and things they have observed. Evenings and nights are filled with talk, surprise, fun, and grief and of course planning some actions. All along the churchyards and street corners, the talk was not mostly about what would happen but rather what was happening.

## **Chapter Seven**

### **Summary and Conclusion**

The present ethnographic account, written with insight and sympathy, of the life and problems of the poorest beggars, examined life in the street corner, a frontier that was already beginning to be forcedly and violently vanishing by the government after the field work for this study was already completed. As such, attempts were made to picture the life of poor urban exiles, life in the main stem of the streets and churchyards of the central city of Addis Ababa. To these ends, this final chapter of the thesis offers a summary of the rationale to study the impoverished beggars and the approach followed, re-estates the major findings and forwards short-term and long-term proposals for a public policy that could prevent and alleviate poverty in general and, the problem of beggary in particular.

In the wider international context, there is not as such a bulk of literature on the problem of beggary. The limited scholarly works have been largely targeting at local fact-finding studies. Thus, there seems to be a wide gap on the social science literature regarding concepts, theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches to the study of the socio-economic aspects of the problem of beggary and the life of the actors. Besides, the limited researches undertaken so far were basically survey-oriented attempts, which heavily lean to understand the beggary problem following quantitative approaches at a macro level. One of the most serious problems with such a profile is that it draws a flat, static picture. It does not provide insight into the dynamics of the problem. Above all, most of the studies lack ideological and political neutrality to expose the beggary problem from the point of view of the victims. Ethiopia is not an exception to this general trend.

In Ethiopia, the problem of beggary has been given little attention so far. We find very limited literature, which directly focused on the issue under consideration. The beggary problem has

been largely addressed by small or large-scale survey researches providing analysis based on statistics. The macro approaches were sought to examine the quantifiable characteristics of the beggars using such indicators as age, sex, educational level, ethnic background, etc at a particular moment in time. Although the qualitative approach can not be said to be wholly absent in past researches on the problem of beggary in an urban setting, what literature there fails to analyze fully and qualitatively the overall situation of beggars. It is this gap that this research attempted to fill by providing analysis based on the point of view of the actors themselves.

Begging is one of the most conspicuous, readily visible social events and problems especially during the religious comemorable days of the Ethiopian Orthodox church, notably the days of the saints. Hence, the study was undertaken in such a context. Since both the context of begging- the ceremonial days- and the event itself are inherently sensitive aspects of social life, it demands care and ethnographic skill in attempting to conduct ethnographic research on begging. It is not amenable to a free use of some methods of data collection.

The world of beggars like any other life ways is full of challenges, plans and aspirations meanings, symbols, prejudice, skills, techniques, conflicts, etc. The ceremonial days and places and the temples environs are the stages where the beggardom population exhibit their skills as skillful actors and dramatists. Begging is a business, which demands commitment, competitiveness, tactfulness and alertness from the beggars. The fit would survive and the novice and the uncompetitive would lose in the social contest for the scarce resource, the alms. Begging as a social event presupposes a convenient social setting, a potentially responsive, relatively large number of passers by, a dramatic presentation of their case by beggars, justifiable evidences for responding to the beggars, and a tacit, socially recognized level of understanding and usually wordless communication between the beggars and the begged.

In this particular study, begging has been situated in the wider historical context of the country instead of solely dwelling on synchronic description. The current beggary problem in Ethiopia has to be seen on the basis of some natural and man made factors that have occurred over time. It is therefore misleading to try to depict the beggary problem on the basis of partial events and specific periods in time. To know about the condition of beggary is thus to learn the Ethiopian situation at large. As such, closer scrutiny of the trajectories of the natural factors, the economy, demography and public policy, show how these developments have converged to create one peculiar form of chronic poverty-widespread problem of beggary- in this decade.

The causes for the problem of beggary are diverse. Therefore, it is impossible to attribute one major cause for people's resortment to begging. The causes are rather multifaceted. Although it is possible to define a category of beggars on the basis of particular causes that induced them to take up begging, most often, the path from home to the street to beg is not a one-way process. Many of the conditions that spawn the problem of beggary can, however, be seen as manifestations of the poverty crisis at large. But it is of paramount importance to think of poverty in terms of its precipitating causes that impel different vulnerable categories of poor people to be engaged in begging. Therefore, histories of individual beggars help us to reconstruct the various aspects of the problem and to depict the diverse social, cultural, economic and historical factors, which might lead to similar consequences. In this respect, the individual case studies considered are not typical of the majority of destitute people now living on the street. Yet their stories do typify some of the processes by which growing numbers of our fellow citizens eventually become beggars. Besides, the individual's stories provide an insight into the most vulnerable categories of poor people presently living by begging.

Despite the diverse and complex nature of the beggary problem, an initial possible categorization of the destitute under study can be offered: Resource poor urban dwellers; people under conditions of contingency including orphans, people with different disabilities and disaster

victims and; policy related inclusive of the retrenched, demobilized soldiers, war affected and the displaced. This categorization may provide a basis for analyzing possible social action arising out of shared interests and experiences, for public debate, and for policy action at macro and local levels. In fact it is clear that individuals may fall into more than one of the categories and the categories are obviously inexhaustive. More importantly, however, we need to have roughly how many destitute and poor people fall into each category in order to establish the size of the policy problem. This kind of analysis should, in future, be done using large-scale surveys, supplemented by qualitative research.

In order to depict the current socio-economic life of the beggars, emphasis has been laid on the general situation of the particular urban context of which they have become part. Therefore, the spatial, socio-economic and administrative history of Addis Ababa and its current poverty situation was exposed at length. This in turn helps to understand the kind of constraints and problems presented to the people under investigation. To speak of the urban condition, therefore, is to speak of the life of the beggars. Apart from their multifaceted impoverishment, one peculiar form of marginalization- homelessness-and the constant forceful dislocation of the beggars and their resistance to remain in their constituencies to keep on begging poses lots of problems. Beggars often apathetically accept the situation, do what they can with what they have and experience little or no control over their surroundings. Although the police do their best to hustle them away from their constituencies, many of the beggars are still more visible for they have nowhere to hide and to turn to. Beyond those whose origin was Addis Ababa, the majority of the displaced or migrant beggars need to have reasons for not returning to their original homelands. As such, the migration or displacement history of the beggars and the socio-economic history allow us to see the beggary problem in the context of natural and man made events, which have precipitated thousands to follow a course of life against their individual will.



