

JIMMA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

**A HISTORY OF THE MAREKO PEOPLE
(SOUTHERN ETHIOPIA):1880s-1991**

BY

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**PARTIAL FULLFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF ARTS IN HISTORY AND
HERITAGE MANAGEMENT**

June, 2017

**A HISTORY OF THE MAREKO PEOPLE
(SOUTHERN ETHIOPIA):1880s-1991**

**A thesis presented to
The School of Graduate Studies of
Jimma University**

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June, 2017

Acknowledgements

A number of individuals and institutions have contributed to the successful completion of this work. I am genuinely indebted to them and express my heartfelt thanks to all who supported me. First of all, I am deeply grateful to Dr. Ketebo Abdiyo for the commitment and devotion in giving me scholarly feedbacks from the early inspection of the research topic all through the drafts of the thesis. Moreover, I am deeply indebted to Assistance Professor, Buruk Wolde-Michael for he has attended me with detailed comments throughout the pages and he has raised a number of specialized questions that enabled me to improve the research considerably. He has offered scholarly constructive and technical guidance in this research work. He has done this with warm cooperation and academic motivation.

I extend my gratitude for Jimma University History Department and Heritage Management, for co-operation and assistance it availed for the research. In this regard, *Ato* Tsegeye Zeleke, has provided consistent support. During the research, *Ato* Tsegeye Zeleke equally provided very useful and far-reaching suggestions since the development of the proposal, beginning from the registration date. I wish to acknowledge the help of the staff at Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES) at Addis Ababa University (AAU).

I am also indebted to my friends and relatives. My wife Kidest Wuletaw from whom I got moral support during my research work deserves specific appreciation. Many thanks to my kids, Naol and Sareme Yohannes, I got endurance because of you. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to my mother, W/ro Ajobush Wendemagegn, my sisters Azab Tesfaye and Semeret Gezahgn from whom I got moral and material support. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to *Ato* Wuletaw Bezabh who has helped me in providing and identifying the most important and relevant documents during this research work.

I also like to express my thanks to *Ato* Weleu who supported my research work providing useful document. Finally, my gratitude thanks goes to Inspector Edemo Kamilo, who has helped me in identifying the most important informants, whose name appended in thesis, for giving me valuable information.

Notes on Transliteration System

I. Amharic is written in syllabify alphabets primarily consisting of 33 characters representing consonants, each having seven variant forms referred to as “orders,” to express the seven sounds or vowel phonemes of Amharic (Ethiopian alphabets). In writing Ethiopian or the *Libixxian* or *Marekgna* and Hadiya names and words, the seven sounds of Ethiopian alphabets are transliterated in this paper as follows in this thesis.

Orders	Symbols	Examples
1st order	ä	Zära Yacob
2nd order	u	Uredan Dukema (termite hill)
3rd order	i	Libixxian (the language of Mareko)
4th order	a	ballabbat (land lord)
5th order	é	Meté (the name for the space of Mareko land by the Mareko people)
6th order	e	Geber (tribute)
7th order	o	Boyamo

II. Regarding the sixth order, in the above list it must be noted that ‘e’ will be suffixed to the letter if the letter is vocalized or stressed as y in *Wäyzäro* to mean Mrs. For words having the sound of the sixth order at the end, it is not necessary to add the representing letter of the sound as r in *Hägär* (country) and *Mämher* (teacher).

III. In accordance with many Semitcists’ usage the transcription of consonants Palatalize sounds are represented by:

ሻ = Šä pronounced as ‘sh’ in the word ‘usher’

ቸ = Čä pronounced as ‘Ch’ in the word ‘chair’

ኘ = Ńä sounds as in Spanish ‘canon’

|
ʕ = Zhä pronounced as 'z' in the word 'azure'

ǰ = Jä pronounced as 'j' in the word 'Jan'

IV. In the transcription of consonants to indicate the stop or affricate in glotalized explosives; in accordance with many Semitcists' usage glottalized sounds are represented as follows.

ϕ = Qä

ϕ̣ = Čä

ʕ/θ = Šä

ʕ = Pä

Abstract

Attempts have not been made to study the history of Mareko people. Even though the area which means the habitat of Mareko people, has been described by various Ethiopian and foreign travelers, historians, anthropologists, linguists and missionaries in their works, with the exception of few citations, a history of Mareko people either subsumed under linguistically similar ethnic groups of the area or have not received attention. Therefore, a history of Mareko people becomes among the least studied not only in the region but also in Ethiopia as a whole. This work, therefore, attempts to, explore and examine thoroughly to reconstruct a history of Mareko people from the 1880s, particularly from their incorporation into modern Ethiopian Empire state up to the downfall of the military Regime (Derge) in 1991. Moreover, the interactions of the people under the study with the neighboring communities, with the Christian Highland rulers, and with Hadiya people will be explore and examine. The study conducts employing three methods of collecting and analyzing sources. The first is oral information. Collection of oral interview is the basic method employed to obtain data for this research. By interviewing the individuals mainly, who are contemporary with the period of Emperor Haile Selassie and the Derge (military) Regime, particularly, who had close relation with the historical events either through their political position or their social status in which they were bestowed traditional titles and participated in different political, religious and social events. Thus they could accumulate valuable information. The second categories of the sources employed are archival material. Considerable amount of valuable documents and archives on the Haile Selassie regime of Mareko wereda (district) at Butajira town destroyed during the transitional period in 1966. A few valuable archival materials fortunately were reserved and found outside the present Mareko wereda at Butajira town, the present administrative center of Meskan wereda (district). These materials are not properly stored and it has become tire some necessary materials since they left as meaningless remnants of the past regimes, particularly, after the split up of the former Meskanena Mareko wereda (Meskan and Mareko) wereda in 1993, when Mareko wereda left concerning materials at Butajira in one old and very small room. I extracted some valuable archival materials which dated back to the establishment of the Provincial Military Administrative Council (the PMAC).

The third category of the source employed is secondary source, in which published and unpublished materials collected and analyzed. Published materials like articles, journals, book chapters, essays and books which have valuable information concerning Mareko people and their neighboring communities have been utilized for this research. Unpublished materials like BA, MA and Phd theses and, manuscripts having valuable information on Mareko people and their neighboring communities collected and analyzed. Shortage of archival materials and the dearth of written materials has been a challenge in the reconstruction of this thesis.

Preface

The main objective of this thesis is to reconstruct a history of the Mareko people from the 1880s to 1991. The research investigates and closely examines issues related with the Mareko people just after their incorporation into modern Ethiopia under the leadership of Emperor Menelik II until the end of the military regime Derg, in 1991. A historical development the time of incorporation is the main concern of this thesis.

The thesis is presented in five main chapters. The first chapter deals with background in which the researcher elaborates geographical and physical location of Mareko people, origin and settlement of Mareko people, language of Mareko people, etymology of the term “Mareko”, Religion of Mareko people. Chapter two investigates the prelude to the territorial expansion of King Menelik II towards the Mareko and examines the conquest and incorporation of Mareko people into modern Ethiopian Empire state. The introduction of new political system, land tenure system and also the arrival of new settlers have been also discussed. Furthermore, development works and public institutions, which established after the conquest, have been discussed under this chapter. The new relationship which developed after incorporation between Mareko people and Imperial government is the main objective of this chapter. Chapter three attempts to display the history of Mareko people during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie I(1930-1974). Under this chapter, the political condition, land and land tenure system have been examined. The 1936-1941 short lived occupation of Italy has been taken up and the political, social and economic conditions of the Mareko people and Mareko-land under Fascist rule have been investigated. The role of the Mareko people during the resistance movement period also examined. The post-liberation period and its socio-political and economic developments, which brought by the imperial government and its cause and effect has explained in this chapter. The socio; political and economic developments during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie I is the central theme of chapter four. This chapter also deals with the socio economic and political conditions of Mareko people during the time of the military government known as the Derg. This chapter has addressed the effect of new government reforms on the people under the study. Here also development works which coordinated by the government for Mareko people have been addressed. The final chapter, chapter five deals with the interaction of the Mareko people with the Christian highland kingdom and its Kings, Hadiya people, and their neighboring communities. This chapter provides important but more or less undocumented, positive and negative interactions which Mareko people experienced with the Christian highland kingdom and its Kings, the Hadiya people, and their neighboring communities Oromo, Gurage, and Silte until the collapse of the Military government Derge.

Acronyms

AAU.....	Addis Ababa University
BDU.....	Baher-Dar University
CSA.....	Central Statistics Agency
EHC.....	East highland Cushatic
EOC.....	Ethiopian Orthodox Church
HOF.....	House of Federation
IES.....	Institute of Ethiopian Studies
KTCA.....	Koshe Town Cooperatives Association
KTDA.....	Koshe Town Dwellers Association
LMDA.....	Libido Mareko Development Association
NWCD.....	National Work Campaign for Development
PAs.....	Peasant Associations
PMAC.....	Provisional Military Administrative Council
SNNPRS.....	South Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional State
USSR.....	Union of Soviet Socialist Republic
VCCs.....	Villagization Coordinating Committees

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CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SETTING OF THE MAREKO WEREDA (District) WEREDA (District)

The people of Mareko are one of the ethnic groups living in the central highlands of Ethiopia. They live in Mareko *wereda* (district), which is found between the latitudes of 7:55' S and 8:04' N and longitudes of 38:26'W and 38:33'E.¹

Mareko people mainly settled and live in Mareko *wereda* (district). Their ethnic group consists of 66 clans and hundreds of sub-clans. Among those 66 clans of Mareko, 49 clans have now permanently lived under the administrative division of Mareko district and the rest Mareko clans live in the neighboring Meskan district and also Silite Zone, Lanfaro district.² At present, Mareko district is one of the thirteen districts that makeup of today Gurage zone, within the Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (SNNPRS).

The 1942 decree, which is known as the Administrative Regulations Decree of 1942, established the original sub-national administrative divisions, which included the province (*teklay gizat*), the sub-province (*awraja*), the district (*wereda*), and the sub-district (*miktel wereda*),³ these local government arrangements have continually changed their numbers, names and boundaries throughout the country's recent history. As result of this administrative adjustment and re-adjustment the Mareko *awraja* (sub-province)⁴ was compounded under Arsi Province (*Tekilay Gizat*) and made some change on boundaries and numbers of district and sub district. Accordingly it was renamed Mareko *wereda* (district).

The Imperial government made some reforms on the eve of its removal, which was the 1973 *Awraja* Self-Government Reform the province, readjusted and compounded into Shawa Province (*Tekilay Gizat*) Administrative division after a readjustment was made on boundaries and number of districts (*Weredas*) and names.⁵ Subsequently, the name of the former Mareko *wereda* (district) was changed into Meskanena Mareko *wereda* (Meskan and Mareko district). This administrative division and the name of the district, therefore, continued in use until 1991.

¹Daniel Mekonnen, "Managing Inter-Ethnic Conflict through Indigenous Institutions-case of Siltie and Mareko Communities in Southern Ethiopia": in *International Peace and Conflict Studies*, Vol.3, No 1, (June 2016), p.68.

²*Ibid*, p. 69: Sintayhu Worku, "A Socio Political and Economic History of Mareko People: 1936-1974" (BA thesis, Department of History Dire Dawa University, 2002, p.3: Sintayhu reported that the number of Clans in Mareko are 65: Behareseboch Meker Bet (Council of Nationalities), *Ye Debub Kelele Beharoch Behareseboch ena Hizeboch Profile* (The profile of South Nation Nationalities and People's) Hawasa, 2004, p. 331. The Behareseboch Meker Bet reported that the numbers of clans are 64.

³ Cohen and Koehn, *Ethiopian Provincial and Municipal Government: Imperial Patterns and Post-revolutionary Challenges*. Michigan: Michigan State University African Studies Center, 1980, p.16.

⁴memo of Ato Bezabe Agune, see at Appendix A,

⁵Informants: Imam Odo Ebba, Ato Hailu Gagoro, and Inspector Edemo Kamilo.

Until 2004 Mareko people and Meskan-Gurage were remained together. However after 2004 the Mareko and Meskan became separate *Weredas* (districts) of Gurage zone and subsequently, Mareko *wereda* (district) was established.⁶

Mareko district is located in the eastern part of the Gurage zone and shared boundary with Oromiya Regional State in the eastern part, Meskan *wereda* (district) of Gurage zone in the western part, Sodo *wereda* (district) of Gurage zone in northern part, and with Silite *wereda* (district) of Silte zone in the southern part of its territory. The administrative center of Mareko district is called Koshe town, which is 82 km from Welkite, the Administrative center of Gurage zone through a new road of Butajira *via* Welkite, and 160 km far from the capital Addis Ababa via Alem Gena-Butajira-Zway (Batu) asphalt road.

At present Mareko district consists of 26 rural *kebeles* and one town. The 2007 CSA (Central Statistics Agency) reported that the total population of the district is 64,512 out of this 32, 730 were males and 31,782 were females.⁷ In addition to the Mareko people, the population of the district is made up of different linguistic and cultural groups who arrived and settled in the region in different times in the present district.

1.2 THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE MAREKO PEOPLE

1.2.1 ORIGIN AND SETTLEMNT OF MAREKO PEOPLE

The origin and settlement of Mareko people at their present habitat, has been found to be among controversial issues of the Mareko history. The controversial issues, especially about the origin of Mareko people, would be the result of generalization and lack of detail study. Different writers who studied the area, especially the Hadiya people have categorized Mareko people as one of the five a clan of Hadiya ethnic group.⁸ However, we when critically look at the oral tradition of most clan elders, there are different claims concerning their origin.

Mareko people as known by others are just “Mareko,” they also called themselves “Libedo.”Both names are interchangeably used. They were known to be among the peoples that made up the Hadiya Muslim Sultanate of the medieval times.

⁶ Informants; Inspector Edemo Kamilo, Ato Hailu Gagoro, and Ato Demeke Ahmed.

⁷ Central Statistic Authority, *The 2007 population and housing Census of Ethiopia; Results for Southern Nation, Nationalities and Peoples Region*, Vol.1. Part IV, table 2.8, (Addis Ababa, 2008), p. 95, 249; *Behareseboch Meker Bet* (House of Federation), *Ye Debub Kelel Beharoch Behareseboch ena Hizeboch Profile* (The profile of South Nation Nationalities and People's) Hawasa, 2004, p. 330. There is slight difference among these two reports, the South Nations Nationalities and People Profile reported that the population of Mareko in the 2007 Census was 64, 384. It has a difference of 128.

⁸ Staffan Grenstedt, *Ambaricho and Shonkolla From local Independent Church to the Evangelical Mainstream in Ethiopia: The Origin of the Mekane Yesus Church in Kambata Hadiya*, the faculty of the Theology, (Uppsala University, 2000), p. 45; Grover Hudson, “Highland East Cushitic”: in *the Non-Semitic Languages of Ethiopia*, M. Lionel Bender (ed.) 1976, p, 234.

Some historians work related the origin and present settlement of Mareko people with the sixteenth century population movement and its sequence which remapped some territory of the country following the wars of Imam Ahmed Ibin Ibrahim al- Ghazi (popularly known in Ethiopian history Ahmed Gran).⁹ It is true that, the Mareko people as pastoralists moved from place to place in this area in searching of favorable grazing ground and water source for their animals. However, their origin has not only been associated with the Hadiya ethnic group. Rather, the present Mareko ethnic group is the conglomeration of three sub-groups, these are; Libido, intermixed Libido (the ancestors of Bemedo, who was the brother of Boyamo to whom some Hadiya clans traced their genology), and Aneqa (indigenous communities).

Like most of the Medieval Hadiya Sultanate population groups, the Libido group oral traditions identify Arabia as the place of origin for their father, Libido. The founding father of the present Libido ethnic group was lived for uncertain time in Harar and begot children, then the number of his offsprings grew there until they were divided into three and separately moved out of Harar. First one group of Libido/Mareko moved from western Harar and lived for unknown period in the present Arsi-Bale area. Next another movement brought them around the present west Arsi probably around Shashemene area, where they led a pastoral way of life and followed the direction of lake areas and curved their journey and arrived in the present Mareko-land west of Lake Ziway.¹⁰ When part of Libido/Mareko arrived in this area, the area had been inhabited by Muslim communities to whom new arrivals collectively called “Aneqa” who were part of indigenous stocks in the area. The settlement was not easy task for new arrivals where indigenous communities fought for survival.¹¹ Subsequently, among the clans of new arrivals, a sub-clan called Dukama defeated “Aneqas.” After the surrender of the indigenous, Aneqa a peace treaty was reatned between the two parties: arrivals and survivals.¹² According to Mareko oral tradition, the peace the treaty was known as “*Uredan Dukema*” literally means (convention of the termite hill) which was concluded between Dukama clan of Libido and the “Aneqa”.

The remaining group of Libido/ Mareko moved with other similar linguistic group communities from Harar and stayed in Sharka-Gedeb. Then due to the push and pool factor, they continued their movement and arrived in the domain of the Muslim Sultanate of Hadiya¹³ where they adopted the socio cultural and administrative system of Hadiya ethnic group and lived until the

⁹ Lapiso Delebo, *Yeitiopiya Rejim Yehizb ena Yemengist Tarik (the Long History of Ethiopia and its People)* Addis Ababa, 1982, p. 162,163, Mehamed Tadesse, Hazo: *A political History of the People in Gedebano, Gutazer, Welene and Agemjay Localities of the Guragheland-Ethiopia (to 1991 AD)* NP, 2009, p. 20. Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia 1855-1991*, Second Edition, Oxford, Athens, Addis Ababa, 2005, p.9.

¹⁰ Tesfa Gebreyese, *Aymalale: Ye Gurage (YeSodo-Gordena) Hezib Ye Tarik Masetawesha (Aymalale: the History of Gurage (Sodo Gordena)* Ed, Worku Tesfa, Addis Ababa. 1987 (1995/96) p.14. (Amharic) : Edemo Erego, Edemo Herego, “Metē: Ye Libido/Mareko Behalena Tarik lay Yetedrge Tenatawi Tsehufe” (“Metē: the Culture and History of Libido/Mareko People”): *Paper Presented on Panel Discussion*, unpublished (Amharic) Koshe, 1998, pp. 16-17: Informants, Inspector Edemo Kamilo, Imam Tuke Aella, Ato Lile.

¹¹ Edemo Herego, pp. 5-6: Informants; Inspector Edemo Kamilo, Imam Odo Eba, Ato Lile Odo.