To these ends, by and large, the driving dynamic behind the beggary problem today is the widening gap for many people between the cost of their basic needs and the resources available. Many people these days seem sinking ever deeper toward the bottom, the limbo of poverty. And poverty is the most frequent precipitant of the problem of beggary. Beneath poverty lies the wide spread scarcity of resources needed to lead proper life. Beneath that lies a socio-economic system more concentrated with evils of urbanization owing to migration and displacement of mass of human beings who have no where else to go but the streets. The plight of the beggardom, concentrated more and more heavily in urban areas particularly in Addis Ababa is becoming worse rather than better. The problem of urban poverty, as some people say, will continue to grow as the costs of living rise and the stock for low and middle-income urban dwellers shrinks. But, poverty is not confined to urban areas. Today thousands of rural people who could not make a living due to famine and recurrent drought are constantly shoved off their land and are forced to take to the streets of urban areas. For some people, the position of these farmers will continue to worsen aggravating the problem of beggary. In this respect, the failures-the beggars- are not the result of individual character defects but largely flaws in the socio-economic system that provided them their marginal position in an urban setting.

As a result of the threat of widespread marginalization and exclusion, the beggars struggle to maintain or establish a viable social interaction among themselves. The modes of social interaction in the form of interpersonal relations enable the beggars to amend their loss of social articulation. As such, among others, factors like ethnic and/or district background, gender and age play a basic role in composing and patterning the beggars' informal social relationships and in determining the choice of friends. Because of their impoverishment, varied forms of associational or institutional ties do not exist among the beggars. For the most part *ikub* stands out as the most important and the only institution in the beggar communities in all the sites in the study. Of course, some are heard saying

that there is a strong sign that even among the city dwellers due to chronic poverty many people are being forced to quit voluntary social institutions such as *idir* because of the incapacity to afford to pay their monthly contributions. It is in light of this that it becomes very difficult and even impossible for the poorest beggars to have organized themselves in associations. This made the operation of personal relations for support all the more important.

Transience is perhaps the most striking and pervasive characteristic of this street corner world. It characterizes not only the subtler social relationships but also the more obvious spatial relationships of those within the network of interlocking and overlapping personal communities at any given time but also the movement into and out of these networks. Thus, this street corner world does not at all fit the traditional characterization of the lower class people as a tightly knit community whose members share the feeling that "we are all in this together." Nor it seem profitable- especially for those who would see it changed to look at it as a self supporting, on going social system with its own distinctive "design for living," principles of organization, and system of values. Thus, it is important to note that within the area of their own social environment, the beggar men didn't create much, or at least there hasn't grown up a distinct and independent local community with its own unique economic, cultural, and socio-political institutions.

In the long run, of course, poverty is dysfunctional not only for the poor-themselves but also for others as well. It creates all sorts of social problems that upset the social order. Those poor who cannot be economically productive become dependent on other members of society. Apart from beggary, prostitution, vagrancy, crime, illness, malnutrition and unemployment are social diseases for which the body politic must ultimately pay a price. The system as it exists now does virtually nothing to cure them. Among the poor, the beggars-women, children, the disabled and the aged-have suffered most. Thousands have taken the streets because they lost their stable existence and livelihood due to famine or civil eviction. Others have been forced out of their homes to beg simply

because living costs have risen. Still others move closer each day to the brink of beggary existence. In a nutshell, the findings of this study seem to indicate conclusively that the beggary problem is but an aspect of the larger problems of poverty and that any fundamental solution is national.

Nearly all beggars live on the charity of citizens. The traditional way of giving charity has a matter of fact encouraged the able bodied beggars to take advantage of it with the genuinely needy. While the intention of an alms- giver may be good, the beneficiary is not always likely to be a genuinely needy person. Many people believe that giving in charity is meritorious and the unscrupulous able-bodied professional beggars exploit his faith. But charity should be practiced for the welfare of the community. People must give through a sense of social responsibility to the needy members of the society. Care must be taken to ensure welfare of the receiver through help and it must never result in his continuous dependence on the society. It must be admitted that if a good part of the sums of the charity was used in an organized manner, the needs of the genuinely needy could be met better and even to a larger extent and the professional beggars would be discouraged. As such, organized charity is tantamount to a means test that discourages all but those our compatriots truly in need. In organized charity, every need is investigated, assessed, and then meaningfully met. The alms-giver must therefore realize the importance of channeling charity through organized channels. There would always be opportunities to practice charity, but what is suggested here is that to contribute to human welfare through organized programmes is more effective way of relieving human suffering. The traditional way of giving charity in unorganized manner will not be able to solve the problem. A multi-pronged attack is necessary to combat this complex problem.

So far, there are no great efforts on the state level on the right to shelter, social welfare entitlements and other services to the beggars. Paradoxically enough, most activity on the state level has been geared toward dislocating and evicting the very poorest. In this respect, the most salient conclusion of the study is that government has been making beggars out of its concern. There is also

no impetus on the part of the beggars to speak for themselves for they are not yet unionized or organized. Though physically visible as most beggars find themselves disconcerted by the sight of a human being slumped in sleep in a sidewalk, the beggars are politically invisible, they had no voice. In this regard, efforts should be dedicated, at least temporarily, to make the urban environment human and humane, to make the geographical entity in which so many beggars and other destitute reside livable, to avoid the dangers inherent in the hostility and alienation which proceed from insecurity and external threat, anxiety and powerlessness, and to guarantee that the poorest beggars do not live as part of an amorphous mass-nameless, faceless and anonymous.

Although prevention of the beggary problem has a lot to do with improving the socio-economic condition of the country at large and alleviating poverty, the state and other stake holders should move a head and should do their level best to provide certain kinds of short lived assistance and relief services by establishing welfare programs than putting a vigorous pressure and adding fuel to the already existing downward spiral. Hence, relief efforts must not cease entirely. They not only alleviate real suffering, but also serve to neutralize the potential threat of discontent. But, there might be a danger that charity can actually be a means of perpetuating the problem by throwing money at the poor with out changing the conditions and systems that promote poverty. In the long run, therefore, programs should be designed not only to alleviate but also to prevent poverty. Job training, expanded educational opportunities for the disadvantaged members of society, and programs to improve rural conditions and involving participation of the poor in controlling their own communities should be an integral part of the war against poverty. As such, the social programs to be designed should not be in the form of incentives to the poor to live gratuitously rather should help them toil for their bread. In other words, the situation should be managed through a careful balanced act. A concept, more relevant to the present and the future might be 'balanced development'. Hence,

the focus must be on the economy getting better. This means more effective planning of human and economic resources and better distribution of goods and services.