¹² *Ibid*

¹³ Informants: Imam Tuke, Hajji Jateno Meke, Tesfa Gebreyese, pp.14-15.

16th century population movement which reunited the two separated groups of Mareko people. According to Braukamper and Edemo, this part of Libido with other Hadiya groups from the surrounding area of Ziqewala Mountain in present Eastern Shawa, migrated to the areas between Lake Zway and the upper Bilate and part of the Libido stayed permanently within a particular region called Maraqa/Mareko.¹⁴

The Sixteenth century population movement and expansion which was accelerated following the wars of Imam Ahmed ibn Ibrahim, invited new linguistic and cultural groups in Central eastern Ethiopia. Among the areas where new settlers arrived and lived with indigenous communities, the west of Lake Ziway regions particularly the present Hadiya Zone, Gurage Zone and Siltie Zone were the most important for the period under the study. Crosspondingly this population movement and expansion brought the third part of Libido people which separately stayed at Hadiya area during the long journey from Sharka Gedeb. Then the third part of Libido people which moved from Hadiya into present habitat intermixed with marriage and adopt the culture of Hadiya people during their stay for hundreds of years.¹⁵ Due to this ethnic interaction and frequent marriage among Mareko and Hadiya probably at the present Hadiya Zone, new clans were formed and moved with Mareko people in to the present Mareko *wereda*. These intermixed clans were believed that the offspring's of Bemedo who was the brather of Boyemo to whom some part of Hadiya clans claimed their origin and recognized him as ancestral father.¹⁶

Based on the available written sources the oral tradition of Mareko and their cultural structure Mareko people are made up of clans which traces three origins; these are "Aneqas"- remnants of indigenous community which integrated with new comers, Libido-which did not traces ethnic affiliation and intermixing with Hadiya ethnic group, and another group which traces ethnic affiliation and intermixing with Hadiya ethnic group. Through time all these identified communities, due to continuous interaction and integration developed common cultural identity and shared common history mainly after they conglomerated at the present Mareko-land and collectively called Mareko as one single ethnic group.

1.2.3 LANGUAGE OF THE MAREKO PEOPLE

Ethiopia is the home of diversified ethnic groups where over 80 languages are spoken. These languages are generally categorized by linguistits under two super-language families, i.e. the Afro-Asiatic and the Nilo-Saharan. Among these super-language families the Afro-Asiatic language family has many speakers in Ethiopia and the Horn. Cushatic language family is spoken by the majority which further sub-divided into four sub-categories based on geo-linguistic classification.¹⁷ Libixxian (Marekegna), the language of Mareko people is categorized

¹⁴ Ulrich Braukamper, "The Correlation of Oral Traditions and Historical Records in Southern Ethiopia: A Case Study of the Hadiya/Sidamo Past": in *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Vol.11, No.2, pp.29-50, (July 1973), p.35.

¹⁵ Tesfa Gebreyese, p.14: Edemo Herego, p. 5: Informant: Teacher Dergu Gemechu,

¹⁶Ulrich Braukamper, pp.43-44: Informants; teacher Dergu Gemechu, Ato Hailu Gagoro, Inspector Edemo Kamilo

¹⁷ Grover Hudson, "Highland East Cushitic...", p.232,

under East Highland Cushatic (EHC) sub-category, which is under the Afro-Asiatic language family. The 2007 CSA data reported that the language, Libixxian or Marekegna is mother tongue for the population of 52, 068 Mareko living in the district and also other districts in Gurage Zone.¹⁸

Some studies on the EHC languages and Anthropological studies on Kembata, Hadiyya people and also neighboring Gurage people subsumed Libido language of Mareko people under Hadiyya language as Hadiyya proper and identified it as dialect of Hadiyya language,¹⁹ rather than identifying it as one single language. However, informants from Mareko ethnic group and the 1994 Ethiopian Census on Grover Hudson identified *Libixxian* or *Marekegna* as one independent language.²⁰

In December 2006 the first *Libixxian*-Amharic dictionary²¹ was published by Wondu Ergedo who among the others strived for the development of the language. And the role played by Libido-Mareko Development Association which was supported by the government of Mareko *Woreda* to develop their language has become effective and recently the language of Mareko people, Libixxian or Marekegna has become one subject for primary school (1-4).

1.2.4 ETYMOLOGY OF THE TERM MAREKO

The etymological genesis of the term “Mareko” said to be among other controversial issues of a history of the people. This could be due to the absence of critical studies of the history and anthropology of the Mareko people.

From ancient times, Mareko people were known by three names, such as Hadiya, Libedo and Mareko. One of these differences are the result of public activities are the result of regularly quoted as a reason; other people and their opinions are Mareko people. Based on this several writers who conducted on studying a history and Anthropology of Hadiya people categorized Libedo as one clan of Hadiya people. However available few written sources and oral tradition of Mareko contrarily appeared which advocate Libedo/Mareko as part of population of Sultanate of Hadiya with others such as Qebena, Kembata, and Halaba and other collectively known as Hadiya.²²

¹⁸ Central Statistic Authority, P. 201, table 3.1 Population by Rural-Urban Residence, Sex, and Mother Tongue.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p.233, 276, Mehamed Tadesse, p.178. According to Mehamed “82% lexical similarity with Libido” Tagesse Shuramo, “Ethnic Interaction in South Central Ethiopia: the Case of Kambata and Hadya (1890s-1990s)” Jimma University Department of History and Heritage Management, 2012, P.18.

²⁰ Informants; Imam Odo Eba, *Ato* Hailu Gagoro, Inspector Edemo Kamilo: Grover Hudson, “Languages of Ethiopia and Languages of the 1994 Ethiopian census Aethiopia”, 7 (2004), 160-172: In *International Journal of Ethiopian and Eritrean Studies*, 2004, p.161, 164.

²¹ Woundu Ergedo, *Libixxian Sagalla-Amaa'llisan tirato, (Simple Libixxian-Amharic dictionary)* 2006, Jajaw printers.

²² Ulrich Braukampier, “Islamic Principalities in South East Ethiopia between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries” in: *Islamic History and Culture in Southern Ethiopia, collected Essays* (Munster,Hamburg,London) 2002, pp.60-61: Staffan Grenstedt, *Ambaricho and Shonkolla From local Independent Church to the Evangelical Mainstream in*

The etymology of the term “Mareko” can be traced to two origins; the first bases on religious happening, and the second bases on political happening which is also again presented with two different interpretations. Instead of writing ever found and the name of the comings Mareko people, religious foundation of the country appears to be roughly. The author mentions the area from Butajira up to west of Lake Ziway, where Mareko people now habitat was known as the province of Kontem Hadiya where part of Hadiya people moved and settled.²³ However around 1284 AD *Abune Zena Marqos*, the well-known Orthodox Christian Missionary down to the Gurage country in expanding his activity and at the middle of Dobena locality and the present Koshe town built a church and named it Marqos after his name. Initially the name Marqos which describe the church gradually changed into Mareko/Mareqo and became the name of the area which formerly known as Konteb and also represent the name of the people.²⁴ Regarding this Lebel reported that one hundred-fifty ancient Orthodox Christian Churches built by *Abune Zena Marqos*. However most of them were destroyed by the war of Imam Ahmed Ibrahim. Only forty-four Churches are existed among them three are named after their founder such as Gädamä Zéna Marqos, Yäbäret Zéna Marqos, Désa Zéna Marqos.²⁵ According to this remark and its advocates initially the name Mareko describes the area than the people but gradually it used both to identify the area between west of Lake Zway and Butajira town, and the people living in the area.

The second idea concerning the origin of the term Mareko traces on two past political happening between Mareko people and Emperor Menelik II, the first idea traces the origin of term Mareko on the course of incorporation, and the second traces itself on the period after the new political economy fully exercised over Mareko people and both have been advocated by Mareko people.

According to informants among Mareko people the name ‘Mareko’ had been given by Emperor Menelik II to Libedo people after his campaign of incorporating the land and the people temporarily resisted by the people until his army under his direct command forcefully subjugated the people after one full day war. After King Menelik defeated them he made treaty with Mareko elders and clan chiefs concerning the new relation in which they recognize him as their King through their *balabbats* verified by the King. In the mean time additional agenda was rise on the fate of war captives and booty particularly cattle which taken by Shawan army.²⁶ Regarding the fate of war captives and the booty the King come up with two alternatives through which representatives of Mareko people have one choice. After the representatives asked the King to allow them a few thinking time one elder who is well known orator replied that “we prefer our men to booty if your mercy will with us, even though our land is harsh in producing eatable vegetation and fruit we can produce such property” the King who lessoned through translator

Ethiopia: The Origin of the Mekane Yesus Church in Kambata Hadiya, the faculty of the Theology, Uppsala University, 2000, p. 45: Grover Hudson, “Highland East Cushitic... p, 234.

²³ Tesfa Gebreyese, p.98.

²⁴ *Ibid*, p.15, 98.

²⁵ Phillip Lebel, “Oral Traditional and Chronicles on Guragé Immigration”: in *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, pp. 95-106, Vol. 12, No. 2 (July 1974) p.101.

²⁶ Edemo Herego, p. 13: Informants; *Ato Nine Alemu, Abegaz Belachew,*

admired not only by the choice but also by speech and said that “the speech of this people tests like honey, I do according to your choice and I called the name of your people ‘*ye mare eqa*’ here after.” According to the advocates of this, the name Mareko used after this political origin.²⁷

The other idea advocated by Mareko people side by side with the first idea which Sintayhu Worku also remarked as the origin of etymology of Mareko traces on the political economic relation of the people with King Menelik to whom Mareko people pay honey as tribute and the King who identify the people with their honey tribute named them “*ye mare eqaye*” literally means “my honey container”²⁸ most of Mareko people advocated, even know and explain how King Menelik gave the name Mareko to them. However few available written materials found to be contrary to the origin which advocates by Mareko people, and used the term Mareko to identify an area through relative location and marked “Mareko is an area located west of Lake Ziway where Libido and Gurage live”²⁹

According to these written sources, the term Mareko was used first to identify an area which was located west of Lake Ziway as far as Zebidar Mountain which separates Meskan-Gurage from their kinsman known as Sebat bet Gurage. Gradually, the name began to be used interchangeably to identify both an area and people living in the area. Particularly, it became the name of Libedo ethnic group and earlier settlers. Due to its freeness from derogatory meaning and explanation, the people used the name interchangeably and/or side by side just like “Libido/Mareko”.³⁰

Based on the above different assumptions concerning the etymology genesis of the term Mareko, we can reach on one possible argument. The frame of our reference should be the claims of Mareko people concerning their habitat. Mareko people living in the identified area despite their difference origin collectively call themselves “Libido”. Concerning the totality of their habitat including spiritual identity they have different custom in the area. They called their land “*Meie*”. According to the Mareko spiritual identity apart from difference on religion which means all Mareko/Libido nation, Muslim, indigenous religion follower, Christian (Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant) have a common spiritual guardian to which they called *Meie*. She has special mission particularly keeping the fertility of their land and habitat. The origin of the term *Meie* is not clearly identified however, the only available written material about the people and the area has a clue which stated that “there is a place called Meie-hora which has warm spring water and a type of salty soil suitable for cattle where Mareko people fight”³¹ it seems that its purpose was beyond

²⁷ Edemo Herego, p. 13: Informants; Ato Nine Alemu, Abegaz Belachew.

²⁸ Informants: Ato Tessema Tamirat, Ato Hailu Gagoro: Sintayhu Worku, p.2.

²⁹ Bairu Tafla, Ed, *Asma Gyorgis and His work; History of the [Oromo] and the Kingdom of Sōwa*, Stuttgart, 1987, p.944: Grover Hudson, p. 233: Ulrich Braukampeir, “Islamic Principalities...”, P. 87.

³⁰ For instance Mareko people called their language *Libixan* which means (that belongs to Libido). And institution like local self-help organization known as Libido-Mareko Development Association (LMDA) used both names, i.e Libido and Mareko compoundingly. However, Commercial Bank of Ethiopia opened its branch in 2008 in Koshe, Mareko wereda and first named its branch “Libido branch” but later changed it and renamed it Mareko branch due to the English term is taboo.

³¹ Tesfa Gebreyese, p.16, 20.

cattle reserving area since they used the name Mete both to call the identified place and their guardian of fertility. Based on this Mete-hora would be their place of blessing for fertility where fight against the neighboring Silte people to protect and enhance for purpose before and even after the incorporation of their land into Menelik's empire.

Based on the above spiritual identity, we can conclude that the name Mareko was first used by neighboring people to identify the area. But the controversial issue will be its origin, to which different explanations articulated even among Mareko oral informants, regarding their different on the origin of the term, the religious idea which explained by Tesfa Gebreyse which traces the 13th century expansion of Orthodox Christianity has other supportive written material concerning the influence of Christian tradition in the identified century until the area annexed for short period by Imam Ahmed Ibrahim and his followers.

The western neighboring Mesqan-Gurage people have an idea about the etymology genesis of their name which traces on the arrival of Christian northern settlers' during medieval period and their activity. Concerning this Denberu et al. reported that the name Mesqan originated from the name of the Mesqele Eyesus church which was constructed in today's Bidara *qebele* in Mesqan *wereda* at the end of the medieval period which in later period destroyed by Imam Ahmed Ibrahim.³² So that, the religious idea probably will be the better alternative for the etymology origin of the name Mareko due to the existence of different explanation given by Mareko informants connecting with King Menelik II.

There is one exceptionally presented but additional input for the exploration of the origin of the term Mareko. The Wolayta people called Hadiya people 'Mareko' which has means (Arabs)³³ Despite its unique origin and used by non neighboring Woliya people for other linguistically and historically related Hadiya people, this etymological explanation give important clue for the age-old relation of Mareko and Hadiya people.

1.3 RELIGION AMONG THE MAREKO PEOPLE

1.3.1 FANDANNO, THE INDIGINOUS RELIGION OF MAREKO PEOPLE

Before and even after the introduction of the two universal Religions, Christianity and Islam, Mareko people had been worships their own traditional religion and practices different spiritual beliefs at home with family, as a clan level and as the whole ethnic level.

³² Dinberu Alemu et al. *Gogot: Ye Gurage Hezib Tarik, Behalena Quanqa (Gogot: History, Culture, and Language of the Gurage People)* Department of Culture and Sport Artistic Printers Press (Amharic) 1995, p.36.

³³ Informant: Mohamed Brhanu and Tesfaye; they were summer MA student of History and Heritage department of 2016 graduate and from Walayta ethnic group according to them for Walayta people the word Mareko used to identify their neighboring Hadyia ethnic group: Valentine Peveri, "The Exquisite Political Fragrance of Enset Silent Protest in Southern Ethiopia through Culinary themes and Variations" in: *The Open Journal of Socio Political Studies*, 2015, p.566.

The traditional religion of Mareko ethnic group called *Fandanno* will be among the earliest indigenous and well organized, which can be categorized under institutional religion. *Fandanno* religion was mostly followed by the population of Medieval Muslim Sultanate of Hadiya before 13th c and were equally dominated by Islam from 13th c to 16th c.³⁴ Concerning the origin of *Fandanno* religion there is one assumptions which stated that “*Fandanno* introduced by two mans by name “Itto” and “Allbajjo” who flight like a bird and crossed Sea” and introduce the religion. However, probably due to the introduction of Islam religion and other factors³⁵ the *Fandanno* religion lost most of its followers and became nominal until its revival after reappear.

Fandanno, the indigenous religion among Mareko and generally the population of Hadiya Sultanate revive and became alternative religion around the middle of fifteenth century after its reintroduction. The revival does not delimit among the Mareko rather its get wider followers. Its reappearance has not only spiritual figure but also political since the ruling class of Hadiya credited for its’ reintroduction. Regarding the reintroduction of *Fandanno* religion there is disagreement among scholars who studied the area, mainly who should have the credit.

Admitting the oral tradition, Braukamper ascribe *garad* Bimaddo (also known as Mehmed and considered as the ancestral father of Libido of Mareko) the brother of *garad* Boyamo for the introduction of *Fandanno* religion among populations of the Medieval Sultanate of Hadiya. To the contrary Alebachew and Samuel recognize and credited *garad* Boyamo, the ruler of the Sultanate who made it the state religion.³⁶ These brotherhood *garads* were contemporary of Emperor Zära-Yá eqob but there relation with the northern Christian empire and its rulers differ one another. *Garad* Boyamo to who part of Hadiya state populations traced their origin, identified as loyal to the Christian rulers and sometimes acted as client ship. However *garad* Bimaddo/Mehmed admittedly, the father of Libido/Mareko identified as a rebel due to his immense quest for former independent sovereignty subsequently he was devastated with his followers by the Christian army which supported by his brother Boyamo.

Even after the introduction of Islam and Christianity, *Fandanno* notwithstanding exercised side by side and remain one of the competent of the new religions and culture as resistant which well organized and lead its priests. The *Fandanno* religion followers known as *Fanadaano* (plural) and *Fandaancho* (singularly). The *Fanadaano* believes in an omnipotent, which live in the sky to which they called *Waa’a*. For the *Fanadaano* (*Fandanno* followers) the word *Waa’a* represents both the Creator and the physical sky.³⁷ According *Fanadaano* *Waa’a* creates good things and protects human being from evil sprites. Beside the *Fandanno* religion Mareko’s worships different beliefs. Most of these spiritual and cultural practices occasionally practiced aimed for blessing fertility praying, to save from drought, to heal sick and other social, economic and political

³⁴ Alebachew Kemiso and Samuel Handamo, *Ye Hadiya Hizbe Tarik ena Bahel, (The History and Culture of Hadiya People)* Addis Ababa, 2002, pp.200-202, 204-206: Grenstedt, p. 51-53: Huntingford, p.15.

³⁵ Braukamper, “The Correlation of Oral Traditions...”, p.45.

³⁶ *Ibid*: Alebachew and Samuel, pp.200-201.

³⁷ *Ibid*

traumas. According to the 13th century hagiography of *Abune Zena Marqos*, the famous Orthodox Christian missionary from shoa to whom the introduction of Christianity in Gurage area and Mareko credited, Mareko beside *Fandanno* and other spiritual beliefs people worshipped a cult known as “*Makose*.”³⁸

Like other indigenous religious system they also believe in, the power vested in certain individuals and families. However for such case for indigenous religion followers of Mareko power vested on women rather than man by which the spiritual leader acknowledged both by the “believed and believer.” Among the spiritual leaders of Mareko traditional belief followers *Werke Mariam* was the most important and had historical place in Mareko history.³⁹ She was contemporary to the 1936-1941 Italian occupation and her impermeability for Italian rule proofed and hostage in unknown place.