Overall, poverty has become a major aspect of a wider social and economic crisis afflicting Ethiopia. And the poverty crisis in Ethiopia is very complex and has affected all strata and sectors of society, its dynamics have been shaped by inter-locking economic, social, political and natural factors interacting through time. As such there is no short-range solution for it. By and large, poverty is a political matter as much as an economic one. It is embedded in unequal economic, political and socio-cultural relations, and transmitted through the generations. It is something experienced by people as they pass through life and involves a range of deprivations, processes and relationships, some of which are more amenable to possible policy interventions than others. A strategy for poverty reduction with any chance of success must be a long term one. It requires integrated attacks on many fronts including the legal, political and cultural and particularly the organizational as well as the economic. Such a strategy cannot be developed as a technical matter - it is political and involves values, interests and public discussion, which must come from the Ethiopian people themselves.

Given an Ethiopian commitment to poverty reduction, economic and sociological and/or anthropological analysis can play vital roles in the development of efficient, equitable and implementable policies and research programs geared toward poverty reduction. In doing so, a clear message is that policies aimed at reducing poverty need to identify which groups of people are poor, vulnerable, getting poorer, and what their circumstances and strategies actually are so that policy levels can be identified. Only a multi-lateral, comprehensive and well-designed program for prevention and treatment of beggary, and of course poverty, backed by coordinated action and handled with sensitivity, will bring to the problem under control, if not eliminate it. To these ends, efforts of government and non-government organizations and individuals should be stretched to the

limit and emphasize the need for a national commitment in the long run. This is a vision seized by fervor of urgency and hope.

In a nutshell, the beggars huddled in the darkness of the cold street are our otherselves. They are the reflection of our own insecurity; they are the face of our impoverishment. These urban exiles recall something that seems to be missing from ourselves: well-being. They challenge us to reach out, to forge our socio-economic well-being, to imagine ourselves in their place. In the final analysis the way to prevent poverty in general and beggary in particular is to create an improved socio-economic and political system – a system that would serve not only the poor under investigation but also all of us from all walks of life.

## Bibliography

- Abebe Kebede, 2001." Poverty in Addis Ababa" in Meheret Ayenew (ed.) The Social Dimensions of Poverty. Poverty Dialogue Forum. Consultation papers on poverty. No. 1. Unpublished.
- Abebe Shimelis and Bereket Kebede. 1996. "Issues in the Measurement and Dynamics of Poverty: A survey" in Bereket kebede and Mekonen Tadesse, (eds.) The Ethiopian Economy: Poverty and Poverty Alleviation. Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Conference on the Ethiopian Economy, Addis Ababa, PP. 227-244.
- Abrhams, P., 1982. Historical Sociology. Ithaca: Cornell Up.
- Addis Ababa City Council, 1989. Addis Ababa Centurany Commemoration Book. Addis Ababa.
- Addis Ababa Master Plan Project Office, 1985. Addis Ababa.
- Again, Moyniham, 1968. "Building the Frazier Tradition into National Policy" in Valentine, Charles (ed.) Culture and Poverty: Critique and Counter Proposals, London W.C.1: The University of Chicago Press, Ltd. PP. 29-42.
- Aklilu Kidanu and Dessalegn Rahmato, 2000. Listening to the Poor: Study Based on Selected Rural and Urban Sites in Ehiopia. Forum for Social Studies Discussion paper.No. 3.
- Alock, Pete,1997. Understanding Poverty. Macmillan Press Lmtd.
- Anderson, Nels 1961. The Hobo: The Sociology of the Homeless Man. Phoenix Books, The Chicago and London:University of Chicago Press.
- Assefa Damte, 1993. Urbanization in Ethiopia: Pre and Post Revolution Experience. Milwaukee, W1: University of Wiscors in Milwaukee.
- Assefa Tolera, 1995. "Ethnic Integration and Conflict: The Case of Indigenous Oromo and Amhara Settlers in Aaroo Addis Alem, KIRAMU Area, Northeastern Wallaga " M.A. thesis, Department of Sociology and Social Adminstration, Addis Ababa University.
- Bahiru Zewde, 1987. "Early Safars of Addis Ababa: Patterns of Evolution" in Ahmed Zekaria and et al (eds.) Proceedings of the International Symposium on the Centenary of Addis Ababa" November 24-25, 1986 . PP. 43-45

- Baker, Jonathan, 1995. Refugee and Labour Movements in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Review-Studies on Emergences and Disaster Relief. No.2. Nordiska Afrikanstitutet, Sweden.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1986. The Rural-Urban Dichotomy in the Developing World- A Case Study from Northern Ethiopia. Norwegian University Press.
- Barrett, Richard A., 1991. Culture Conduct- An Excursion in Anthropology. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Wadsworth, inc., USA.
- Barth, F., 1969. Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference. Boston. Little Brown
- Befekadu Degfe and Berhanu Nega, 1999/2000 (eds.) The Ethiopian Economic Association: Annual Report on the Ethiopian Economy. Addis Ababa: United Printers. Ethiopia.
- Bernard, Russel, 1994. Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches SAGE publications, Inc.
- Bevan, Phillipa and Ssewaya Achilles, 1995. Understanding Poverty in Uganda: Adding a Sociological Dimension. Center for the Study of African Economies. University of Oxford. England.
- Booth, D. 1995. "Institutional Reform and Adjustment: Perspectives from Social Theory" . Paper presented at the fourth structural adjustment forum workshop. Nottingham.
- Both, Elizabeth . 1972.Family and Social Network. (Second ed.). London. Tavistock.
- Burgess, E.W. 1924." The Growth of the City: An Introduction to a Research Project" in Publications of the American Sociological Society 18: 85-97.
- Burleigh, Homer, 1970. "How many Problems can a Man Have?" in Will, Robert E. and Vatter, Harold G. (eds.) Poverty in Affluence: The Social, Political and Economic Dimensions of Poverty in the United States. Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc. pp. 75-80.
- Cernea, Michael M., 1995. "Urban Settlements and Forced Population Relocation" in Mathur, H.Mohan and Michael Cernea, (eds.) Development, Displacement and Resettlement- Focus on Asian Experiences. Delhi: Vikas publishing Houses Pvt. LTD. PP.39-74