Some of the above beliefs and spiritual practices were originated in Mareko-land by the Mareko people however, the *Fandanno* religion seems to be introduced from the Hadiya ethnic group who were members of the Muslim Sultanate of Hadiya.⁴⁰ As the result of the existence of different ethnic groups in the then Sultanate of Hadiya there was multicultural population within the domain of the Sultanate where different spiritual and cultural activities shared by these integrated and assimilated populations. This witnessed the existence of different spiritual cultures among Mareko people.

1.3.2. THE INTRODUCTION OF ISLAM AMONG THE MAREKO PEOPLE

As the population of the Medieval Sultanate of Hadiya, Marekos’ were among the first people who accept Islam religion in the Sultanate. The Muslim Sultanate of Hadiya, in which Mareko belongs, was member of the Zeila Confederation which was formerly established by other Sultanates in southeastern region of Ethiopia.⁴¹ Based on this information, Mareko-land where part of Mareko people mainly habitat geographically the nearest to states and peoples of the members of the Zeila Confederation since it is located West of Lake Zway. Regarding this geographical proximity, Mareko peoples would be influenced by the then nearby Muslim Sultanates and vis-à-vis Muslim missionaries would be first arrived in Mareko land and Islam imported⁴² and spread among the rest population of the Muslim Sultanate of Hadiya. Some available sources indicated that Islam was introduced and well organized Islamized communities

³⁸ Mehamed Tadesse, p.26: Tesfa Gebreyese, p.78.

³⁹ Informants; Ato Nune Alemu, Ato Hailu Gagoro, Abegaz Anbese Tira: Edemo Herego, p. 44, 172-173.

⁴⁰ Alebachew and Samuel, pp. 202-206: Edemo Herego, p.169.

⁴¹ Braukamper, “Islamic Principalities...”, pp.60-6: Tagesse, p. 12:

⁴² Mordechai Abir, *Ethiopia and the Red Sea: the rise and decline of the Solomonic dynasty and Muslim-European rivalry in the region*, Institute of Asian and African Studies, University of Jerusalem, 1980, p.14.: Ulrich Braukämper, Aspects of Religious Syncretism in Southern Ethiopia: in *Journal of Religion in Africa*, pp.194-207. Vol.22, Fasc.3, 1992, p.199, 205.

were existed before the war of Ahmed Ibrahim.⁴³ Generally it will be possible to Islam was introduced among Mareko people from the Muslim Sultanates which found in the southeastern region through frequent interaction and the role of Muslim missionaries.

1.3.2.1 Islamic Syncretism in Mareko before 1940s

Around the middle of fifteenth century, particularly during the series of war between Hadiya *garads* and Emperor Zara Ye'eqob, the indigenous religion; Fandanno, reintroduce among the Mareko and co-existed with Islam. Gradually the impact of syncretic manifestations involved in Muslim Mareko people. One of the most important syncretism manifestations among Muslim Mareko before the re-Islamisation in the first four decades of twenty century, was the duration of *remedan* (fasting month of Muslims) for which some Mareko Muslims had took a break at the middle of the fasting month saying that “ let took a rest” and after a break they resume the fasting.⁴⁴The idea of taking a break at the middle of the *remedan* after fifteen days fasting would be directly associated with syncretism since the fasting duration for Fandanno religion followers has had optional not less than fifteen day and greater than thirty days. Elders, sick's and youngsters fast for fifteen day and healthy mature and religious leaders fast for month.⁴⁵ Concerning this Braukämper identified areas of influences that have a sign of syncretism in Muslim Hadiya which displayed in some practices of Islam.⁴⁶

The ball rolls until the re-Islamisation of Mareko after the arrival of *Abba Zemzo* to who credited for re-Islamisation. Concerning the origin and religious activities of *Abba Zemzo*, my informants stated that, *Abba Zemzo* was a religious man, who came from Hossana area, and arrived in Mareko around Koshe area and he built Mosque to conduct his religious missionary activity. There he used a *debe* (drum) to attract young's through his songs and also chew up a *chat*.⁴⁷

In the same period, another Mosque was built around Jereno *Kebele* by the effort of *Abba Bereqi*. Consequently, only an incomplete picture of the syncretic religion among the Mareko constructed after amalgamated practices left behind.

1.3.3 The Introduction and Expansion of Christianity among the Mareko people

The history of Christianity among the Mareko had the work of individual Orthodox Christianity missionary of 13th century by name *Abune Zena Marqos*. He was the family and student of

⁴³ Michael Vinson, *Struggle for Recognition: A Critical Ethnographic Study of the Zay*, African Studies Center, University of Leiden, 2013, p.44; Trimmingham J.S. *Islam in Ethiopia* (London) 1965, p.64; Ulrich Braukemper, *Islamic History...*, pp.56-58.

⁴⁴ Informants: *Abegaz Anbese Tira*, Inspector Edemo Kamilo, and *Ato Nune*.

⁴⁵ Alebachew and Samuel, p.216.

⁴⁶ Braukämper, “Aspects of Religious Syncretism...”, pp.202-203.

⁴⁷ Informants: *Abegaz Anbese Tira*, Inspector Edemo Kamilo, and *Ato Alemu Nine*.

famous *Abune Tekle Hymanot* of Shoa.⁴⁸ *Abune Zena Marqos* played a major role in the expansion and the reintroduction of Christianity in Gurage country including Mareko.⁴⁹

According to our available information concerning the work of *Abune Zena Marqos*, round 1278 *Abune Zena Marqos* down to the Mareko from Gurage Country to expand his missionary activity to the nearby localities, and then built the first Church in between Koshe (the capital of Mareko *wereda*) and Dobbena, the nearby district of Silte Zone. However, until the middle of 19th century Christianity was not able to expand among the community and it was dominated by Islam and Fandanno and other indigenous spiritual practices.

Probably the advance of Christianity and Christian culture began to influence the area particularly after the arrival of Christian people later known as Zay on the islands of Lake Zeway. Buruk Woldemichael and Michael Vinson reported that these people arrived with their spiritual, cultural and material heritages in securing the Ark of the Covenant.⁵⁰ Subsequently the arrivals of these Christian people attract the eyes of the different Christian rulers in different time and period, foreign and indigenous individual for different purpose.

Orthodox Christianity revived and began to be reintroduced among the Marekos in the Middle of the 19th century as the result of the revival of political dominance of the Christian Highland Kingdom in the area. Orthodox Churches were built and Church functionaries settled with their families after the conquest of Mareko by Menelik II.⁵¹ These arrived and settled church functionaries have had diverse origin and in later time integrated with Mareko and made intermarriage with the local community. And even some owned locally given titles. Among these newly arrivals that can get social acceptance in Mareko *Azmach Fisha Zewde* was the most important. He was originally from the present west-Shawa Oromya region; Meta-Robi Woreda arrived in Mareko as deacon.⁵² Gradually he became one of important figure on the eyes of Mareko and bestowed one of important title called *Azmach*. Due to his special talent and skill of conflict resolution and served the community as member of the traditional conflict resolution institution until his natural death in 2016.

After the 1970s, different sects of Christianity; Catholic and different Protestant Churches were built and began their missionary activity. The Protestants became more active among the minorities especially they had strong foothold among Kontomma communities,⁵³ who are occupational minorities living both in Mareko Wereda and the neighboring Meskan Wereda. Despite of existing followers of Orthodox Christianity, Protestantism, and Catholicism the

⁴⁸ Tadesse Tamrat, *Church and State in Ethiopia 1270-1527*, Oxford, 1972, pp. 176-177; Tesfa Gebreyese, pp. 97; Mehamed Tadese, p. 18.

⁴⁹ Phillip Lebel, P. 101; Dinberu Alemu et al.P.195; Mehamed Tadese, p.18; Tesfa, p.15, 98.

⁵⁰ Buruk Woldemicheal, "The History of the Monastery of Däbrä Seyon Mariyam in Lake Zeway to 1991, History Department, Bahir Dar University, 2002, p.10; Vinson, p. 36.

⁵¹ Tesfa, p.101

⁵² Informants; *Ato Buba Balcha*, *Ato Takele Balcha*: Tract prepared for his death memorial.

⁵³ Informant; Inspector Edemo Kamilo, *Ato Zewde Chumeto*, and *Ato Lile*

majority of Mareko People followed Islam religion⁵⁴. Concerning the origin and condition of the minority group, particularly about the Kontoma community living in Mareko *wereda*, a brief description will be given on chapter five.

⁵⁴ The 2007 Ethiopian Population Census result in Table 3.4 Population by Religion and Sex, p. 249. Stated that Islam has 54, 202 followers among Mareko out of the total population of 64, 512.

CHAPTER TWO

2. THE CONQUEST OF MENELIK AND ITS IMPACT

2.1 Objectives of Menilik's Expansion towards the Mareko people

The objectives of King Menilik II expansion and conquest of Mareko people was part of his whole regions of Ethiopian campaign and mainly southern Ethiopian marches. It was also similar to the whole campaigns which undertaken earlier and took in later time. Like other previous campaigns, in this area here also King Menilik II intended to fulfill his political and economic objectives to secure his position.

Politically King Menilik to fulfill his dream to be king of king should boost Emperor Yohannes IV regarding weapons, troops, and money. To get those inputs he should expand his territory towards resourceful regions and areas to collect available resources.⁵⁵

Economic objective of Menelik could be site as seek for arable land. King Menelik have an experience of surveying Mareko area and able to learn about the fertility of the land more than two times; first during his campaign of 1875 which included most of east Gurage area and Mareko⁵⁶, secondly, during his campaign to conquer Arsi Oromo in 1886 across Mareko⁵⁷ land and Concerning this Tesfa Gebreyse stated that, Mareko land is very fertile where spring waters flow abundantly. Due to the fertility and also the dominantly pastoral way of life of Mareko people, soon after incorporation the land of Mareko measured and most of the part distributed for newly settled non-natives.⁵⁸

In securing the above objectives King Menelik II conducted two campaigns towards Mareko. The oral tradition of Mareko marked their resistance war against the expansion of King Menelik II into two and named each wars after the war leaders; the first 1877 the war of Ajacho, after its leader Ajacho Geleto, the second was 1887 the war of Lechebo, after its leader Lechebo Ajacho, the son of former war leader Ajacho Geleto. Let see both resistance wars;

2.1.1 The 1878 War of Expansion Made by Menelik, King of Shewa kingdom (*The War of Ajachoo Geleto*)

Menelik as King of Shewa Kingdom started his territorial expansion and conquest in Southern Ethiopia by using both peaceful method and forceful subjugation through forcefully. The first submission which secured by Menelik was the Soddo (Kestane) Gurage in 1875 and 76, whose peaceful submission caused by geographical nearness and religious similarity to the King's court at Entoto and for the sake of security since they were under the constant attack by neighboring

⁵⁵Woroku Nida. *Jebdu: Ye Gurage Hizeb Bahelena Tarik (A History and Culture of Gurage)* Addis Ababa. (Amharic), 1983 (1990/91) p.71.

⁵⁶Edemo, p. 38: Alebachew and Samuel, pp.74-75.

⁵⁷Edemo, p. 25: Tesfa, p.95.

⁵⁸Tesfa, pp.15-16

Oromo.⁵⁹ Menelik’s victory over Sodo (Kestane) people motivated him to continue his territorial expansion and conquest over the rest of the area, directionally western and eastern Gurage including Mareko people.

Menelik’s second campaign was conducted in the year between 1876 and 1877 in which his attempt to conquer these areas through peaceful and forceful means only became successful after the peaceful submission of Qebena.⁶⁰ However his forceful method found to be ineffective due to the combination of western and eastern Gurage force which crushed the force of King Menelik. Concerning this Mehamed Taddses stated that “they [Menelik’s force] started their conquest from Qebena and continuously covered the Welene-Gedebanno, Akilil, Muhur, [...] Selt’e, Meskan, Dobbi, areas.⁶¹ However, the initial efforts of the force of Shawa ended with a humiliating defeat.”⁶² According to oral information among the mareko people and some materials the force of Menelik which advanced Selt’e and Meskan Gurage area the neighbor of mareko people, mareko clan chief organized their army under the leadership of local war leader named Ajacho and make ready to protect their frontier against the conquering army. Consequently fresh and numerically superior force of mareko people defeated the exhausted but relatively well equipped force of Menelik in 1878 at a place near Dobenna which is the adjacent territory of Selt’e people, Mareko people and Meskan Gurage. Concerning this war and the bravery of Mareko fighters and the wise use of horses by Mareko cavalry men, Tesfaye by citing the work of Cecchi stated as follows;

ማረቆዎች [...]ጥሩ የሆኑ ፈረሶች ያሏቸው ናቸው።[...]ምኒልክ ጦር በከፈተባቸው ጊዜ የጦር መሳሪያውን አልፈሩም ። የፈረሶቻቸውን ጆሮ በጨርቅ በመሸፈን ጠላታቸውን የምኒልክን ሰራዊት ፊት-ለፊት ገጠሙት ። አንድ የጥይት ድምጽ ከ2000-3000 ህዝብ ሊያስበረግግ በሚችልበት አገር እንዲህ ማድረጋቸው ለታላቅ ጀግንነታቸው ጥሩ ምስክር ነው።[...]⁶³

The above sentence is translated as follows;

Marekos’ are good with horses. When Menelik opened
War on them they did not feared weapons. by wearing

⁵⁹ Bahru Zewde, *Modern...*, p.61: Lapiso G. Dileo . 1983 (1990/91), *Ethiopian Feudalism and Early Capitalism*. Second Edition, Addis Ababa, pp.190-192.

⁶⁰ R.H. Kofi Darkwah, *Shewa, Menelik and the Ethiopian Empire 1813-1889* (London: Heninemn) 1975, p.99.

⁶¹ Mehamed Tadesse, p.46.

⁶² Gethaun Dilebo, “Emperor Menelik’s Ethiopia, 1865-1916: National Unification or Communal Domination“ Phd: Thesis (Washington, D. Howard University) 1974, p.103: H. Marcus, *The Life and Times of Menelik II 1844-1913* (Oxford: Clarendon Press) 1975, p.149: Atsem-georgise, NY. *Ye [Oromo Tarik] (A History of Oromo) part II, IES, Addis Ababa University*, P.42.

⁶³ Tesfaye Habiso, “Kambattaena Hadiya - Yeastedader Akababienna Yebihereseb tarik and Getsta”, at IES Ethiopian collection, Addis Ababa. 1993,450.

a cloth on their horses ears combated Menelik's army
in front of the firemen. A country where the sound of
gunfire disband 2000-3000 people doing great bravery
is a good witness.

The tradition of Mareko called this first resistance war "the war of Ajacho" which named after its leader Ajacho Geleto.⁶⁴

The 1878 King Menelik's campaign's military tactic by which intended to conquer the Gurage and Mareko people within a single campaign witnessed it was the result of underestimating the fighting capacity, and semi-fragmented and sometimes stateless people. However war time unity, effective leadership of local war chiefs, and the existing self governing sentiment, deteriorated Menelik's idea of easy access to conquer the area.

2.1.2 The 1887 Campaign of King Menelik II towards Mareko people. (*The war of Lechebo*)

Then after his unsuccessful campaign towards Gurage area and Mareko, with ruminants of his fighters return to his court at Liche to reorganize his army, made important intelligent work, and recruit new fighters from his formerly submitted loyal areas in conducting second expansion and conquering campaign against Gurage area and Mareko people. To disrupt their former war time unity King Menelik planned to conduct his following campaign through independent attack.⁶⁵

The second campaign of King Menelik's territorial expansion and conquest towards Mareko people started one year before the beginning of Great Famine known as *Kefu Qen* (evil day) (1888-1892), in 1887.⁶⁶ This campaign was led by King Menelik himself and his war general Ras Gobena Dachu.⁶⁷ Just before the beginning of actual fighting the King call for the peaceful submission of Mareko people, consequently the resistance of Mareko people became split in to two after the ruling class from Medore clan who learnt about the growing power of Menelik by looking his force who equipped better weapon and numerically increase from the previous war, inclined to peaceful submission to save the life and property of his people. Concerning this Sintayhu Worku stated that "Mareko's north of Wajja River under the ruling class of Medore clan submitted peacefully and the south of Wajja River under the leadership of Shebo clan resistance continued."⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Alebachew and Samuel, p.75: Edemo, p. 38.

⁶⁵ Zewede Gebre Sillasie, *Yohannes IV of Ethiopia, A Political Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon) 1975, p.271.

⁶⁶ Tesfa, p.96. He stated that Aste Menelik II marched towards Mareko a year *Kifu Qen*.

⁶⁷ Edemo, p. 38.

⁶⁸ Sintayhu, p.8: Informants: Ato Nine Alemu, and Abegaz Anbese.

Politically dominating clan of Mareko to whom confrontation seems to be meaningless rather than cultivating death toll and destruction on the area, became ready to peaceful submission and apparently to use the opportunity in securing the will be political arrangement by King Menelik. However the local politically rival Shabo clan by uniting and organizing most of Mareko people who habitat south of wajja river make necessary prerequisites to fight the nearby well equipped army of Menelik.

The expanding and conquering army of Shewa under the leadership of the King and his war general in offensive line occupied with tent on the adjacent area of Mareko, Selt'e and Meskan at a place known as Dobenna. King Menelik there secured loyalty from the already conquered Meskan Gurage and Soddo Gurage's and able to get some recruited fighters from them.⁶⁹

After the submission of politically ruling clan of Medore confirmed clan represented by Mesebo who brought gift to show loyalty, then King Menelik and *Ras* Gobena began to plan how to fight the resisted group.

The resisted group of Mareko people organized by Shabo clan⁷⁰ under the leadership of Lechebo Ajacho⁷¹, the son of Ajacho who led the 1878 "Ajacho war" to confront the invading army at the place called Dobbena. Even though they were boosted regarding weapon and well trained fighter, they were advantageous since they have numerical superiority on the enemy and geographically, fight on their area.

Under their war-time leader Lechebo, clan chiefs ordered to recruit and organized resistant fighters in which each clan assigned its own traditional war leader. From each clan Mareko's cavalry force which was well known during the first war of resistance,⁷² recruited and the main task of fighting lay up on them beside the infantry force which armed with few gun and the majority armed with traditional backward weapons like; spear, sward, and shield. The Mareko people tradition called this war "the war of Lechebo" after its leader.⁷³

The war "of Lechebo" was decisive in which the Mareko resistance group army tried their best to resist the well-equipped force. The resistance group of Mareko people found to be in upper position initially when they were in offensive position however, the tactic full defensive position of force which led by experienced *Ras* Gobena turned into offensive line with his surprise attack and relatively better weapon. The fighting continued until the leader of Mareko resistance force Lechebo shouted and died in the course of the war and following disband occurred among the

⁶⁹ Edemo, p.39: Informants: Imam Tuke , Hajji Jateno , and *Abegaz* Anbese.

⁷⁰ Sintayhu, p.8: Informant: *Ato* Nune, *Abegaz* Anbese, and *Ato* Lile.

⁷¹ Edemo, p. 38.: Informants: *Ato* Nine Alemu, *Abegaz* Anbese, and *Ato* Lile

⁷² Tesfaye Habiso, p.450: Edemo, pp. 47-48, 84; stated that the war lord of Ulbarga sent a military help to neighboring Mareko war leaders during their war with the neighboring Oromo. Bahru Zewde, Bahru Zewde, System of Local Governance among the Gurage; the Yajoka Qicha and the Gordenna Sera, p. 21, 2002. He stated that "[...]Kistane Gurages strengthen their internal defense to defend external aggression from neighboring Hadiya and Mareko."

⁷³ Edemo, p. 38, : Informants; Imam Tuke , Hajji Jateno, and *Abegaz* Wangoro.

fighters. The war end and the resistance crushed after one full day fighting when Mareko resistance fighters retreated following the death of their leader and most of cavalry fighters, the backbone of the resistance force, shouted with enemy bullet.⁷⁴ During their unplanned retreat the group disbands and most of them surrendered. Then the experienced fighters of Shewa flow into the nearby villages to collect booty and returned at temporary camp with numerous cattle since it was the norm of Shewa fighters riding cattle from the defeated area.⁷⁵ At the end of the war death and casualties appeared both sides but on the side of the resistance considerably increased.

After the resistance crushed and most of fighter group surrendered treaty was made by King Menelik and clan representatives and elders concerning the fate of war captives and booties. Mareko elders and clan representatives preferred human war captives to material booty, and then the King admired their choice human than material, and finally Mareko people incorporation secured after the formerly peacefully submitted Burqamo family of Medore clan recognized as nobility to legal representative of Mareko people.⁷⁶

2.2 Political condition in Mareko after incorporation into Menelik's Empire

Mareko people which incorporated by King Menelik through both peaceful submission and forceful subjugation, due to the split which appeared on the ongoing resistance since the 1877 "the war of Ajacho" when mareko people without clan division scored victory on the force of Menelik I. After the incorporation into Modern Ethiopian Empire Mareko nobility which govern and represent Mareko people can create smooth political relationship with the Imperial government. Actually this smooth relationship had been calculated by the nobility of Mareko, from Medore clan represented by Mesebo Burqamo's family. However the former resistance group leaders under the leadership of Shabo clan still remain contrary to the ruling nobility. The occasional rivalry among the governing nobility and competition for power against the governing nobility under the Shebo clan chiefs repeatedly solved by the assembly of Mareko clan chief through the traditional dispute solving management known as *Ragga/Magga*.⁷⁷

In 1894 Menelik I was in the way to one of his important expansion and conquest campaign towards the state Wollayta. Menelik II, who made some expansion campaigns by using fighters from previously submitted areas through formed loyalty, arrived in local area near to Butajira and ordered *Fitawrari* Habte Georgise to recruit fighters from the locality.⁷⁸ The Mareko nobility under Mesebo which receive the message tried to use the situation as an opportunity and meet

⁷⁴ Alebachew and Samuel, p.76: Edemo, p. 38-39

⁷⁵ Edemo, p.13: Darkwwah, p.102: Abbas Haji, "Arsi Oromo Political and Military Resistance Against the Shoan Colonial Conquest (1881-6)" In: The Journal of Oromo Studies, Volume II Number 1&2 Winter, 1995 & Summer 1995, pp. 1-21, eds. by Abbas Haji, Feyisa Demie, Assefa Kuru and et al, p.6.

⁷⁶ Alebachew and Samuel, p.76: Sintayhu, P.7: Edemo, p. 60.

⁷⁷ Informants: *Ato* Nune and *Abegaz* Wanegoro.

⁷⁸ Dinberu Alemu et al.P.231: Sintayhu, p.7: Edemo, p. 42.

the King at his temporary camp in Butajira and display his support by contributing cavalry force which led by son Mesebo named Borqmo's.⁷⁹

2.3 Replacement of Communal Ownership of Land by New Land Tenure System in Mareko

Just before the sharing out of the land of Mareko people by Emperor Menelik II, in Mareko, land was a communal property of the community as a whole. There was not any plot of land which emerged to have been obsessed by an individual. Every have had full right to use the land with his clan. Each clan and sub clan was prearranged independently and occupied a definite geographical area which was recognized by a neighboring clan.⁸⁰

The people of Mareko were mainly pastoralists tending their large herds of cattle, goats, and sheep and naturally, the consumption of meat and milk constituted a major part of their diet.⁸¹ Every member of a community has access to grazing field and as well as for farming.

The most durable impact of the defeat and occupation of the Mareko was the appropriation of their land. Victims of the war and their descendents were made *gabbars* of the followers and supporters of Imperial government as elsewhere in southern Ethiopia during the same period. The confiscation of Mareko land assumed two ways, complete and partial. In areas where major confrontations and stiff resistance were staged, particularly south of Wajja River, complete alienation of land by conquerors was applied. In that area, the rightful owners, the Mareko, entirely lost their land to the new *naftagna* (gun bearer) settlers and the Mareko became *gabbars* on their own land.

Unlike the chiefs of the area of strong resistance whose land was confiscated, in areas north of Wajja river where resistance was not confronted, chiefs were allowed to retain part of measured land of the clan land thus called *ye balabbat meret* (land of the land lord) and to submit the remaining part of measured land to the government which then became *ye mengist meret* (crown land). However, despite the difference in the intensity of isolating the mass in holding land, during the new land measurement known as *qallad*, most of the land of the northern and south of Wajja River bequeathed to the Emperor or his agent *balabbat Qennazmach* Burqamoo.

2.3.1 The Implementation of new Land Tenure System and its impact on the Mareko people

The incorporation of Southern region of the today Ethiopia into Modern Ethiopia by Emperor Menelik II brought one of fundamental change on the economic, social and political life of the

⁷⁹ Sintayhu, p.7: Edemo, p. 42.

⁸⁰ Edemo, p. 15: Informants: Imam Tuke Aele, Hajji Jateno, and Ato Buba.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, :Tesfa, p.15

people. The mother of these changes was the introduction of new land tenure system which begot the above economic, social, and political influences.

Ethiopia had a tremendously multifaceted land-tenure system.⁸² The difference and complexity witnessed mainly during the time of Emperor Menelik II who applied two different land tenure systems in one country. The difference particularly happened after the incorporation of southern regions into northern regions, particularly in the time of Emperor Menelik II Ethiopian the government divided the land tenure system of the country into two; rest right system and *gult* system. In the northern Tigre Amharic provinces, the power base of the Imperial authorities, land ownership was vested with the kinship group, peasants ownership of land was protected by the rest system, in which subjects are expected to pay tribute. The Imperial government applied new land tenure system known as *gult* system on newly added peoples and states which completely different from the rest system since the Imperial establishment owed gult rights to “Amharic and other northern nobility, or in many other cases transformed local chiefs or *balabbat* to land lord status.”⁸³

Menelik’s administration concerning land and land-tenure system followed a new system on the land Mareko people exceptionally from the newly incorporated people and states of southern region where *gult* system, the base of feudal system laid.

On the land of Mareko people, where land ownership was traditionally managed, Imperial government applied *rist* right system after the land measured through new land measurement known as *qallad*⁸⁴ made on the land of Mareko people. Concerning the exceptionality of *rist* right system on Mareko people land than the newly incorporated southern region, different remarks presented by different sources; the first argument stated that “it was by friendly relation created between Emperor Menelik and Mareko nobility obtained special treatment”⁸⁵ the second argument attributes that, due to Mareko people economic activity in which they dominantly engaged in pastoral way of life, after the incorporation land measurement *qallad* was made and the majority of arable land distributed among the newly settled northerners. Since farming had not well developed economic activity among Mareko people, the application of *gult* system found to be impossible.⁸⁶

The new land measurement *qallad* made on Mareko-land, land classified into several types for different purpose. Among different classifications on land in Ethiopia, on Mareko land Imperial

⁸² Dessalegn Rahmato, *Agrarian Reform in Ethiopia*, Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, Uppsala, 1984, pp. 17-18; Saheed A. Adejumobi, *The History of Ethiopia*, Westport, Connecticut, London, pp.40-41; Hussein Jemma, “The politics of Land Tenure in Ethiopian History; Experience from the South”, XI World Congress of Rural Sociology, Trondheim, Norway, 2004, p.3, 4.

⁸³ Saheed, p.41; Andargachew Tirunhe, *The Ethiopian Revolution 1974-1987: A transformation from an aristocratic to a totalitarian autocracy*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p.97-98.

⁸⁴ Bairu, p: Tesfa, p.15; Edemo, p.51.

⁸⁵ Sintayhu, P.7; Edemo, pp.51-52; Informant: Ato Nune, and Abegaz Anbesse.

⁸⁶ Tesfa, p.14; Sintayhu, p.13.

authority classified as *seso* (one over third) land, *gebar* (tribute) land, *ye mengest metkeya* land, *gebru leyu-leyu* land, and *hudad* land. These types of classification holds most of the arable land of Mareko people, which numerically composed of; *seso* land owned 404 *gasha*, *gebar* land owned 297 *gasha*, *yemengest metkeya* owned 451 *gasha*, *gebru leyu-leyu* owned 514 *gasha*, and *hudad* land owned 2 *gasha*.⁸⁷

The purpose of those land classifications differ one to another accordingly to its purpose based on its purpose the largeness of the land also determined. Regarding the size land classified as *gebru leyu-leyu* had owned the majority from the rest classified lands. Its purpose was to distribute land for mareko people as rest land. Numerically one *gasha* land owned by one family or sub-clan members in which one individual represent his respective family or sub-clan concerning any land cases like tax payment.⁸⁸

Among them the land which categorize as *yemengest metekya*, prepared for Mareko war leaders and other government fighters commonly known as *neftgna* most of them were from Amhara and Gurage ethnic groups as return to whom who participated in different wars and campaigns supporting the Imperial government.⁸⁹ The then Mareko elites particularly traditional war leader who participated in different war and campaigns supporting Menelik II since his campaign against Italy at the battle of Adwa, reward land for farming and grazing field for their cattle from type of land classification named *yemenegest metkeya*. Among these war veterans *fitawrari* Dubale, Basha, *Qegnasmach* Oshebe, Tesema Qasetew, and Tessema Ababore were became the first to share and from *Yemengest metkeya* as rewarded for their participation during the Battle of Adwa.⁹⁰

Instead of the above land classification and purpose, from *Seso*-land or *Gegar*-land some part taken and prepared for grazing ground especially from lands which had not suitable for farming.⁹¹ This arrangement was made due to most of economically cattle keeper Mareko people's lost vast and suitable grazing fields in the expense of emerged elite class after new land measurement known as *qallade* and distribution. Since most of inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic conflicts before and after incorporation caused by competition over grazing fields, such type of making solution concerning shortage of grazing ground seems to be important.

The former ruling clan of Mareko people which recognized and transformed into nobility, from Medore clan of Mesebo Burqemo family and other clan chiefs who recognized and transformed into *balabbat* shared vast arable and grazing land in the course of the land measurement. Accordingly the nobility, Mesebo Burqamo owned a vast land which included part of the present

⁸⁷ Edemo, p. 51.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, pp.52-53.

⁸⁹ Dessalegn, p.18: Bahru, "A history...", pp.90-91: Edemo, p.53.

⁹⁰ Edemo, p.52: Informants: *Abegaz* Wangoro, *Ato* Nune, and *Abegaz* Anbese.

⁹¹ Edemo, p.53: *Ibid*.

Mareko-land as far as Dejjo River in the present Selt'e zone Lanfaro district.⁹² Other clan chiefs who represent his clan also owned vast arable land and farm land. In addition to Mareko nobility and clan chiefs, other minor *balabbats* from neighboring ethnic and linguistic groups became shareholders of the land measurement and distribution, and became owner of vast farm land in Mareko-land. Among these neighboring *balabbats*, *balabaras* Jemayde of Meqi area, Ensene Met'o *balabbat* from Abossa locality around Ziway, and *Qegazmach* Shomoro Mossa the *balabbat* of Selt'e were important.⁹³ However after the establishment of formal administration system and the loyalty gesture of majority of Mareko clan chiefs to land distribution that non-Mareko *balabates* of neighboring ethnic and linguistic group left their authority on Mareko people.

After the new political administration system installed in mareko-land new class emerged which become socio-political and economic beneficiary of the time most of appointees were from former clan chiefs of Mareko people whose power had been operated by the nobility of Burqammo family from Medore clan to whom the Imperial government given remote-control for power discharging or appointing. Through time the nobility of Burqammo family took dynastic shape which ruled until the reign of Haile Selassie ended.⁹⁴

2.3.2 The arrival of new Settlers in Mareko land following their conquest and their share in land ownership

The complete conquest of Mareko people by the expansionist force of Menelik was followed by the Shewan settlers for different administrative purposes. The Oromo of Gulele and Sellale who had served in the army during Menelik's campaign were among the settlers in Mareko land. Likewise, there were also the Oromo of Gulele who were evicted by force from Finfinnee area at the time of the foundation of Addis Ababa as the Capital of the Empire. They settled at Jolle and Dida *qebeles*. They were offered by Imperial government huge tracts of land to these areas. Jolle is now become under the administrative division of Meskan-Wereda after the split of the former Meskannena Mareko *wereda*. Mareko's called them Sodo since they speaks the same dialect of language with their neighboring Sodo-Gurage area where Sodo Oromo communities live integrating with Kestane-Gurage.⁹⁵

Moreover the resettlement of the Gulele Oromo not only limited at Mareko-land but also part of Gulele settled in Arsi land⁹⁶the eastern neighboring of Mareko where the people practiced more

⁹² Informants: *Ato* Takele Balcha, *Ato* Nune Alemu, and *Ato* Wochiso Geletu.

⁹³ Informants: *Ato* Takele, *Ato* Nune, and *Ato* Wochiso.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*

⁹⁵ Edemo, p. p. 30: Informants; *Ato* Takle, *Ato* Nune, and *Ato* Wochiso Geletu.

⁹⁶ Katabo Abdiyo, "A Historical Survey of Arsii Oromo (1910-1974) M.A. Thesis, Addis Ababa University, Department of History, 1999, pp.24-25.:Tariku Degu, "Transformation of Land tenure and the Role of Peasant Associations in Eastern Arsii (1974-1991)" MA thesis, Department of History, Addis Ababa University, 2008, p.4.

or less similar economic activity with Mareko which was cattle keeping. The environment also has similar weather condition.

The arrival and the settlement of the new comers add another tension on the existing land grabbing among the non-native population. But native Mareko Still engaged in cattle keeping; only the elites were participated in land sharing.

2.4 Economic condition of Mareko people during the reign of Menelik II

The main economic activity of Mareko people just before incorporation was dominantly animal husbandry with little agriculture only for subsistence. Besides this they were well known bee keepers in the area and the product was much demanded.

Soon the incorporation their land was measured and distributed for settled non-natives. Still majority Mareko does not fully practiced farming.⁹⁷ Through time they learnt the better to run both side by side and joined the economic activity of mixed agriculture. In due course of time the way of Mareko life also changed.

2.4.1 The Imperial decree on the abolition of *senga-geber* (tribute on fattened cattle) and proposed solution as substitution

The establishment of Ministerial system in Ethiopia was, soon followed by several social, economical and political reforms and these reforms announced through consecutive decrees. These reforms categorized under their categories and have concerns either for indigenous or foreign individual or group.

After the conquest of Mareko and their land measured through a traditional system known as *qalad* new settlers arrived and settled for permanent with integration among the Mareko people. Sergew Hable Selassie reported that the Imperial reform on several socio economic and political condition of the country included the abolition *senga-gebber* which was a kind of tribute payable on fatten ox.⁹⁸ Correspondingly the decree has particularly addressed by identifying regions of Wollega upto Arsi and Mareko. The objective of this decree had not vivid but it marked the abolition of *senga-gebber* substitution by fattening oxen for the royal palace consumption in these identified areas on the land of newly settlers described as warra gennu⁹⁹ explicitly known as Gulele Oromo who had resettled in Arsi and Mareko-land from Finfinne area following the expansion of Addis Ababa.

⁹⁷ Sintayhu, p.13: Tesfa, p.15.

⁹⁸ Sergew Hable-Selassie, *Dagmawi Menelik- Ye Addissu Seleiane Meserache* (Menelik II- founder of new civilization) 2001, NP, p. 470: Sintayhu Worko, p.14. Sintayhu Identified as *Keft gebber (senga-gebber)* as one of important tribute in kind with others which expected from Mareko people annually.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*

Even though the objective of substituting fatten oxen tribute by fattening of ox for Imperial palace consumption on these areas, where the primary economic activity and income dominantly rearing of animals, it may be due to the mass death of cattle in these areas. It is clear the decree of abolition of such kind of tribute proclaimed after the country had faced and challenged by one of the divesting cattle plague called rinder paste¹⁰⁰.