- \_\_\_\_\_, 1996. "Understanding and Preventing Impoverishment from Displacement- Reflections on the State of Knowledge" in MC Dowell, Christopher, (ed) Understanding Impoverishment- The Consequences of Development Induced Impoverishment Berghan Books, U.S.A, PP.13-32.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1996. "Bridging the Research Divider: Studying Refugees and Development Oustees" in Tim, Allen, (ed.) In Search of Cool Ground: War, Flight and Homecoming in Northeast Africa London : African World press, Inc. PP.293-317.
- Central Statistics Authority, 1994. The 1994 Population and Housing Census: Results for Ethiopia. Vol. 1, Addis Ababa. CSA.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1994. The 1994 Population and Housing Cenus: Results for Addis Ababa, Vol. 1, Addis Ababa.CSA.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1995. The 1994 Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia. Addis Ababa
- Cilliers, Jakkie. 1995. Demobilization and Reinteggeration of former Combatants in Africa. The Institute for Defence Policy. South Africa.
- Clark, Kenneth, 1968 "Breaking with Tradition and Returing to the Dark Ghetto" in Valentine, Charles, (ed.) Culture and Poverty: Critique and Counter proposals. The London W.C. 1: University of Chicago Press, Ltd. PP.78-83.
- Clark, John, 1986. Resettlement and Rehabilitation: Ethiopia's Campaign Against Famine. London: Speed printers.
- Davis, Kingslay and Golden, Hilda Vestz, 1954-55. Urbanization and the Development of Pre-industrial Areas: Economic Development and Cultural Change.
- Davis, Kingslay, 1967. "The Urbanization of the Human Population" in Breese, G. (ed.) The City in New Developing Countries. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall. PP.1-5.
- Dixon, Jhon, and Macarov, David 1998. Poverty: A Persistent Global Reality. London and New York.
- Encyclopedia Britanica 1958. (14<sup>th</sup> ed.). V.5 PP. 248-253.
- The Encyclopedia of Social Work in India 1968. New Delhi: Publication Division, India.

- Fekadu Gedamu, 1976. "Urbanization, Polyethnic Group Voluntary Associations and National Integration in Ethiopia" in Ottaway, Marina, (ed.) Urbanization in Ethiopia: A Text with Readings in Urban Sociology, A.A.U., Unpublished.
- Fried, Marc, 1969. "Deprivation and Migration: Dilemmas of Causal Interpretation" in Moynihan, Daniel P. (ed.). On Understanding Poverty: Perspectives from the Social Sciences New York: London : Basic Books, Inc. Publishers.
- Fuchs, Victor R., 1970. "An Alternative Income Oriented Definition" in Will, Robert E. and Vatter, Harold G. (eds.) Poverty in Affluence: The Social, Political and Economic Dimensions of Poverty in the United States. Harcourt: Brace and World, Inc. PP.45-47.
- Gallup, George, 1970. "Two Basically Different Views on Causes of Poverty" in Will, Robert E. and Vater, Harold G. (eds.) Poverty in Affluence: The Social, Political and Economic Dimensions of Poverty in the United States Harcourt: Brace and World, Inc. PP.45-47.
- Getahun Tafesse. 1999. "Poverty and Poverty Reduction in Ethiopia" in Tegegne et al (eds.) Proceedings of a Workshop on the Twenty Fifth Anniversary of the Institute of Development Research. Institute of Development Research. A.A.U. Addis Ababa. PP.37-66.
- Gilbert, A., 1994. "Third World Cities: Poverty, Employment, Gender Roles and the Environment During the time of Restructuring" in Urban Studies 31 (4)
- Gladwin, Thomas, 1968. "Second Thoughts on the Primitive and the Violent" in Valentine, Charles A. (ed.) Culture and Poverty: Critique and Counter Proposals. The Ltd. London W.C.1: University of Chicago Press. PP.87-93.
- Glazer, Nathan. 1968. "Slums and Ethnicity" in Sherald Thomas ( ed.) Social Welfare and Urban Problems published for the National Conference on Social Welfare. Columbia New York and London: University Press.
- Goitom Ghirmatsion, 1996. "Aspects of Poverty in the City of Addis Ababa: Profile and Policy Implications" in Bereket kebede and Mekonen Tadesse, (eds.) The Ethiopian Economy: Poverty and Poverty Alleviation. Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Conference on the Ethiopian Economy, Addis Ababa, PP. 227-244.

- Gutkind, P.C., 1967. "Orientation and Research Methods in African Urban Studies" in Gutkind and Jongmans. (eds.) Anthropologists in the Field. Netherlands:Royal Van Gorcum Ltd. PP. 133-169.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1967. The Energy of Despair: Social Organization of the Unemployed in Two African Cities; Lagos and Nairobi. Montreal, Center for Developing Area Studies.
- \_\_\_\_\_ , 1974. Urban Anthropology: Perspectives on Third World Urbanization and Urbanism. Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum & Comp. B.V.
- Hadgu Bariagaber. 1995. " The Dimensions of Poverty in Ethiopia: Some Emperical Evidences" in Mulat Demeke et al (eds.) Food Security, Nutrition and Poverty in Ethiopia Proceedings of the Inagural and First Annual Conference of the Agricultural Economics Society of Ethiopia.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1987. "The Role of Demographic Information in Planning for Urban Growth and Development in Ethiopia" in Seminar on Development Planning and Demographic Analysis: The Case of Ethiopia. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University, Institute.
- Hamer, Jhon H., 1967. "Voluntary Associations and Structures of Change Among the Sidamo of South Western Ethiopia" In Ottaway Marinna (ed.) Urbanization in Ethiopia: A text with Readings in Urban Sociology A.A.U. Unpublished. PP. 218-235.
- Hance, W.A. 1970. Population, Migration and Urbanization in Africa . New York: Columbia University.
- Heath, Robin A., 1993. "Leisure and Recreation in Harare". In Zinyama, D. Tevera and S. Cumming (eds.) The Growth and Problems of the City . Harare: Print Brokers (Pvt.) Ltd. PP.109-127.
- Hederson, Richmund C., 1904. Modern Methods of Charity Macmillan, N.Y.
- Herzog, Elizabeth, 1966. "Is there a Culture of Poverty?" in Meissner, Hanna H. (ed.) Poverty in the Afflunet Society. New York: Harper and Row Publishers PP. 92-102.
- Hogg, Richard, 1996. "Changing Mandates in the Ethiopian Ogaden: The Impact of Somali Refugees and Returnees of the UNHCR" in Tim Allen, (ed.). In Search of Cool Ground; War, Flight and Home Coming in Northeast Africa London: African World Press, Inc. PP.153-163.