2.5 THE ERA OF SMALLPOX AND ITS MEMORY IN MAREKO PEOPLE

During the final time of Emperor Menelik's reign infectious diseases to which still scientific medicine does not brought in the country made death on large section of the population. Among these diseases the most deadly were Small pox, gonorrhoea, syphilis killed both in the capital and the countryside.¹⁰¹ This situation forced the Emperor to made important medical diplomacy with foreigner named Alexan Tapanyan to whom the Emperor gave 20,000 Ethiopian birr to import medicine and laboratory machine from Europe.¹⁰²

In addition to the above medical diplomacy, the Emperor was capable of importing drug for smallpox, the most deadly disease of the time. The government of France to whom the Emperor asked medical help, sent a drug by a French citizen doctor. Subsequently, the Emperor proclaimed a decree to his subjects on 10 March 1910 to free anti smallpox injection¹⁰³. The decree does not discriminate any part of the people. However, most part of rural population of the country lost the opportunity to free medical support due to accessibility of transportation.

Among the highly smallpox infected areas and peoples', Mareko were the most identifiable.¹⁰⁴ Even though the Emperor's decree allowed them to free medical service at the capital due to the long distance between the capital and Mareko all most all Mareko's missed the service. However they did not wait their death at home rather searched several traditional ways of medical treatment. Within the people there were well known knowledgeable and skillful personalities who able to extract and prepare medicine out of plant leaf, root part, animal products, soli and other minerals. Most of these individuals had their own field of knowledge mainly based on the vision of the case, internal body or external.¹⁰⁵

In due course of time the lucky ones can healed through traditional way of taping smallpox infected men even. However many Mareko's lost their life since the effectiveness of traditional drugs determined by several factors. And this era was remembered as one of the worst parts of their recent history.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁰ Afework Gebreyesuse, *Dagimawi Menelik Neguse-Negest Ze Ethiopia* (Menelik II Emperor of Ethiopia) Rome, 1901, p. 10.

¹⁰¹ Sergew Hable-Selassie, p.409.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, P.408.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, pp. 311-312: Richard Pankhurst, "Economic and Social...", p.146.

¹⁰⁴ Edemo, p.18, 28: Ulrich Braukämper. 2012. *A History of the Hadiyya People*, Krause (Wiesbaden) pp.290-291.

¹⁰⁵ Informants; Hajji Jateno Meki, Imam Tuke Aela, and Abegaz Ambese Tira.

¹⁰⁶ Edemo, p., p.18, 28: Informants: Hajji Jateno Meki, Ato Lile, Imam Tuke, and Abegaz Ambese.

2.6 Expansion of Modern Institutions and its impact on the Mareko people

2.6.1 Establishment of modern Judiciary institution in Mareko-land

Mareko people had a long history of using a traditional conflict resolution mechanism called *Ragga/Magga* through which they Mareko elders intermediary to solve already happened disputes, to stop ongoing conflicts, and controlled conflicting cases which occurred in intra-clan and inter-clan among Mareko people.¹⁰⁷ The duty of *Ragga/Magga* did not been restrict to one field of area rather it has several stages of conflict resolution mechanism.¹⁰⁸ Not only on Mareko-land among Mareko's but also the institution played a major role in relaxing tensions which occurred in the area particularly; between Mareko people and neighboring ethnic and linguistic groups like Meskan-Gurage, Selt'e, Soddo Gurage, and Arsi Oromo.

After incorporation particularly modernizing era of Emperor Menelik II in which the Imperial government made reform in on Ministry of Equity (*yefethe minister*) expanding Judiciary institutions among the mass solved the time and money consuming pre-existing judiciary system which located very far from nearly incorporated regions.¹⁰⁹ Reform made the accessibility of Judiciary institutions by dividing the country into six regions of bench (*wenber*) which also divided into a dozen for each one Judge and two persecutors appointed. Regarding this expanding judiciary institution, Mareko people categorized under the sixth benches which integrated "Sodo and Mareko"¹¹⁰ based on settlement in which Mareko province holds Mareko people, Meskan-Gurage, and part of neighboring Selt'e people, and assigned judges and persecutors accessed to interpret accordingly the Imperial law.

The introduction of modern and institutionalized Judiciary organ in Mareko-land does not eradicate the traditional one rather both systems run side-by-side. And still now the traditional, *Ragga/Magga* has significant place in solving cases particularly among the rural dwellers of Mareko people.

2.6.2 Education in Mareko-land during the time of Emperor Menelik II

It is obvious that the history of Modern education in Ethiopia began in 1908 when Emperor Menelik II opened the first school at the capital. Then the Imperial decree systematically forced families to send their children whose age is above six. However it was the building of schools and expansion of modern education had limited in the capital and the surrounding intended to

¹⁰⁷ Daneil, Mekonnen, "Maaga...", p.327: Daneil Mekonnen, "Managing...", p.69.

¹⁰⁸ Daneil Mekonnen, "Maaga...", pp.327-328.

¹⁰⁹ Sergew Hable-Selassi, p.474.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, p.475.

enroll students from nobility family.¹¹¹ Mareko people like other neighboring people and Ethiopian people mostly had been far from modern secular education and depended on religious teaching until the introduction of Modern secular education during the time of Emperor Menelik II. As followers of Islam and traditional belief side by side as syncretism, the pursue for enrollment in Islamic teaching centers mostly at Mosques in more Muslim neighboring areas like Meskan-Gurage and Selt'e areas found to be less.¹¹² However some young devoted mareko Muslims who were from well to do family joined Islamic learning centers at nearby neighboring Mosques which are locally famous learning centers to learn how to write and read locally known as *qerat bet*.¹¹³

The influence of Ethiopian Orthodox Church in the area where Mareko people habitat and its learning historically recorded on the hagiography of *Abune Zena Marqos* who build the first church in the area around 1284 in conducting missionary activity in preaching and baptizing the people. After the first church Marqos named after its founder started religious teaching until it was distorted by the rising Muslim Sultanate of Hadiya and abandoned following the war of Ahmed Ibrahim in 16th century. However following the incorporation revival of Ethiopian Orthodox Church in building churches and expanding its teaching in Mareko-land witnessed by newly Christianized Mareko people in bringing religious education.¹¹⁴ However it was not successful in achieving Christianize the area through providing education center commonly known as *Yeques temhert bet* where Childers of Mareko people assumed to enrolled but students found to be children's of new settlers of Amhara and Church functionaries rather than indigenous.¹¹⁵

The failure in introducing church education among Mareko people had common after anti Christian education expansion got strong resistance supported by traditional belief spiritual leader to whom enrollment of children in church education distort culture and religion of Mareko people.¹¹⁶

Generally during the reign of Emperor Menelik II church education under EOC beside its Christianizing activity attempted to teach children of Mareko people how to write and read which played a major role besides with Islamic education at *Medressa* (Islamic learning center) being stepping stone by providing primary education for Modern secular education faced strong resistance by conservative families and spiritual leader of traditional belief consequently until the post liberation period heralded one among important reforms, expanding education among the

¹¹¹Sergew Hable-Selassi, p.471: Richard Pankhurst, "Economic and Social Innovations During the Last Years of Emperor Menilik's Life and the Short Reign of Laj Iyasu."In: Proceedings of the 16th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, ed. by Svein Ege, Harald Aspen, Birhanu Teferra and Shiferaw Bekele, pp. 137-149, Trondheim 2009, p.147.

¹¹² Mehamed, pp.31-32: Tesfa, p.103.

¹¹³ *Ibid*

¹¹⁴ Tesfa, p. 14, 97, 98: Sintayhu, p.12.

¹¹⁵ Informants: *Aba Zeleke, Ato Hailu Gebre, and Ato Demeke Ahmed*: Sintayhu, p.12.

¹¹⁶ Sintayhu , p.12.

mass with the missionary support most church education enrolled by students of new settlers; like church functionaries', government appointees' and private settlers rather than indigenous ones, and most of school age children of Mareko people remain unable to write and read basic skills of the time.

2.7 The Battle of Adwa and the Participation of Mareko fighters against Italian Colonial Expansion

Mareko people incorporated into Modern Ethiopia during the second phase of Menelik's territorial expansion and incorporation. As part of southern region of the newly formed unity Mareko people were still led by traditional war leaders during war time coordination and those war leaders were owned titles which introduced from neighboring people; such as *abegaz*, *Azmach*, and titles which introduced after conquest like *qenazmach*, *fitawrari*, and *grazmach*.¹¹⁷

The Nobility of Mareko people who was under the administrative division known as Mareko *Awraja*, to whom the decree of Emperor reached begin recruiting and organizing fighters from his administrative domain. These recruited Mareko fighters led by *qenazmach* Mesebo reached at a place regarding the Decree of the Emperor.¹¹⁸ Among the Mareko fighters lost their life fighting the invading Italian force. The veterans who equipped swords,¹¹⁹ which supplied by the Imperial government back home after the Italians, lost one of historical phenomenon of war at Adwa.

¹¹⁷ Informants: *Ato Hailu*, *Ato Alemu Werkicho*, and *Ato Qoricha Shibru*.

¹¹⁸ Informants: *Ato Tessema Tamirat*, *Ato Alemu*, and *Abegaz*.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*

CHAPTER THREE

3. MAREKO PEOPLE DURING THE REIGN OF EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE (1930-1974)

3.1 Political Condition

During the time of Emperor Haile Selassie I Mareko people had been under the administrative division of Mareko sub-province (*Awraja*) which composed of the present territory of part of Selt'e Zone, and Gurage Zone, in which the adjacent Selt'e people, Meskan Gurage, and Mareko people and other integrated people lived. The then governor was named *major (shalqa)* Asfaw Welde-Amanuel and his vice governor was *Fitawrari* Afework Belynhe. Mareko sub-province had been under the administrative division of second to Arsi *Teklay Gezat*. Butajira was served as the center of Mareko province administration¹²⁰. The former *ballabates* from medore clan which represented by *qenazmach* Oshbe Mesebo, the son of Burqamo Mesebo, the first Mareko *ballabate* who recognized landlord of Mareko people. *Dejazmach* Debo Agebo became appointed governor of Mareko district from indigenous Mareko people, and facilitate to the effective administration by supporting government appointed officials in collecting tax and keeping the security of the area.¹²¹

3.2 Land and Land Tenure System in Mareko during the reign of Emperor Haile Sellassie I

The reign of Emperor Haile Selassie I followed the similar land tenure system among Mareko people like elsewhere in the country. The landlord (*ballabate*) class, government appointed officials, local gentry, settled government troops widely known as *neftegna*, and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church owned vast arable land since the new land measurement made on traditional land owning system of Mareko people the incorporation in Menelik's Empire. There were several minor landlords representing each clan to whom different titles bestowed and recognized by Imperial government and accepted by represented clans of mareko people¹²². These land lords, the newly arrived gentries (*neftegna*) and government appointee officials made a new upper class to which the feudal administrative system allowed political, social and economic privileges. The lower class dominantly holds ordinary mareko people forced to engage in participating over all activities to input his labor for land lords.

¹²⁰ Edemo, p. 59.

¹²¹ Informants; *Ato Nune, Abegaze* Ambese, and *Ato Yebase Lemecha*: Sintayhu, P.7.

¹²² *Ibid*

3.3 Mareko people During the Italian war and Occupation: 1936-1941.

Fascist Italy under its leader Benito Mussolini justifies his campaign for gathered Italians at Rome by remembering where Italy was defeated by black African nation. And tell how much he insisted to revenge their defeat in 1888 at historical battle of Adwa and renew their image healing their scar¹²³. By doing this Fascist ambition to create Italian Orientale through uniting its former colonies Eritrea, and Italian Somali-Land with Ethiopia as a new comer in owning colony aggressively waged war on Ethiopia¹²⁴. Using Eritrea as stepping-stone Fascist Italy, it was Italian colony since 1890, started attacking the area with the then modern weapon.

The time of the political atmosphere found to be uncomfortable to Ethiopia even Ethiopia was member of League of Nation and signed several conventions concerning how to settle will be disagreements among member nations. However Ethiopia's membership cannot stop fascist Italy's aggression and defend its frontier due to British and France policy of appeasement, in which Ethiopia became escape-goat. Emperor Haile Selassie as sovereign represent of the country tried his best to announce a case for concerned bodies and in to appeal for the League of Nations in Geneva.¹²⁵ Notwithstanding Fascist Italy continued its attacks and invasion in Northern Ethiopia particularly in Tigray where local war chiefs on defending line, but until the Wal-Wal incident and Adwa attacks the Emperor had not declare state of emergency. On 1, October 1935 the emperor announce state of emergency to which provincial governors and lower administrative rank governors recruit and organize fighters in the side of National army¹²⁶.

In responding the decree of Emperor Haile Selassie I Mareko People living in Mareko Sub-Province (*Awraja*) srecruit fighters and organized both man power and logistic supply under the then nobility *Qegnasmach* Oshebe Mesebo led in coordinating pre-requests for coming campaign. Mareko recruited fighters were composed of experienced notable fighters most of them veterans of Adowa and fresh fighters. Among the veterans of Adwa, *Qegnasmach* Oshebe Mesebo, *Basha* Weld Giyorgis, *Basha* Gebre, *Tessema* Kasetew, *Fallo* Fonnee, *Leme* Mollorro, *Tessema* Aba Bora, *Basha* Weldayes and *Gade* Lije were leaders of fresh recruits.¹²⁷ Mareko fighters organized under *Kembata* force which led by *Ras* Getachew Abate governor of *Kembata Awraja* fight Italian invading force in Mekele and Mychew at the last anti-Fascist and anti-colonial battle and other several battle fields like Bale and Dolo.¹²⁸

¹²³ Alberto Sbacchi, "Italy and the treatment..."p.210.

¹²⁴ Harold Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, pp.140-141: Saheed, p.71.

¹²⁵ Haile Selassie (Emperor). (Auto Biography), *Heywetena Ye Ethiopia Ermeja* (My Life and Ethiopias' Progress) England Bath, 1929 (1936/37) .pp168-169: Marcus, "A History..."p.142: Saheed, pp.71-72: Alberto Sbacchi, "Secret Talks for the Submission of Haile Selassie and Prince Asfaw Wessen 1936-1939": in *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, pp.668-680) Vol.7, No.4 (1974), p.670.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*.pp.182-187: Marcus, "A History..." , p.144: Saheed, pp.73-74.

¹²⁷ Edemo, p.41: Informants; *Ato* Alemu Werkicho, *Abegaz* Ambese Tira, Imam Tuke.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*

After unsuccessful battle of Miychew the Emperor exile to England. The news about his exile and the situation of the ongoing war in different battles and its result which brought by veterans from war front make fear on peoples living in Mareko *Awraja* (Sub-province) particularly on Mareko people. However, peoples who live the Province and neighboring localities tried their best to sustain the former peace and maintain the security of the area from the will be anarchy born ethnic conflict, religious conflict and robbery, through traditional dispute solving mechanisms after representatives of different ethnic and linguistic groups made convention.¹²⁹ Beside its main agenda, the occasional convention also gave deep emphasis to unity against Fascist Italy. Concerning resistance and coming soon Fascist-Italy rule, representatives of neighboring Mareko people, Meskan-Gurage, Selt'e people, and Sodo-Gurage vote and passed resolution neither submission nor collaboration on the behalf of their people.

Despite such occasional convention, advanced part of Fascist Italy officials found relatively better favorable condition to apply their means and method to effectively control the area and complete submission of Mareko people through religious based intra-ethnic disunity created among the population of Mareko *Awraja*. Their divide and rule policy seems to be effective after they got the peaceful submission and collaboration of local Muslim religious leader among Meskan Gurage and neighboring Silti areas who coordinated with the formerly formed local anti government movement called Goggt, which was actively took fame under *Imam Sugato Zeyne*¹³⁰ to whom several anti Imperial propaganda and readjustment promised and used for Fascist consumption. Most of collaborators among Mareko people welcomed Italians and submitted peacefully since already they were informed that the Italians policy towards Islam was aimed at establishing good relations¹³¹. Those collaborated local chiefs religious leaders with their followers ignorantly leave the past peaceful interaction and ethnic integration a side readily for the will be dispute and conflict. However before Fascist Italy control the area, conflict erupted in western neighbors of Mareko people against Kembata and Mareko fighters which lead by *Fitawrari* Tamrat in a way returning home from national battle fields. In 15th May, 1936 some Sodo Gurage youths who consider absence of local security chief and the gap created in administrative office where most of them were in these national battle fields and used it as an opportunity to rob these travelers when they passing Sodo area¹³². Due to their attempt of robbery and defensive action made by veterans many were killed both sides. This robbery and ill-treatment made by Sodo youths opposed by Sodo people, for instance *Qegnazmach Bobe*¹³³ refused attending the funeral ceremony of his son who died in the course of robbery. This conflict created a serious of bloodshed war among Sodo and Mareko people which will be

¹²⁹ Tesfa, pp.110-111.

¹³⁰ Dirk Bustorf, *Imam Sugato Zäyni, A War Lord of the Selt'e' Gogot*, in: Proceedings of the 16th International Conference of Ehiopian Studies, ed. By Svein Ege, Harald Aspen, Birhanu Teferra and Shiferaw Bekele, Trondheim, 2009, p.156: Sarah Vaughan.2003. Ethnicity and Power in Ethiopia, University of Edinburgh,p.118

¹³¹ Dirk Bustorf, p.156: Tesfa, pp. 116-117, 119. Alberto Sabachi, *Ethiopia under Mussolini*, Bath Press, 1985, p.162.

¹³² Edemo, pp.43-44: Tesfa, p.111:Informants, Hajji Jateno, Inspector Edemo, *Ato Wochiso Geletu*

¹³³ Tesfa, p.111.

present in chapter five. More or less the above and other ethnic based conflicts and disputes and Fascist propaganda created dilemma on Mareko people.

Generally more or less for the Ethiopian forces which had on the way to back home after unsuccessful war in northern fronts and other fronts, the journey was difficult since in some areas peoples used an opportunity to retaliate the exploitive and oppressive regime by robbing soldiers¹³⁴ who were considered as the guardian of the feudal government. Just like the Sodo-Gurage area, the Mareko among the youths whose hidden resentment motivated and organize to use the condition for their anti regime sentiment by attacking the government fighters who were in journey to back home from battle field. Then in 1936 the anti government Mareko group attacked the Arsi force which was lead by *Déjàmach* Welde-Ṭsadiqe. Regarding this Edemo on Alebachew and Samuel stated that “[...] Arsi fighters including their leader *Déjàmach* Welde-Ṭsadiqe [more or less] killed by Libido/ Mareko [...]”¹³⁵

The first collaborators in Mareko promised economic and political privileges from Fascist officials who established camp at Butajira, the former administrative center of Mareko province (*awraja*). However they faced strong resistance among mass and socially hated due to their activities being agent of harsh treatment flogging and torture including killing with fire squad and hanging.