- Hope, Marjorie and Young , James . 1986. The Faces of Homelessness Lexington Books: D.C. Heath and Company.
- Horvath, Rondand J. 1970. " The Process of Urban Agglomeration in Ethiopia" in Journal of Ethiopian Studies Vol. 8, No.2, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. PP.81-88.
- Houser, Phillip M. and Schonore, Leof, 1966. The Study of Urbanization New York: John Willey and Sons, Inc.
- Itana Ayana . 1999. “ Dimensions of Rural Poverty in Ethiopia: Some Preliminary Observations ” in Mulat Demeke et.al. (eds.) Food Security, Nutrition and Poverty in Ethiopia. Proceedings of the Inagural and First Annual Conference of the Agricultural Economics society of Ethiopia. Addis Ababa.
- Jalel Abdel Latif, 2002. “Preliminary Observations on the PRSP Process in Bulletin of the Ethiopian Economic Association. Vol.5 No. 1. PP.22-26.
- Johnson, Lyndon B., 1970. "The Great Unfinished Work of Our Society" in Will, Robert E. and Vatter, Harold G. (eds.) Poverty in Affluence: The Social, Political and Economic Dimensions of Poverty in the United States Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc. PP.9-11.
- Kapferer, Bruce, 1966. The Population of a Zambian Municipal Township: A Preliminary Report of a 1964 Social Survey of the Broken Hill Municipal Townships. University of Zambia. Institute of Social Research. N. 1
- Kebebew Daka, 1978. The Cooperative Movement in Ethiopia A.A.U., Applied Sociology, College of Social Sciences.
- Kebebew and Alemayehu Seifu, 1969. “Eder in Addis Ababa: A Sociological Study”. Ethiopian Observer Vol.12 , No.1.
- Keil, Charles, 1968. "Black Culture from the Blues to Head Start" in Valentine, Charles (ed.) Culture and Poverty: Critique and Counter Proposals. London W.C.1: The University of Chicago Press Ltd. PP.84-86.
- Kiros Adana, 1983. The History of Arada from its Foundation to 1953. B.A Paper Presented to History Department
- Kohen, Peter and Waldron, Sidney R. 1976. “ Urban Linking Associations in Harar” in Ottaway Marinna (ed.) Urbanization in Ethiopia: A Text with Readings in Urban Sociology A.A.U. , Unpublished.

- Korten, David, 1968. Management, Modern Organization and Planned Change in a Traditional Society: A Social Systems Analysis of Cultural Transitions in Ethiopia. Thesis (Ph.D. in Business Administration) Stanford University. Stanford (CA).
- Kubat, Daniel and Richmond, Anthony, 1976. Internal Migration: The New World and the Third World SAGE Publishing Ltd.
- Lane, Robert E., 1970. "The Lower Classes Deserve No Better than they Get" in Will, Robert E. and Vatter, Harold G. (eds.) Poverty in Affluence; The Social, Political and Economic Dimensions of Poverty in the United States Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc. pp. 42-45.
- Liebow, Elliot, 1968. "Life of the Poor as seen from the Street Corner" in Valentine, Charles (ed.) Culture and Poverty: Critique and Counter Proposals. London W.C.T: The university Chicago Press Ltd. PP.94-97.
- Lewis, Oscar, 1970. "The Culture of Poverty" in Will, Robert E. and Vatter, Harold G. (eds.) Poverty in Affluence: The Social, Political and Economic Dimensions of Poverty in the United States Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., PP. 129-135.
- Lourenco-Lindel, I. 2001. "Social Networks and Urban Vulnerability to Hunger" in Tostesnsen, Tvedten and Van (eds.) Associational Life in African Cities. Stockholm: Elanders Gotab.
- Markowitz, Fran, 1996. "Living in Limbo: Bosnian Muslim Refugees in Israel" in Angrosino, Michael V. (ed.) Human Organization Vol. 55 No. 2. Society for Applied Anthropology, U.S.A., PP. 127-132.
- MPRP. 2001. Addis Ababa. Unpublished.
- Mathur, H. Mohan and Michael M. Cernea, 1997. (eds.) Development, Displacement and Resettlement Focus on Assian Experiences Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. PP. 93-121.
- Meissner, Hanna H., 1966 (ed.) Poverty in the Affluent Society New York: London, Harper and Row Publishers.
- Mekuria Bulcha. 1976. "The Social and Historical Background of Edir" in Ottaway, Marina.(ed.) Urbanization in Ethiopia: A Text with Adapted Readings. A.A.U. PP. 361-365.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1973. "Eder: Its Roles in Development and Social Change in Addis Ababa"  
Unpublished Senior Essay, Addis Ababa.

- Mesfin Woldemariam, 1990. The Horn of Arica: Conflict and Poverty Addis Ababa: Commercial Printing Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1968. "Problems of Urbanization" in Proceedings of the Third Annual Conference of Ethiopian Studies Vol. III, Addis Ababa, PP. 20-38.
- Miheret Ayenew, 2001. (ed.) The Social Dimensions of Poverty. Poverty Dialogue Forum. Consultation Papers on Poverty. No. 1. Unpublished.
- Mill, Jhon Stuart, 1970. "Caring for the Unifit: The Poor Law" in Will, Robert E. and Vatter, Harold G. (eds.) Poverty in Affluence: The Social, Political and Economic Dimensions of Poverty in the United States Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc. PP. 40-42.
- Miller, S.M. et al. 1970 "A Social Indicators Definition" in Will, Robert E. and Vatter, Harold G. (eds.) Poverty in Affluence: The Social, Political and Economic Dimensions of Poverty in the United States Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc. PP. 18-22.
- Miller, Walter, 1968. "The Focal Concerns of a Middle Class Scholar" in Valentine, Charles A. (ed.) Culture and Poverty: Critique and Counter proposals. London W.C. 1: The University of Chicago Press Ltd. PP.43-44.
- Mitchel, J. Clyde, 1995. "Afterword" in Vertovec, Steven and Rogers, Alisdair, (eds.) The Urban Context: Ethnicity, Social Networks and Situational Analysis Washington D.C: Berg Publisher. PP. 335-345.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1969. "The Concept of Social Networks" in Mitcel, C. (ed.) Social Networks in Urban Situations: Analysis of Personal Relationships in Central African Towns. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1956. "Urbanization , Detraibalization and Stabilization in Southern Africa: a Problem of Definition and Measurement" in UNESCO Social Implications of Industrialization and Urbanization in Africa South of the Sahara.
- MOLSA, 1992. Study on Begging in Addis Ababa: Action Oriented Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1995. Executive Summary of the Study Report on the Situation of Displaced Families in Ethiopia and the Project Proposal to Rehabilitate them, Addis Ababa, Unpublished.
- Morsink, Hubert, 1996. 'Preface' in Tim, Allen (ed.). In Search of Cool Ground: War, Flight and Home Coming in Northeast Africa London: African World press Inc. PP. Xi-Xii.

- Moser, et.al, 1993. "Urban Poverty in the Context of Structural Adjustment" in World Bank Washington, D.C.
- Muhamed Mussa and Simeon Ehui.1995. Analysis of Household and Food Security in Addis Ababa: Policy Implications paper presented for the fifth Annual Conference of the Ethiopian Economy, unpublished, Addis Ababa.
- Mulat Demeke. 2002. "Rethinking our Development Strategy: The Need to Utilize the Opportunities Presented by ICT" in Bulletin of the Ethiopian Economic Association (EEA) Vol. 4, No.6
- Mulatu Wubneh.1976. Spatial Dynamics and Infrastructure Investment:An Analysis of the Effects of Infrastructure on the Development of Urban Areas and Locational Decisions of Firms in Ethiopia.Ph.D. Desertation.Florida State University.
- Neulinger, J., 1983. "Leisure: A Criterion of Mental Health" in World Leisure and Recreation Association Journal No.xxv. PP.5-9.
- The New Testament Matthew: Chapter 6 Verses 1-4.
- Ngin, Chor-Swang, 1995. "Southeast Assian Refugees in the United States: Problems of Adjustment" in Mathur, A Mohan and Michael M. Cernea, (eds.) Development, Displacement and Resettlement. Focus on Assian Experiences Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. PP. 224-243.
- Orshansky, Mollie, 1970. "An Official Definition of Poverty" in Will, Robert E. and Vatter, Harold G. (eds.) Poverty in Affluence: The Social, Political and Economic Dimensions of Poverty in the United States Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc. PP. 11-13.
- Ottaway, Marrina, 1976. (ed.) Urbanization in Ethiopia: A Text with Readings in Urban Sociology, A.A.U, Unpublished.
- Palen, Jhon, 1976. "Urbanization and Migration in an Indigenous City: The Case of Addis Ababa" in Kubat and Richmond (eds.) Internal Migration: The New World and the Third World SAGE Publishing Ltd. PP.205-225.
- Pankhrust, Alula.1988. "Social Dimensions of Famine in Ethiopia: Exchange, Migration, and Integgeration in Ethiopia" in Proceedings of the Ninth Intrenational Congress of Ethiopian Studies. Moscow: Nauka Publishers. V.2. PP.65-80.

- Pankhrust, Richard, 1927. "The History of Leprosy in Ethiopia" in Medical History London, Vol. 28, PP. 57-72.
- Pankhrust, Richard and Endrias Eshete, 1958. "Self Help in Ethiopia" in Ottaway Marina, (ed.). Urbanization in Ethiopia: A Text with Readings in Urban Sociology.
- Pausewang, Siegfried et al, 1990. (eds.) Ethiopia Options for Rural Development London and New Jersey, Zed Books Ltd.
- Rojers, Alisdair and Vertovec, Steven 1995. " Introduction" in Rojers, Alisdair and Vertovec, Steven (eds.) The Urban Context: Ethnicity, Social Networks and Situational Analysis. Oxford/Washington D.C.: Burg Publishers. USA. PP.1-33.
- Roosens, E.2000. In. Hans Vermullen and Cora Govers (eds.) The Anthropology of Ethnicity. Amsterdam:Het Spinhuis.
- Roosevelt, Franklin D., 1970. " I see one Third of a Nation Ill Housed Ill Nourished Ill Clad" In Will, Robert E and Vatter, Harold G. (eds.) Poverty in Affluence: The Social, Political and Economic Dimensions of Poverty in the United States Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc. PP. 7-9.
- Rossi, Petter H. and Zahava D. Bum, 1969. "Class, Status and Poverty" in Moynihan, Daniel P. (ed.). On Understanding Poverty: Perspectives from the Social Sciences New York/ London :Basic Books Inc. Publishers. PP.217-235.
- Scott, Jhon.1994. Poverty and Wealth: Citizenship, Deprivation and Pevillage. New York and London: Longmen.
- Seymour-smith, C., 1986. Macmillan Dictionary of Anthropology London: The Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Sjoberg, G. 1955. "The Pre-industrial City" in American Journal of Sociology. 60,(March 1:438-445).
- Smith, D.M., 1977. Human Geography: A Welfare Approach London: Edward Arnold.
- Solomon Gebre, 1993. "The Condition of the Poor in Addis Ababa; A Social Problem Not Yet Addressed" in Asfaw Desta, Desalegn Rahmato and et al (eds.) Dialogue Journal of Addis Ababa University, Teachers Association, 3rd Series, Vol. 2, No. 1, Addis Ababa, pp. 1-31.
- Spencer, Herbert, 1851. Social Static's or the Conditions Essential to Human Happiness. John Chapman, Locom.