The first Fascist officials arrived in Mareko Sub-district (*mikitel woreda*) where Mareko people main land and secure the submission of *Dejazmach* Debo Agebo¹³⁶ who was veteran of the battle of Adwa appointed as governor of Mareko sub-district (*mikitel Wereda*) by Imperial government officials. While the *balabbats*, and, at that time, most of powerful leaders of the Mareko *Qegnazmach* Oshebe Mesebo, *Basha* Weld Giyorgis, *Basha* Gebre, Tessema Kasetew, Fallo Fonnee, Leme Mollorro, Tessema Aba-Bora, *Basha* Weldayes and Gadde Lije were obliged to go to the different front, *dejazmach* Debo Agebo stayed behind to guard Mareko Sub-district but he exploited the situation for his own sake and quickly improved his military and political position. This act of collaboration made division among Mareko people based on clan which traced former power rivalry since the time Menelik conquest. The ruling clan opposed by mass under the leadership of Shebo clan,¹³⁷ rival clan in claiming to recognize as nobility of their respective area. But now can produce several supports from members of other clans and can form anti Fascist Italy resistance group and joined organized resistance movement due to former *balabbats* collaboration to secure an already taken power.

In addition to clan based both anti-Italian and anti-collaborator organized form of resistance movement, Mareko people got support from their traditional spiritual leader named Werke

¹³⁴ Alebachew and Samuel, p. 94.

¹³⁵ *Ibid*

¹³⁶ Sintayhu, pp.10-11, Informants; Ato Nune, and Abegaz Anbese.

¹³⁷ *Ibid*

Mariame, (ወርቁ ማርያም)¹³⁸ who strongly and officially displayed anti-fascist rule. Reportedly her role in leading anti-Italy movement known by Fascist officials who established their head quarter at Butajira through their collaborator named *Azmach Eremora*¹³⁹. Italian Fascist officials arrived to confirm the resistance of Werke Mariame, but reluctant Werke refused submission. Consequently she accused being witch and mastermind behind the 1937 attack on Italian military convey when crossing Mareko wereda at Dida locality during their journey from Ziway to Butajira which resulted death of two Fascist military officials Werke Mariame taken as hostage in to unknown place¹⁴⁰. After Dida attack unorganized form of anti Fascist resistance became smooth after several Mareko men's flogged, imprisoned and direct participants were killed. However, Werke Mariame spiritual leader of Mareko's becoming hostage exacerbated hidden feeling and waits an opportunity to fight Italian force.

Fascist Italy side by side applies both peaceful way of owing submission and forcing local notable elders and clan chiefs through warning¹⁴¹. Mareko collaborators also played a major role in indoctrinating fascist policy to minimize ongoing harsh treatment which used by Fascist officials.

Fascist administration in Mareko *awraja* (Sub-province) faced both support and resistance which divide population of the area based on ethnic and linguistic division found being inconsistency for their means of owing the submission of Mareko and other linguistic groups. Their containment policy initially seems to be profitable since they can produce collaborators from ethnic and religious group until Mareko people got lesson from what Fascist officials did on peacefully submitted patriots to whom through agents promised mercy and award for surrender but after surrender publicly killed.

Even though *Qegnazmach* Tuji Anjilo with his followers exiled to remote area to continue his anti Italian occupation before Italian officials advanced Mareko-land and well- come by Debo Agebo, the then governor on the behalf Mareko people. Anti -fascist resistance sentiment revived after the news about the army of *Ras Desta Damtew* approaching in Mareko-land border reached among Mareko people in Mareko *wereda*. Thus anti-Italy group among Mareko people met to fight Italian force by combining with the force of *Ras Desta Damtew* which moved from Arbegona¹⁴², where they were in defending line against the invading army in Southern Front with his army reached border area of Mareko land and Sodo area.

Ras Desta Damitaw, the governor of Sidamo, son-in-law of the Emperor, appointed to lead the southern Ethiopian force in south had been in a way to retreat after unsuccessful defending

¹³⁸ Informants: *Ato Nune*, and *Abegaz Anbese*, and *Edemo*, p. 41.

¹³⁹ Informants: *Ato Nune*, and *Abegaz Anbese*: *Ibid*.

¹⁴⁰ *Edemo*, pp. 41, 172-173 :Informants; *Imam Tuke*, *Hajji Jateno*, *Ato Lile*

¹⁴¹ *Sbacchi*, "Secret talks..." P.668.

¹⁴² *Aregawi Berhe*, "Sprit vs. War-machine: A Patriotic Resistance to Italian Occupation of Ethiopia" (1936-1941) p.11.

against the southern Italian force with his notable war leaders, *dejzmach* Beyene Maried, the husband of princess Romanwork¹⁴³ and *dejzmach* Gebremariam Gari, and with remnants of their soldiers¹⁴⁴. The advancing part of southern Italian infantry under the leadership of General Navarrini met the retreating force of *Ras* Desta at a place called Goggiti, a border area of Mareko-land and Sodo-Gurage on 24, February 1937¹⁴⁵. The coming of national army in the area revive the fighting moral of anti Italy Mareko resistance groups who lost spiritual leader and faced harsh treatment from Italians and collaborated class.

The force of *Ras* Desta which attacked by Italian at Goggti¹⁴⁶ get support from Mareko people particularly from the local area, and fighting continued for three days, until the enemy became upper handed. The Goggti war, in which fresh fighters of Mareko people who were knowledgeable of land scope of the area than Italians engaged in it ended without victory particularly after the death of *dejzmach* Gebremariam Gari, and *dejzmach* Beyene wounded¹⁴⁷ and soon died, their position was among notables Imperial government in Harer, and the governor of Bale respectively. Consequently the force of *Ras* Desta disbanded and Mareko irregular fighters back home to whom fighting Italian force face to face satisfied despite losing the battle.

Ras Desta who lost the battle and his friends died and wounded went to Butajira area with hope to get anti-Italian support and/or place of fugitive. It was not suddenly calculated solution to escape from chasing Italian force to whom he narrowly escaped two times; at Arbegona and at Goggeti rather it was the birth place of his mother where his maternal-side kinsman had been live.¹⁴⁸ However the inverse was true his lost military support where he lost acceptance from local Meskan Gurage who formerly collaborate to Italy under their religious leader, and live as fugitive. Officials of Italian administration at Butajira sent their collaborators of the locality to peacefully give up and they found him in local place called yetebon¹⁴⁹ around Butajira. *Ras* D esta¹⁵⁰ who hopelessly surrender killed by shooting squad with his few loyal follower who were remnants of Imperial troops of southern front, at their camp Butajira and his body was secretly taken by Bekele Weya who had conducting patriotic movement in the area based at Sodo and buried at a place called Medre-kebde Abbo Church in Sodo Gurage area.¹⁵¹

The death of *Ras* Desta Damitew created a very meaningful feeling to Italian in which by doing so they secured the area from probable act of anti-Italy resistance movement. Subsequently in the following month, just after the death of *Ras* Desta, in March 1937 the Italian forces occupied

¹⁴³ Sbacchi, "Secret Talks..." Pp.668-680.

¹⁴⁴ Marcus, "A History..." p, 148: Bharu, "A History...", p.169: Tesfa, p.114.

¹⁴⁵ Bahru, "A Histoty...",p.169: Tesfa, p.114:

¹⁴⁶ Bahru, "A History ...", p.169: Tesfa, p.114: Dinberu et al.P. 246.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*: Tesfa, p.114: Marcus, "A History ...,"p.148.

¹⁴⁸ Informant: *Ato* Teshome Mekonnen: Dinberu et al.P.246.

¹⁴⁹ Dinberu et al. P.246: Tesfa, p.114: Informants, *Ato* Teshome, and *Ato* Wuletaw.

¹⁵⁰ Teclehaimanot Gebrwselassie, p.41.

¹⁵¹ Informant; *Ato* Teshome, *Ato* Wuletaw, and Tesfa, p.114.

Hossana. Tenente Aimoni, was the first Italian commissioner at Hossana who appointed and exercise jurisdiction over the people of Mareko, Gurage, Hadiya, Kembata and Tembaro, Soddo-Oromo, and Weliso.¹⁵² Under their main camp and resident at Hossana the Italian official's setup camps at each former government administrative towns. Butajira town, the administrative site of Mareko *Awraja* where they formed temporary camp now after the first commissioner arrived at Hossana becomes the site for assigned Italian officials to rule the *Awraja*.

Due to effective Italian propaganda in isolating Muslims' of the majority Mareko *Awraja* from resisted group, they started to rule the area through their collaborators under their strict supervision at Butajira.

Anti-Italy movement among Mareko people lost practical movement after the execution of *Ras Desta Dametew* and become hidden until Italian official's started recruiting youths among Mareko for *corvee* during their Ziway-Butajira road construction which cross Mareko-land.

Generally Fascist Italy officials who hopefully relies their trust on collaborators of the area, divide and rule policy, and modern arms to control Ethiopia. Eventually it was true in areas like Mareko *Awraja* where these three factors secured Italian occupation and temporary colonial administration until 1941.

Figure, 1



¹⁵² Informant; *Ato Hailu, Imam Oddo Eba, and Ato Demeke Ahmed: Sintayhu, p.14:*

Figure, 2



The compound of the present Butajira Behere general secondary school, the camp for fascist Italy during their occupation where Ras Desta Damtew was killed. Photo by the researcher, June, 2016

Figure, 3



The above flage in the school compound stood on the exact place at the body of Ras Desta failed after he shooted. Photo by the researcher june, 2016.

3.3.1 Political and economic condition in Mareko during the Italian occupation: 1936-1941

The victory of the Italians over the Ethiopians in the battles of Tembeyen, Maichew and Mekele brought about a political change in that the Ethiopian feudal government led by aristocrat Emperor Haile-Selassie was replaced by Italian rule. The event brought about the end of over

four decades years-old *gebar-melkegna* relationship in Mareko like elsewhere in the country. This meant the end of the external obligations demanded by the *melkegna*, such as tribute payment, both in kind and in cash: and the provision of labor services by the *gebar* Mareko¹⁵³. It is obvious there was the Italian change of policy, which eliminated tribute payment.

Like other areas of the country, in Mareko the feeling was dilemma mainly by ordinary people; appreciating the end of the aristocratic rule but hating the Italians rule. Conversely, part of the feudal class shows the opportunistic feeling to fit with the coming power and to maintain being elite. However to state the view of the majority ordinary class which was victim of the politically oppressive and economically exploitive feudal government, one of my informants¹⁵⁴ describes the following:

The Italians liberated the Mareko from *naftagna*- caused slavery.

The *naftagna* did not treat us [the Mareko] equals, but as slaves.

Because of their bad deeds Waa' took them to Maichew, where they were finished by the Italians. Waa' heard our cries and grievances and permitted the Maichew miracle to occur. Since then, there has been no payment [tribute], or work [free labor] for the *naftagna*, and we [the Mareko] become free from them.

During the time of Italian occupation Mareko people who categorized under the administrative region of Mareko province (*Awraja*) in Mareko represented by *dejasmach* Debo Agebo, governor of Mareko from Medore clan, ruling clan which recognized by emperor Menelik I. Italian administrative officials at their center at Butajira continued to rule Mareko people with collaborated *dejamach* Debo¹⁵⁵ particularly until they setup additional camp at Koshe, through strict supervision since submission changed in to collaboration.

Italians administrative officials at least weekly conduct their strict supervision in Mareko sub-district (*mikitel wereda*) at weekly market called Oshebe Merraa.¹⁵⁶ The day had been intentionally selected to find more Mareko people than ordinary day then announce to all Mareko indigenous nobility, government officials most of them Amhara ethnic groups, religious representatives to arrive meet with local available Mareko people publicly concerning administrative issues. Under the pretext of "all blacks are equal..."¹⁵⁷ Italian officials encouraged

¹⁵³ Lapiso Dilebo, *Ye Ethiopia Ye Mekera Siratena Eritera*, Addis Ababa, 1985, pp.40-41: Informants: Imam Odo Ebba, Ato Nune, and Abegaz Ambese.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*

¹⁵⁵ Informant Imam Tuke, Ato Nune, and Abegaz Ambese : Sintayhu, p.10.

¹⁵⁶ Informants, Imam Tuke, Ato Nune, and Abegaz Ambese.

¹⁵⁷ Tesfa, p.116.

the ordinary class participants who emotionally insult higher class personalities if there is maladministration on the eye of fascist rule. Under such system Italian officials distort the former class relation and successfully made social antagonism among Mareko people.

The Italian occupation and administrative policy undertaken to facilitate the conquest which intentionally upload to stimulate interior disagreement and conflict,¹⁵⁸ exacerbated an already occasionally erupt boundary conflict among ethnic and linguistic groups had have been living in Mareko Awraja. Epicenter of the then border dispute was Mareko-land where Mareko people shared frontier with Mesakan-Gurage, Selt'e, and Sodo Gurage. Dispute occurred at the eve of Italian occupation when neighboring Selt'e group supported by Meskan Gurage invaded and war broke-out, which continued and serious of conflicts erupted until Italian occupation ended. Beside this Mareko people engaged in war against their northern neighbors, Sodo Gurage.

These border conflicts and other wars which Mareko people fight against neighboring people will be present in chapter five. Road construction marked the period of the Italian occupation, and the Mareko contributed significantly to the road-building Labor force. This role of the Mareko Laborers in road construction has also been reported by the contemporary informants. According to Baker, the construction of roads was one of the highest priorities for the Italians in their East African colonial agenda; and about 85 percent of their colonial budget was ear marked for road construction. He also reopened that the amount of roads the Italians constructed in Ethiopia added up to 7,000 kilometers, half of which were asphalted. "By 1941, the Italians had laid down an impressive road network throughout much of the country"¹⁵⁹

Since Italians administration bases it's relatively fully functional at urban areas due to the activity of patriotic resistance movement in rural areas, Italian occupation in Mareko area first began to conduct road construction aimed at connecting Butajira with Ziway across Mareko-land to develop the accessibility of the area through infrastructure.¹⁶⁰ This road construction project mainly used free labor *corvee* among Mareko youths since most part of the road crosses Mareko-land.¹⁶¹ This forced work besides its exhaustiveness indirectly affects agricultural productivity in the area since most of Mareko-land farms had have been hold by family and clan base, in which elder men and other part of group excluded from plough and it had have been the duty of youth whom now become busy in forced road construction to whom it is new, long, and exhaustive. Consequently the project distorted the farming season which was contemporary which conducted by busy and exhausted recruits and then the season in which Mareko people depended on pass away with inefficiently ploughed and ill-harvest make feeding difficult.

¹⁵⁸ Sbacchi, "Ethiopia under..." p.36: Tesfa, p.113, 115,116: Marcus, "A History..." p.150.

¹⁵⁹ Jonathan Baker, "The Rural-Urban Dichotomy in the Developing World: A Case Study from Northern Ethiopia," London and New York: Norwegian University Press, 1986, p. 50.

¹⁶⁰ Bahru, "A History ...", p.164, stated that "This is not surprising, as Italian road-building was geared towards promoting the conquest of the country rather than its development."

¹⁶¹ Sintayhu, p.14: Informants: *Ato Hailu, Ato Lile, and Ato Demeke Ahmed.*

Generally Italian occupation did not brought any significant economic change among Mareko people who depended on agriculture and animal husbandry. Even negatively affect production when they recruit youth, productive population among Mareko people for their road construction. Politically Italian rule can produce agents, collaborators from the nobility and appointed governor particularly after the resistance group lead by *Qegnasmach* Tuji Anjjilo exiled with his loyal followers.

3.3.2 Establishment of Koshe Town

The etymology genesis of a name Koshe derived from a plant locally named “koshe” which abundantly grow in the area mainly before its establishment.¹⁶² Before the establishment of the town local residents identify the area by describing a wild plant name koshe to make clear the vision of their communicator.

Despite of its negative and devastating effect in Ethiopian life, the Fascist- Italy short live in Ethiopia played its own positive role for the establishment of new towns. The role played by Italians can be illustrated by describing the foundation laid for the establishment of Koshe town. The basic cause which forced the Italians to built camp as a brunch of their main camp at Butajira the Administrative center of Mareko Sub-province was the escalating security problem in the area. To control and manage the case the Fascist-Italian military officers of Butajira planned to expand their camp in the Sub-Province particularly in two *Mikitle Woredas* (sub-districts) namely Dobenna at Hamus Gebeya the Administrative center of the Sub-district, and at Mareko the center of the Sub-district Administration.¹⁶³ These two areas were identified as the center of frequent ethnic conflict. More over the Italian found that the area becoming the host for local patriots and decided to nearly check the movement of the patriot. After the Italians built the Ziway-Butajira road, to connect their two camps they founded Koshe by constructing an army camp on seized land from local landlord named Gade Lije. One of the old models of Rain Gauge made of iron still stand in the compound of Mareko District Police Office in former camp of Italian Army at Koshe probably it would be the only fascist artifact in Mareko.¹⁶⁴

Following the Italian camped at Koshe an existing periodic market known as Oshebe Mera which located a few kilometers away from Koshe around northern part, moved to a site nearby to the military camp. The Italians encouraged people to take up house in Koshe in a variety of

¹⁶² Dergu Gemachu, “The Cause and Consequence of Population Migration from Rural to Urban in Koshe town”, BED thesis, Department of Geography and Human Society, Dilla University, 2006, p.18.: Informants, *Abegaz Besoro Mesoro, Ato Hailu* , and *Ato Demeke*.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*

¹⁶⁴ See photo 1 page 9.

ways. For example local peasant women began to provide agricultural products mainly animal and animal products like egg, chicken and cattle for sell around the compound of the camp even on ordinary days out of periodic market day¹⁶⁵. This economic relation between the camp population and peasant make Koshe the focal area of Mareko region where most Mareko people meet from different direction. According to informants the first places selling *talla* (local beer) and *tej* (mead) in the small towns were established during the Italian occupation.¹⁶⁶

Generally the Italian occupation played a ground for the establishment of Koshe town and the beginning of urban life among Mareko people at their own territorial domain.

Figure. 4



An Italian artifact in Koshe town in the compound of Mareko district Police Office.

Photo by the researcher, June, 2016.

¹⁶⁵ Informants: *Abegaz* Kiltero, *Ato* Demeke Ahmed, *Ato* Wuletaw Bezabhe.