- \_\_\_\_\_ 1967. "The Evolution of Society" in Carnerio, Robert L. (ed.) Selections from Herbert Spencer's Principles of Sociology. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press. PP. 218-230.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1970. "Poverty Purifies Society" in Will, Robert E. and Vatter, Harold G. (eds.) Poverty in Affluence: The Social, Political and Economic Dimensions of Poverty in the United States Harcourt, Brace World, Inc. PP. 36-39.
- Spradley, James P., 1988. You Owe Yourself A Drunk: An Ethnography of Urban Nomads Lanham, New York: London.
- Stake, R.E, 1988. "Case Study Methods in Educational Research: Seeking Sweet Water" in R.M. Jaeger (ed.) Complementary Methods for Research in Education Washington, D.C. American Educational Research Association, PP. 253-278.
- Steward, Jullian, 1973. "The Concept and Method of Cultural Ecology" in Bohannan, Paul and Mark, Glazer, (eds.) High Points in Anthropology Alffred A. Knopf. New York: PP. 322-332.
- Subbaravo, Duvvuri.2002. "Good Governance and Economic Development" in Bulletin of the Ethiopian Economic Association (EEA). V.5 No.6
- Taddesse Berisso. 1999. "Agricultural Development and Food Security in Ethiopia:Policy Constraints" in Tegegne et al (eds.) Proceedings of a Workshop on the Twenty Fifth Anniversary of the I nstitute of Development Research. Institute of Development Research. A.A.U. Addis Ababa. PP. 227-242.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2000. "Inter-cultural Collaboration in Ethiopia through Voluntary Association" A paper presented in the sixth academic conference of Orbis Aethiopicus. Frankfurt.
- Tegegne Gebreegziabher et al.1999." "Aspects of Development Issues in Ethiopia" " in Proceedings of a Workshop on the Twenty Fifth Anniversary of the Institute of Development Research. Institute of Development Research. A.A.U. Addis Ababa. PP.105-136.
- Tekeleberehane Gabra-Michael, 1969. Urbanization and Economic Development: An Exploratory Study of Ethiopia Addis Ababa, Haile Selassie I University.
- Thukral, Enakshi G. and Singh, Mridula, 1995. "Dams and the Displaced in India" in Mathur H, Mohan and Michael M. Cernea (eds.) Development, Displacement and

Resettlement Focus on Assian Expediencies Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd.  
Delhi, PP. 93-121.

UNDP, 1997. Human Development Report New York: Oxford University Press.

Valentine, Charles A. 1968. Culture and Poverty: critique and Counter Proposals. London W.C.  
1: The University of Chicago Press Ltd.

\_\_\_\_\_, 1970. "Conditions of Poverty Versus Culture of Poverty" in Will, Robert E. and  
Vatter, Harold G. (eds.) Poverty in Affluence: The Social Political and Economic  
Dimensions of Poverty in the United States Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc. PP.  
135-140.

Websters Third New International Dictionary. 1976. N.Y. G & C, Merriam Company  
Publishers.

Westland, C. ,1983. " Should Governments become involved in Recreation and Leisure?" in  
World Leisure and Recreation Associational Journal No. xxvi. PP. 12-15.

Will, Robert E. and Vatter Harold, G., 1970. (eds.) Poverty in Affluence: The Social, Political  
and Economic Dimensions of Poverty in the United States Harcourt, Brace and  
World, Inc.

Wheeldon, P.D., 1969. "The Operation of Voluntary Associations and Personal Networks in the  
Political Process of One Inter-ethnic Community". In Mitchel, C. (ed.) Social  
Networks in Urban Situations: Analysis of Personal Relationships in Central  
African Towns. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Wirth, Louis, 1964. On Cities and Social Life. Chicago:The University of Chicago Press

Wirth, L., (1938) " Urbanism as a way of Life" in American Journal of Sociology.44. (July:9)

World Bank, 1993. Demobilization and Reintegration of Military Personnel in Africa:The  
Evidence from Seven Country Case Studies. African Regional Office.  
Washington.

## Annex 1

### List of informants (oral sources) – an overall profile

#### I. Non-beggars

<u>Se.No</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>Remark</u>
1.	Mengistu Bezie	30	M	Orothodox	Amhara	Religious person
2.	Zena Berehanu	29	M	“	“	“
3.	Hailu Tadeg	31	M	“	“	“
4.	Mesfin Gudeta	48	M	“	Mixed	Alms-giver
5.	Asmamaw Berehanu	30	M	“	Amhara	Official

#### II. Beggars

<u>S.No</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>Marriage</u>	<u>Education</u>	<u>Residence</u>	<u>Place and date of interivew</u>
1.	Asfaw Bekele	34	M	Orthodox	Oromo	Unmarried	Grade 9	Rented home	Arat Kilo Aug.17,2002
2.	Salilish Alemayehu	25	F	Orthodox	Dorze	Unmarried	Illiterate	Own home	Sidist Kilo
3.	Mahiwa Hussien	43	F	Muslim	Amhara	Married	Illeterate	Street corner	St.George
4.	Fasika Kebede	10	F	Orthodox	“	Unmarried	Illiterate	Parents home	Oct 2002
5.	Tirhas G/Michael	35	F	“	Tigre	“	“	Rented home	St.George
6.	Kumelachew Lakew	48	M	“	Amhara	“	Grade 6	Church yard	St. Mary
7.	Kebret Belayneh	75	M	“	“	Married	Illiterate	Church Yard	St. Stephen
8.	Assefa Alemayehu	22	M	“	“	Unmarried	“	“	Savior of the word
9.	Melaku Baye	30	M	“	“	“	“	“	Savior of the word
10	Getahun Haile	36	M	“	“	“	“	“	St. George
11	Sibhat Menker	16	M	“	“	“	“	“	Savior of the word
12	Deresse Aweke	27	M	“	“	“	Grade 6	Rented home	“
13	Yebezowork Kefle	25	F	“	“	Divorced	Illiterate	Church yard	St., George,
14	Bialf Asazinew	55	M	“	“	Married	“	Verendah	St. George,
15	Alemayehu Endale	22	M	“	Oromo	Unmarried	“	Church yard	St.George
16	Tilahun Tessema	32	M	“	Amhara	Unmarried	“	“	Savior of the world
17	Assefa Alemayehu	22	M	“	“	“	“	“	Sept.21,2002
18	Yeshi Yalalefu	32	F	“	“	Widowed	“	“	“
19	Getachew Zewdie	35	M	“	“	Divorced	“	“	“
20	Geremew Adugna	40	M	“	Oromo	“	“	“	“
21	Addis Agegneu	33	M	“	Amhara	“	“	“	“
22	Abaynesh Tesfa	45	F	“	“	Widowed	“	“	“
23	Fantaye Hadgu	26	M	“	Tigre	Unmarried	“	“	“
24	Mekonen Alemayehu	27	M	“	Wolayta	Divorced	“	“	St.George