¹⁶⁶ Informants; *Ato* Demeke, *Ato* Gonna Tamirat, *Ato* Tessema.

3.4 Mareko people after the Liberation of Ethiopia under the Reign of Haile Selassie I: Political and Administrative Condition

Soon after the Liberation the Imperial government occupied itself in rebuilding and improving the country. Among these reforms the decree which is known as The Administrative Regulation Decree of 1942 divided the country into the different administrative divisions.¹⁶⁷ Based on this reconstruction Mareko people enjoyed some political and social changes. Mareko Sub-province (*Awraja*) at its administration center at Butajira town composed its territory, part of Selte people, Meskan Gurage, and Mareko people, under Arsi Awraja (sub-country).¹⁶⁸

The post Liberation period brought two fundamental political changes among Mareko people; firstly formerly recognized land lord power ousted and newly emerged local chief replaced. This rearrangement on the power of land lording made based on their loyalty to the Emperor during the time Italian war and occupation. Consequently the former influential Medore clan of Burqamo family lost its land lording power after the then *Qegnazmach* Oshebe discharged and patriot *Qegnazmach* Tujji Anjilo took the power.¹⁶⁹ Even if *Qegnazmach* Oshebe had marched at Miychew Battle in the side of the Emperor his family member Debo was collaborated. Secondly; the Imperial appointed officials of Mareko Sub-province at Butajira who learnt the collaboration of Mareko sub-district governor named *grazmach* Debo Agebo made important political change which isolate indigenous Mareko people from governorship and he replaced by a men from Menz locality named Mulunh Biru.¹⁷⁰ As we have seen above the first power shift was based on loyalty, but the second sought complete distrust on indigenous population and the beginning of organized feudal administrative system in Mareko-land through direct involvement of Monarchial family members in holding governor position. Concerning this Cohen and Koehn in Aberra Tesfaye stated that “[...] these entities were far from autonomous and largely operated through the network of subordinate field officials shifted by central government appointees.”¹⁷¹

Beside its attainment in vision merging and intensification of the national bureaucracies, the 1942 reform on administrative division was inefficient to address the mass demand on local Self-administration and economic development.

In responding this mass dissatisfaction the Imperial government made some reforms on the Local self-administration in 1966.¹⁷² This reform changes some administrative forms on different Provinces of the country after the Local Self-Administrative Order No, 43 become functional. Accordingly, the former Mareko Sub-province rearranged and changed its name and its boundary. The newly included area was Sebat Bet Gurage which separated from their linguistic group Meskan-Gurage via mountain named Zebider, and the Sub-province renamed Gurage and

¹⁶⁷ Aberra Tesfaye, “The Extent and Impacts of Decentralization Reforms in Ethiopia”, PhD dissertation, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Boston University, 2015, p.49.

¹⁶⁸ Edemo, p. 59: Informants; *Abegaze* Ambese Tira, *Ato* Wechisso Geletu, and *Abegaz* Nunese Mentorro.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid*

¹⁷⁰ Sintayhu, p.10. Informants: *Abegaze* Ambese, *Ato* Wechisso, and *Abegaz* Nunese.

¹⁷¹ Aberra, p.49.

¹⁷² Edemo, p. 59-60: Aberra, pp.49-50.

Mareko. This newly arranged Sub-province also divided into two district administrative divisions; Mareko district and Gurage district, which was based on settlement rather than linguistic base. Then, Mareko District where most Mareko ethnic and linguistic groups live also divided in to three Sub-District administrative divisions; Dobenna Sub-District, Shershra Sub-District, and Lanfaro Sub-District.¹⁷³

After the 1966 administrative arrangement made on Mareko Sub-Province, Mareko District in which three ethnic and linguistic groups integrated; Mareko people, Meskan-Gurage people, and Selt'e people who live in Lanfaro Sub-District, the former border disputes on territorial claim among the identified peoples re-erupted and border clashes became part of life here and there.¹⁷⁴

Officials of Gurage and Mareko sub-province and Mareko district become busy to solve the repeatedly raised border conflicts. Based on the 1966 the Local Self-Administrative order which gave powers for the local administrative arrangement in 1968 the Gurage and Mareko Sub-Province made some arrangements on the name and the boundary of the administrative division. Consequently Gurage and Mareko Sub-Province renamed Hykochenna Butajira Sub-Province, and its former boundary in western side excluded the Sebat Bet Gurage, and adds new area from Eastern side by including Ziway (Batu) and Shashemene where part of Arsi Oromo habitat.¹⁷⁵ Then the former habitats of Gurage and Mareko Sub-District Mareko people, Meskan-Gurage and part of Selt'e people remained under the rearranged administrative division. The site of this rearranged Sub-Province moved from Butajira to Ziway under Shewa Sub-country (*Kifle hager*).¹⁷⁶

3.4.1 Land and land tenure system in the post Liberation period

The liberation era since 1942 brought some fundamental changes on the socio economic life of Ethiopian people. The Emperor and his Imperial government become busy to restore the resumed authority and the overall system administration. In due course of time the Imperial government looks at the land and land system. Inseparable nature of land and his subject people forced to admit the economic life of the masses peasantry which deteriorated by the five year war and Fascist occupation and subsequently in 1942 a new land-tax decree which set the tax on together measured and unmeasured land at half that imposed in 1935.¹⁷⁷

In Mareko where land was measured during the reign of Menelik I, the estimate for forty hectares (*gasha*) was basis for the tax collection of agricultural tax.¹⁷⁸ However, most of the population of Mareko Sub-district (Awraja) particularly the Muslims to whom anti "Christian

¹⁷³ Edemo, p.59-60: Informants, *Abegaz Wangoro, Abegaz Hamdino Beyene, and Imam Tuke.*

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid*

¹⁷⁵ Edemo, p.59-60: Informants, *Abegaz Wangoro, Abegaz Hamdino Beyene, and Imam Tuke.*

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*

¹⁷⁷ Bahru, "A History...", p.192.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 192-193.

and Amhara”¹⁷⁹ propaganda installed by Fascist officials through their local agents did not inspire by the merciful cutback on land-tax which reduce the expected expense of the peasant for land-tax by 50%. Inversely, among the native Mareko landlords (balabbats) particularly collaborators which influenced by neighboring Arsi Oromo resistance say no to pay taxes to the newly set up Imperial government¹⁸⁰. The movement was crushed by a local fighting group of Silite called Gogot which was led by Imam Sugato Zeyne who formerly collaborated with Italy but now tried his best to show his loyalty to the Imperial government.

The Imperial government distributed land which was registered as government (*ye mengist*) land for Mareko patriots, non-native soldiers and exile as reward for their loyalty which was substitute for salary. However, holders of this kind of land due to the unmanageable situation of the owner to cultivate on the land due to largeness of the land most of the time the owner made unwritten agreement with peasant to sharecropping on the land.¹⁸¹ The sharecropping accord determined by the fertility and the availability of land. The most commonly used sharecropping accord between either native or non-native land owners and Mareko tenant peasants was *erbo* which means one fourth, in which the tenant expected to share of the product accordingly.¹⁸²

One of the adverse effects of the post Liberation period on the history of Mareko people was the government policy of imperial Land grant. The case was happened in 1960s when the formerly reserved land for communal grazing ground at Goflala by Mareko localities later registered as government land and at the time of land sale became fashion the grazing land given to Ras Kassa.¹⁸³ Ras Kassa who was among the Absentee landlord arranged to settle the neighboring Silite communities as a tenant peasant, prohibited local Mareko communities any attempt of using the former grazing land for similar purpose. Subsequently local Mareko communities faced shortage of grazing ground for their cattle and search another alternative to solve the existing problem. However their solution to solve the problem engaged them with in conflict with neighboring Silite communities.

The Imperial Land grant policy, which promotes holders of state tenure to convert them into freehold¹⁸⁴ land, the process reached its boiling point in 1960, in Mareko *kebele* when most of large size land owners’ particularly non-native *neftgnas* became engaged in lucrative land sale¹⁸⁵. In due course of time some able Mareko personalities mostly from the *balabbat* class played with the opportunity and purchased their own forefathers land.

¹⁷⁹Sbacchi, *Ethiopia under Mussolini*, 1985, p.162. Dirk Bustorf, “Imam Sugato Zeyne... p.156: Tesfa, p.115,116,119

¹⁸⁰ Dirk Bustorf, p.159.

¹⁸¹ Dessalegn, p.23: Bahru, “*A History...*” p.19.

¹⁸² An accusatory letter from Ato Selam Ale to Meskanena Mareko *Wereda* (district) Head of Peasant Association, Butajira, reference No. 1019/71, year 1971 EC see the letter at Appendix B: Edemo, p. 53.

¹⁸³ Edemo, p. 18, 29: Informant; Abegaz Ambese, Ato Wuletaw, and Ato Nune.

¹⁸⁴ Dessalgn, p.19: Bahru, “*A History...*” p.193.

¹⁸⁵ Edemo, p. 53: Informant; Abegaz Ambese, Ato Wuletaw, and Ato Nine.

3.4.1.1 TENANCY IN MAREKO AFTER LIBERATION

The liberation period initially seems came up with patient to an existing socio political condition of the country which introduced hospitable occasional land-tax decree in 1942. However the condition of tenancy still continued as fate and an enviable social reality. Moreover evacuation of tenants became fashion due to the introduction of Agricultural Mechanizations and consequently unenviable cruelty was done on the life of tenant and tenants' family.¹⁸⁶ According to Sintayhu Worku, and informants, in Mareko some peasants alienated from their plot by the 1941 and 1942 land decree and subsequently the fate of those peasants became struggle for survival and migrated to Metehara and Wonjji sugar factory for the sake of job as wager.¹⁸⁷ Mainly due to the international community enforcements and external aid that the Imperial government established a Committee on Land Reform in 1961¹⁸⁸ to look at the suffering condition of tenancy. Mainly the complexity of tenancy became too severe to disregard mostly in southern half of the country.¹⁸⁹ Regarding this in 1964 the government sought a clue for end of tenancy and present the case to the parliament, however the parliament hinder the ratification of tenancy bill since the parliament was dominated by the landlords then the action of the Imperial government frustrated.¹⁹⁰ According to Bahru Zewde, the 'no' vote of the parliament for 1964 tenancy bill became backdrop for the 1965 student protest under the banner of "Land to the Tiller"¹⁹¹

3.5 Developmental Works in Mareko after Liberation of Ethiopia

In the period after 1941, the Imperial government established a variety of program and offices in all over Ethiopia, including schools, police stations, local administrative offices, judicial offices, and technical aid programs.

These programs of the state resulted in the introduction of modern institutions in Mareko Sub-Province. Amongst other things, it introduced a system of public finance and accounting. The Mareko *awraja* public finance office was established for the first time in 1941.¹⁹² The office, locally known as *gimja bēt*, was located in Butajira, its function being to collect taxes from local peasants and to pay salaries to government workers. With the reorganization of the old imperial state administration after 1941, some fundamental socio-economic transformations took place.

Koshe town which was built for camp by Italians, occupied by Major Asfaw in 1942 following the Italian soldiers' evacuation and the first government office that is Police Office had

¹⁸⁶ Bahru, "A History..." p. 195: Dassalgn, pp.25-26, 30.

¹⁸⁷ Sintayhu, p.15. : *Abegaz Amdino, Ato Jebeso, and Abegaz Wongoro.*

¹⁸⁸ Bahru , "A History..." p.195: Dassalgn, p.31.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid*: Hussein, P.5.

¹⁹⁰ Andargachew, p.98: Bahru, "A History..." p.195.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid*

¹⁹² Informants; *Ato Wuletaw Bezabh, Ato Teferi Bezabh, W/ro Abeba Bezabh*, the father of these informants first arrived in Butajira from Menz as government worker in *gimja bet*, the first office still stands at the former place and served now for Meskan woreda Health Bureau.

established at the compound and house of former Italian soldiers camp. In the coming years some urban features emerged in Koshe. Among these social services the building up of the first clean drinking water was the most important.¹⁹³ In addition to this the integration of several ethnic and linguistic groups for several economic, political and social background play its role in developing the economic revival of the town.¹⁹⁴ Local businessmen run several types of small business like mail tea houses, shop, and restaurants. Beyond all business activities Koshe weekly market played the most important role in inviting neighboring communities in koshe town.

Figure, 5



The first *gimja-bet* (treasury) which was built during the reign of Haile Selassie I, on Butajira town, at present it is the office of Meskan district Health center.

Photo by the researcher, June, 1916

¹⁹³Sintayhu, p.13.

¹⁹⁴ Informnts; Ato Demeke Ahmed, Ato Hailu Gagoro, Ato Qoricha.

Figure, 6



The comounded of the former *gemja-bet*

Photo by the researcher june, 2016

3.5.1 Education in Mareko after Liberation

During the third decades of 20th century the Emperor was busy implementing plan that assured partition for the future. Among these Imperial plans building schools among the mass to address education coverage was among other developmental, however, the plan to expand education coverage disrupted by the 1936-41 Italian war and occupation and other newly developed situation.

It was after the Liberation the Emperor devoted a great deal of attention to the building of schools following a serious of real educational policies was introduced for the endorsement of education in the country. To meet this need, reconstruction began with the reestablishment of the Ministry of Education in 1942. To enhance expansion, a Board of Education was established in each region. After institutional formation got shape since 1942 the Ethiopian government was engaged in the expansion of the education system.¹⁹⁵ Besides government leading role in the expansion of education, the missionaries take part in building and sponsoring the field.¹⁹⁶ As the result of this favorable condition in 1942 in Mareko *awraja* (sub-province) at Butajira the first modern school built by the Swedish Missionary. Then Population of the Mareko *awraja* particularly the nearby people for the first time enjoyed modern secular education and sent their children to school since its inauguration.¹⁹⁷

In beginning of the mid 20th c the evolving expansion of school in Mareko *Awraja* was aborted after disagreement occurred between the Church and Ministry of Education. The introduction of Education-tax in 1947¹⁹⁸ which aimed at increasing the State income indirectly affects the expansion of education, not only in Mareko people but also in whole Mareko Sub province. The main point of disagreement between the church and the Ministry of Education was over finances to which later accorded and transfer the schools into Church administration.¹⁹⁹ And subsequently the initial progress of building schools and expansion of education suddenly pause in the sub-

¹⁹⁵ Woubet Kifle, p.16: Alemayehu Bishew and Jon Lasser, Education in Ethiopia: Past, Present and Future prospect, In: African Nebula, Issue 5, 2012, P.57: Marcus, "A History...", pp.136-137.

¹⁹⁶ Tesfa, p.137: Viveca Halldin Norberg, Swedes in Haile Selassie's Ethiopia: A Study in early Development Co-operation, Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, Uppsala, 1977, pp.254: Woubet, P.17.

¹⁹⁷ Informant: Ato Teshome and Ato Wuletaw,

¹⁹⁸ Bahru, "A History...", p.193: Woubet, p.17: Daniel Weldegebriel Ambaye, Land Right and Expropriation in Ethiopia, Real Estate planning and Land Law, Department of Real Estate and Construction Management, School of Architecture and the Built Environment, Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) Stockholm, 2013, p.55.

¹⁹⁹ Tesfa, p.137: Sergew Hable-Selassi, , p.473. concerning the disagreement between the Church and Government Sergew stated that, during the first Ministerial appointment during the reign of Menelik, the Minister position for Education left vacuumed intentionally due to the disagreement over the appointment since the Church had lead education the then Patriarch *Abune* Matiyos asked the position of Education Minister.

province. However this situation helped the Swedish Missionaries to get a free hand access in school building and expansion of education in the area.²⁰⁰

The Swedes already started building school in the area but now they accelerate the magnitude of coverage in the Sub-province and built two schools in ten year, in Koshe and Tora.²⁰¹ Mareko people mainly the habitat of Koshe town warmly well-come the Swedes project and provide labor and moral support. More over the most important support was come from the local *ceiqa shum* named *Ato Shibru Gade*, who provides part of his *rist* land for school building site.²⁰²

It was a golden opportunity for Mareko people to whom the Swedes built the first modern school at the center of Mareko, Koshe, which inaugurated in 1962²⁰³ and began to enroll students mainly from koshe and also from the nearby localities. The Swedish program gave an opportunity for mareko children by providing modern and accessible school.

However the first government sponsors school opened after ten years of silence in 1960 at Hamus Gebeya Kebele which was part of Dobenna Sub-District under Mareko District administration.²⁰⁴ Besides its unfair distribution considering the ratio of two schools for one district population its initial success and policy of allowing missionaries to take part seems encouraging since education had been considered as luxury in the eyes of majority Mareko people.

3.5.2 Addressing Health Center in Mareko

Mareko people as population of part of rural Ethiopia had been faced heavy problem to enjoy health service due to the absence of accessible health center. In due course of time Mareko people lost their life mostly by curable disease. Since the area has mostly malaria case death became high. Particularly pregnant mothers, infants, elders and handicaps were common victims of death due to inaccessibility of health center.²⁰⁵ However as the result of the 1942 government development works in, 1960 Mareko people enjoyed health service after the first relatively nearby clinic opened at Hamus-Gebeya town it was under Mareko District. The establishment of this health center saves travelling time and decrease death caused by curable disease among Mareko people.

3.5.3 Development of Clean Drinking Water in Mareko

Mareko people like other rural population of the country suffered a lot due to the absence of clean drinking water and affected by waterborne disease since they used ponds as source of drinking water. It was very difficult during dry seasons since the area weather condition belongs

²⁰⁰ Tesfa, p.137.

²⁰¹ Informants: *Ato Tamirat*, *Ato Buba*, and *Ato Qoricha*

²⁰² Informants; *Ato Demeke Ahmed*, *W/ro Aygede Gebure*, and *Ato Ekemo*.

²⁰³ *Ibid*

²⁰⁴ Edemo, p. 69-70: Informants, *Ato Jebesso*, *Ato Lemado Gobebo*, and *Ato Buba*.