25	Tamene Berecha	27	M	‘	Oromo	Unmarried	Grade 6	‘	St.George
26	Adamu Mengistu	37	M	‘	Amhara	Married	Illiterate	‘	St.George

## **Annex - 2**

### **Check list (Interview Guide) \***

#### I. General

1. Date of interview
2. Time of interview
3. Place of interview

#### II. Socio demographic characteristics

- |             |                      |              |
|-------------|----------------------|--------------|
| 1. Age      | 4. Ethnicity         | 7. Residence |
| 2. Sex      | 5. Marital status    |              |
| 3. Religion | 6. Educational level |              |

#### III. General Interview guidelines and probing points

1. Over all life history
  - Place of birth
  - Reasons for coming to Addis Ababa (for new comers)
  - Year started begging
  - Reasons for begging
  - Income from begging per day
  - Attitude toward the life of begging
  - Future plans and aspirations
  
2. Attitudes towards the passers- by and their alms
  - Generosity of alms givers
  - The type of alms commonly offered
  - Reasons for the sympathy of alms givers
  - Comparison of ceremonial days Vs ordinary days

**\* Please note that this is a general interview guide used for scheduled interview with individual as well as a group of beggars. Selected questions from among the general guide lines were applied in accordance with the purpose of interview (i.e. case studies, individual personal informants, focus group discussion, key informants). Besides, as many as specific and probing questions were asked for each general guide lines when a need arises to generate data that has depth. And several other**

### 3. Interpersonal relations

- Ethnicity
- Village background
- Age
- Gender
- Others

### 3. Involvement in voluntary associations

- Idir
- Iqub
- Mahiber
- Others

### 4. Reasons for Non-involvement in voluntary associations

### 5. Factors and ways of interaction with the society at large

- Ethnic background
- Love life
- Entertainment and leisure
- Others

### 6. Problems encountered in begging activity and overall life situation

### 7. Existence and absence of government and non government agencies helping beggars

### 8. Future plans and aspirations

questions were asked beyond scheduled interviews particularly in situations where the researcher faced an apparent observable behavior which was not preconceived before but is worth of investigation (eg.Issues of conflict and fight over territories )

### Annex 3

#### QUESTIONNAIRE

The objective of this questionnaire is to secure information on the religious ceremonial days and the saints commemorated – in Ethiopian Orthodox Church believers.

There fore, you are kindly requested to write the name of the saint or divine being commemorated on the days of a month.

##### Part One – Names of saints and beings

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_  
Age \_\_\_\_\_ Religion \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. \_\_\_\_\_

##### Part Two – Names of saints and beings

Day	Name of the Saint	Day	Name of the saint
1. _____		16 _____	
2. _____		17 _____	
3. _____		18 _____	
4. _____		19 _____	
5. _____		20 _____	
6. _____		21 _____	
7. _____		22 _____	
8. _____		23 _____	
9. _____		24 _____	
10. _____		25 _____	
11. _____		26 _____	
12. _____		27 _____	

13. \_\_\_\_\_

14. \_\_\_\_\_

15. \_\_\_\_\_

28 \_\_\_\_\_

29 \_\_\_\_\_

30 \_\_\_\_\_

## Annex 4

### **Titles of St. Mary As Used by Beggars**

#### **(Names Related to St. Mary)**

<b><u>Ser. NO</u></b>	<b><u>Name in Amharic</u></b>	<b><u>Literal English</u></b>
1	ቤዛዊት ዓለም	The redeemer of the world
2	እግዝትን ማሪያም	Mary and God
3	እመ ብርሃን	The mother of light
4	የአምላክ እናት	The mother of God
5	የመድኃኔአለም እናት	The mother of the Savior of the world
6	ጭንቅ አማላጅ	The one who helps in time of trouble
7	አዛኝቱ	The compassionate
8	ቅድስት ማርያም	Saint Mary
9	ድንግል ማርያም	Virgin Mary
10	እመቤታችን	Mary our Lady
11	ወላዲተ አምላክ	One who give birth to God
12	እመቤቴ ማርያም	Mary my Lady
13	ባናታ ማርያም	Mary of Baeta
14	ሀና ማርያም	Hannah Mary
15	ኪዳነ ምዕረት	The covenant of mercy



Annex 5

Days of a month with corresponding commemorated saint or Being in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

Day of a Month	Saint Commemorated	Day of a Month	Saint Commemorated
Day 1	Lideta; John the Baptist	Day 16	Kidane Mihret
Day 2	Aba Goba; Thadeaus the Apostle	Day 17	Stephen the Martyr
Day 3	Baeta Mary	Day 18	Abune Philemon
Day 4	The Four Beasts; John the Apostle	Day 19	St.Gabriel
Day 5	Abo	Day 20	Hintseta
Day 6	K'usk'uam	Day 21	St.Mary
Day 7	The Trinity	Day 22	St.Urael
Day 8	Kiros; Aba Babluda	Day 23	St.Geogre
Day 9	Thomas	Day 24	Teklehaimanot
Day 10	The cross of Jesus	Day 25	St.Merk'orios
Day 11	Hana-Mary; St.Jared	Day 26	Thomas Zehindek'a
Day 12	St.Michael	Day 27	The Savior of the world/ Tekelhawariat
Day 13	God the Father	Day 28	Emmanuel
Day 14	Gebrekiristos of Abune Aregawi	Day 29	Balewold(Cermony of the Sun
Day 15	K'irk'os	Day 30	St.Mark

Source: from informants (1) Deackon Mengistu Beze (2) Deackon Zena Berhanu (3) Hailu Tadeg

## **Annex 6. Photographs**

**A group of small children sitting on a sidewalk and asking for alms from passers-by**

**Two itinerant blind beggars around Arat Killo**

**An elderly and silent beggar close to a garbage can around Sidist akillo**

## **Youth team beggars**

**An advocacy beggar asking for alms in favour of a woman who recently gave birth to a child and who slept in front of him embracing her infant**

**A woman with a child, a disabled man and a religious personnel (a woman and a priest)  
begging close to one another**

**Beggars huddled in the Churchyard of the Savior of the World-one Sunday afternoon in the  
open forum**

**Beggars congregated at a Churchyard and asking for alms during a Saint day.**

***DECLARATION***

***I hereby certify that this thesis is my original work, and all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.***

***Wobishet Demewozu-----***

*This thesis has been submitted with my full approval as the advisor.*

*Taddesse Berisso (PH.D.)-----*