²⁰⁵ Sintayhu, p.7: Informants: *Ato Gonna Tamirat*, *Ato Demeke Ahmed*, and *Ato Wuletaw*.

to *Kolla*, when the availability of rain water limited during three months of Ethiopian rainy season in summer. During the vast dry season Mareko mothers and girls pass an exhaustive day to day activity in search of available water. Beside farness of traditionally build ponds, the absence of treatment and purification for this source of water, water born disease had been common by which several people victim.²⁰⁶The 1942 government plan in expanding public services among the mass become functional building clean water source in Mareko District after twenty year. In 1962 the governor of Mareko District receive message from body of Imperial Government to dig water hole in Koshe by participating the localities.²⁰⁷Then the cooperation work of government and Mareko people particularly Koshe town dwellers who engaged digging water hole enabled the effectiveness of establishment of the first clean drinking water source in the town.

²⁰⁶ Yemane Berhane, Ulf Högberg, Peter Byass and Stig Wall, Gender, Literacy, and Survival among Ethiopian adults, 1987-1996, In: *Bulletin of the WHO* 2002; 80, p.715: Sintayhu, p.12.

²⁰⁷ Sintayhu, p.13.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. MAREKO PEOPLE DURING THE DERG REGIME, 1974-1991

4.1 The downfall of the Imperial Regime and the coming of the Derg regime

The open movement of anti-Imperial regime and its socio-economic and political system initially started by students', teachers, civil servants, and soldiers as urban phenomena. Activate of the movement aimed at complete change on the feudal political system in which their revolutionary movement intensified and gained popular support particularly by urban population since the 1960 unsuccessful coup against the Emperor and his Regime taken.²⁰⁸ However there was no well organized political party and/or organization to handle all revolutionary groups under a single body to foster dissatisfied groups of different social and economic sects, with planned program. Due to this a decade-age but influential movement against the Imperial regime "the military took advantage of the power vacuum created by the lack of a revolutionary organization [...]"²⁰⁹

The direct involvement of the Military body under the leadership of representatives from the key components of the army, air force, navy, and police, accelerated the downfall of the government of Emperor Haile Selassie I. "the final stage of Ethiopian Revolution began in January 1974 with a series of mutinies led by the Military in various provinces and demonstrations by restive citizenry in the capital"²¹⁰ the action taken by the gunmen's accelerate the boiling point of the revolution and motive for the already existing political situation. In due course of time, "popular campaign and uprisings were accompanied by calls for the separation of Church and State and equality of religious, and regional, occupational, and economic groupings."²¹¹

The year 1974 and the month September became the turning point of Ethiopian history in which the Military body overthrows the Imperial Regime through a successful coup on Emperor Haile Selassie. Consequently the Military body established transitional government known as the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) widely called Derg, under its leader Major Mengistu Haile Mariam.

4.2 The establishment of Provincial Military Administrative Council and the Introduction of New Political-Economy with Revolutionary Reforms

In December 1974, the PMAC began to introduce its political-economy system by declaring its promise to Ethiopian Socialism, which followed by announcement of a consequence economic policy. Based on the guideline of Socialist socio-economic view, and answering revolutionary

²⁰⁸ Andargachew, p.37.: Bahru, "A History....," P.223; Saheed, p.117.

²⁰⁹ Saheed, p.119.

²¹⁰ *Ibid*: Andargachew, pp.37-38.

²¹¹ Andargachew, p. 49: Bahru, "A History....," p.231; Saheed, p.120.;

questions of mass, the PMAC began to proclaim several reforms which “designed to root out the socioeconomic underpinning of the old order and to mobilize the masses of rural and urban constituents for the revolutionary struggle.”²¹²

In changing the feudal political economic system and social structure, the reforms of the PMAC planned to the benefit of all sectors of the society. Among those reforms, the reform made on land and land system under proclamation Number 31 of 1975 which is entitled ‘Public Ownership of Rural Lands Proclamation’²¹³ was one of important fruit of the Ethiopian Revolution brought by the PMAC in responding the revolutionary demand to the salivated mass.

The land and land system issue was one of the epicenter among other revolutionary questions of the 1960s political theater of Ethiopia in which students particularly in the Capital Addis Ababa on several demonstrations frequently voicing as their motto calling “Land to the tiller”. So that the PMAC which immediately tried its best in handling public attention, gave responsibility for rural people regarding the land and land associated issue in which the proclamation Number 31 of 1975 “became the central legislation which set off the process of land distribution and the organization of peasant in Peasant Associations”²¹⁴

The 1974 Revolution brought about a relatively better political economy atmosphere, with the toppling of the feudal serfdom. Mareko people now regained their land use and ownership rights. They had now no “*melkegna*” and “*neftegna*” who takes their honey, butter, milk, cows, children, crop, etc at will. It was the land Proclamation of Article 6 which heralded another fundamental change on the feudal socio-economic relation, in which the law proclaimed the abolition of the “onerous practice of tenancy, and frees the peasant from all obligations to the landlord”²¹⁵ through which the most victim of the society became librated from the exploitive and oppressive feudal socio political system. The magnitude of feudal burden varies from region to region and the most affected were who under the *gult* tenure system, mainly in south.

4.2.1 THE 1975 LAND REFORM, ITS IMPLIMENTATION AND CHALLENGS IN MAREKO

The land Reform of the 1975 and its implementation in Meskanena Mareko district (Awraja) was preceded by new appointments on the expense of former officials who formerly occupied key position of Sub-province of Land and tenure Administrators under the Ministry of Land Tenure and Administration Minister. Consequently, the Land Tenure and Administrative Minister passed new appointments and write circular letters to each Sub-Country (*kifle hager*) Administrative Centers. Accordingly on 28, February, 1975 the Ministry writes a letter to *Dejazmach* Mamo Seyum Administrator of Shewa Sub-Country (*kifle hager*) concerning the appointment of Ato

²¹² Saheed, pp.119-120, Andargachew, pp.86-87.:

²¹³ Bahru, “*A History...*,”p.242: Andargachew, P.100: Saheed, p.120.

²¹⁴ Andargachew, pp.100-101: Dessalgn, p.37: Bahru, “*A History...*,” p.242.

²¹⁵ Dessalgn, p.38: Bahru, “*A History...*,” p.242.

Solomon Gashaw as appointed manager of Shewa Sub-Country's Land and Tenure Administrative Office.²¹⁶ To notify the concerned body the circular letter reached at Ziway the Administrative center of Hykochena Butajera Province to administrator *Ato* Lulu Legesse on 26 March 1975. Then on the same month the circular letter write to Meskanena Mareko District on 9, April 1975 at Butajira and received by *Ato* Alemu Shiamete, Administrator of the District.²¹⁷

According to the letter, the new appointment on the Land and Tenure Administrative Office of the District had to objectives; first, it was among other similar appointment and dismissals made on former Regime Officials to whom the Reform brought fundamental change on the disposed Socio-economic and political condition. Due to this current political situation the Revolutionary Government opt either permanent dismissal or to shift the former Regime officials from one Sub-Country to another temporarily until the political situation cool down. Secondly, the new appointment aimed at implementing the land Reform decree in Shewa Sub-Country.²¹⁸ Regarding the implementation of the decree in the Sub-Country the new appointee *Ato* Solomon Gashaw could be picked due to two reasons, either he got short training about the new Reform of land tenure system or he would be one among other individuals who had anti-Imperial Regime but their struggle remains undergrounded and verified as supporter of the Reform. Actually the new appointment was made by Minister of Land and Tenure Administration 15 days before the actual and officially the decree passed.²¹⁹ The circular letter concerning the new appointment reached Meskanena Mareko District Administrative center office to announce all offices under the District Administration. Based on this the preparatory preconditions of the implementation process for the ratified land Reform just months before the decree by taking into account the will be challenges that face the process.

Mareko people to whom *rist* system had been applied as a land tenure system during the time of incorporation in to Emperor Menelik II Empire, and *gult* system also applied and run side by side during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie. Since incorporation majority of native Mareko's lost most of arable land which is suitable for farming during the new land measurement *qalad* made by Emperor Menelik II following his Imperial decree. Then regarding the decree, Marekos' land measured by Imperial officials on the expanse of the former communal land holding system of the conquered people and distributed for local verified nobility and local dignitaries', newly arrived settlers, and Church for different administrative roles. Moreover, most arable lands were taken from *rist* holder Mareko peasants during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie when the Imperial government rewarded his loyal war veterans. This situation exacerbated by the introduction and expansion of Agricultural Mechanization of 1960s, thus most Mareko peasants remain under sever condition due to violated right of land.

²¹⁶ A letter from Shewa Sub-country (*kifle hager*) Administration Office to Mareko *Awraja* (district), reference No. 1387/6/67, 1967 E.C see letter at Appendix C.

²¹⁷ *Ibid*

²¹⁸ A letter from Shewa, reference No. 1387/6/67 Appendix C.

²¹⁹ *Ibid*

The 1975 land Reform had produce both satisfied and dissatisfied groups, consequently until the downfall of the Derg regime Mareko people divided into two groups based on their former social and political statues. The dissatisfied group among Mareko people which resisted like similar northern Ethiopian *rist* holder and local landlords, initially just after the decree they begin to resist. This resistance against the land decree broke out after local landlords united against the law of Article 4 of Proclamation Number 31, which states “the maximum size of land for each self-laboring rural household shall at no time exceed 10 hectares”²²⁰ and it take rebellion shape particularly around Hamus-Gebeya Sub-district at Bammo locality. The local landlords, to whom the decree appeared to violate their hereditary right over vast arable land organized secretly to interrupt the process of land distribution program in which, local members of newly appointed Peasant Association run the implementation process. However the anti land Reform resistance crushed by compound force of local and government which arrived from District Administration center Butajira.²²¹

According to local informants²²² the rebellion had short lived due to two reasons; firstly, the resistance group had lost local support even if the ring leaders were indigenous landlords who had elites and from elite background of previous two Imperial Regimes namely during the reign of Emperor Menelik II and Emperor Haile Selassie, due to excess land that they holds were property of the mass local peasant which they controlled on the expense of them. Secondly, they were little in number since cannot include all landlords among Mareko people and unity had lack of proper organization which means it has lack of deep preparation for any will be reaction of government.

After their shortly crushed anti-land Reform rebellion, they changed the method of resistance against the distribution of execs land through subversive activities. The ground for their subversive activity lay down by the government itself which gave the responsibility of land redistribution for newly established Peasant Association.

Anti-land Reform resistance groups in Mareko whose former social strata cannot thoroughly disrupt by newly established government Reform due to consolidated - age-old social structure; they had an opportunity to distort the process of land redistribution by influencing some committees of local Peasant Association. The local Peasant Association to which besides its main responsibility of implementing land redistribution task empowered to establish judicial tribunals (*yefered shengo*).²²³ Its function was aimed at looking all cases involving land disputes before the ordinary courts However, some members of local judicial tribunals (*yefered shengo*) in some kebeles were elected from local dignitaries who had relation with former landlords, concerning this Dessalegn Rameto stated that “some complained that those involved in allocation

²²⁰ Dessalgn, p.38: Andargachew, pp.100-101, 103-104.

²²¹ Edemo, p.40: Sintayhu, p.15: Informants: *Ato Yebase, Ato Wuletaw, and Abegaz.*

²²² Informants: *Ato Yebase, Ato Hailu Gagoro, and Abegaz Wongoro*

²²³ Dessalgn, p.38: Hussein, pp.10-11. :An accusatory letter from Ato Selam Ale to Meskanena Mareko wereda (district) Head of Peasant Association reference No. 1019/71, 1971 EC see the letter at Appendix B.

of plots were guilty of favoritism, and the like, others that the whole endeavor had been to be the benefit of one social group and not to all [...]” moreover Fekade Azeze as cited in Crewett, W. in most general term remarked that “bribery of officials was a regular practice to ensure that the better-endowed farmers would get access to a better quality or a large parcel of land.”²²⁴ Nevertheless, beside such frustrating act against the new land reform all most all former tenants and landless Marekos enjoyed the fruit of the reform.

The land redistribution process had its own steps. First, Peasant Associations have to be established based on the decree in which the new government used it as “grass roots level” administrative base. Then each individual registered in the established Peasant Associations as member in their kebeles.²²⁵ The registration as member of the Peasant Associations served as pre-request for land redistribution process followed by qualifications to owe land. Among the most common measures adopted by the Peasant Associations as criteria used for assigning land to individuals, number of family members, main concern was given to landless, former tenants were allowed to farm the plots they previously obsessed²²⁶ and subsequently through the reform landless, wage workers, and tenant cultivators became the most treated social groups in the country.

Like other patriarchal families through which family members headed and represented by father, in Mareko the registration process ran according to the Peasant Associations acknowledgment of father as head of family unless and otherwise widow led a family. Regarding widow and broken family due to divorce, male member particularly older boy or any who represented by a family to took house hold position and act as a head allowed to represent in the registration process.²²⁷

In Mareko the land redistribution process had been very sophisticated. The basic cause for this complicated process will be credited for former Imperial Regimes which applied two different land tenure systems simultaneously to run in the area based on the fertility of already in position arable land. Accordingly some suitable arable lands were annexed as a *gult* system by non-native officials where they converted the former peasant farmers who had hereditary right over the plot of land, into tenant. This system and process began during the regime of Emperor Haile Selassie particularly after the Liberation period.²²⁸ In such Kebeles and cases where *gult* system profoundly occupied the redistribution process ran according to the Proclamation Article 6, peasants became free and retook the already occupied lands based on the communal system

²²⁴ *Ibid*, pp.43-44.: Wibke Crewett, Ayalneh Bogale, and Benedikt Korf, Land Tenure in Ethiopia: Continuity and Change, Shifting Rulers, and the Quest for State Control, CAPRI Working Paper 91, International Food Policy Research Institute: Washington, DC, 2008, p.15.

²²⁵ An accusatory letter from Ato Selam Ale to Meskanena Mareko Wereda (district) Head of Peasant Association, Butajira, reference No. 1019/71, 1971 EC see the letter at Appendix B.

²²⁶ Dessalgn, p.44: Wibke Crewett... P.15.

²²⁷ *Ibid*, p.49: Informants, Ato Hailu Gagoro, Hajji Jateno, and Ato Tessema.

²²⁸ Informants; Ato Gonna, Ato Qoricha, Ato Takele Balcha.

which verified the hereditary right and legislation.²²⁹ However relatively most Mareko farmlands had been under the *rist* system until the reform.

Besides the minor *gult* occupied lands, majority of Mareko farm and grazing land remained under the *rist* system. In *rist* hold kebeles' land was controlled by both native and non-native individuals since the time of Emperor Menelik II. Among the native's clan chiefs and war veterans controlled large size lands both for farming and grazing field. The members of non-native *rist* holder owned vast and fertile lands that were mainly from Amhara and Gurage ethnic groups²³⁰ who were in serving of the consecutive Imperial Regimes. Regarding such ownership, (non-native), the reform under Article 20, calculated that "[...] one special provision was included, namely that no non-resident was henceforth entitled to put in claims to land".²³¹ Besides its recognition for the usurped land doing well did, the restoration for the legal owner, it had the side effect on the settlers whose ownership categorize under non-native in which the land reform provoked an often aggressive response against immigrant landlords and *neftegna* settlers in much of southern Ethiopia²³² consequently in Mareko some clan members particularly to whom Marekos' called "*horror-manna*"²³³ literally means 'father of land' (in recognizing their pioneer as early settler), had aggressively participated in the destruction of non-native *rist* owners' property. The defending position of settlers' who had *rist* owners who stands in protecting their property and safeguarding their family members intensified the situation and this offensive and defensive action grow into ethnic conflict. Consequently death toll produced on the settlers' side.

The proclamation Article 20 also abolished the former power of *balabates* and local chiefs. In addition to losing their former power and social structure, large size of *rist* land taken and redistributed among the landless and former tenants. The decree allowed the distribution of land which was above 10 hectares taken by the PAs and allotted to its members based on the situation of the members.²³⁴ Among the members the first chance was given to whom who had no land, either tenant or other type of discrimination.

In Mareko where native *rist* owners who were recognized as *balabat* by former Imperial government forced by the law to leave excess land particularly lands above 10 hectares during the redistribution process. However some liberated tenants complained that they were forced to give part of their product namely known as *erbo* literally means quarter to former landlord. The judicial tribunals which was part of PAs established to look land and associated issues particularly in Faqa-Werabo *Kebele* found to be making some dissident acts in which supporting

²²⁹ Dessalgn, pp. 37-38.

²³⁰ Edemo, p.29.

²³¹ Dessalgn, p.38: Edemo, p.29.

²³² Christopher Clapham, "The Political Framework: Controlling Space in Ethiopia": In *Remapping Ethiopia-Socialism and After*, ed. by Wendy James, Donald L. Donham, Eisei Kurimoto, and Alessandro Triulzi, Oxford, Athens, Addis Ababa, 2002 , p.15: Dessalgn,p.37.

²³³ Edemo, p.29: Informants; Ato Hailu Gebre and Kebede Gadissa.

²³⁴ Dessalgn, p.38: Hussein, p.10: Bahru, "A History...", p.242.

and legalizing the case in which the former tenant accused his former master in local judicial tribunal demanding *erbo* (quarter) of his produce on his former land.²³⁵ Finally the accuser who dissatisfied by the decision of local judicial tribunal Peasant Association appealed his case to District level Court at Butajira.²³⁶

4.3 Dismissal made on Imperial appointees, and new appointment made by PMAC on Meskan and Mareko District Offices

The Revolutionary Government soon made dismissal on Imperial Government Officials. As discussed initially the appointment and dismissal on government officials was made at the eve of the various reforms. Regarding this the first change on administration position was made on land and Tenure Administrative Office thus the then administrator of Shewa *kifle hager* (Sub-country) *Dejazmach* Mamo Seyum received new appointment order from the Minister of Land and Tenure Administration and sent notification letter to Mareko district administrative office concerning the appointment of *Ato* Solomon Gashaw as Shewa Sub-country's Land and Tenure Administrator in February 1975.

The process went step by step and new appointments made on several sectors of government offices. Accordingly on 5 June, 1975 D/r Bantayhu Gelaw the administrator of Shawa Sub-country (*kifle hager*) sent a circular letter to Mareko *Wereda* (district) concerning the new appointment of *Ato* Solomon Abebe, who assigned to take the office as administrative of Hykochina Butajira *Awraja* (Sub-province). According to the letter the appointment of *Ato* Solomon Abebe as administrator of the Sub-province following the dismissal of former administrator *Ato* Lulu Legesse, had not fully verified, rather it was tentative and his span in office would be determined by other officials order who had evaluate his fitness and commitment to the revolutionary reforms.²³⁷

Soon the revolutionary government continued the process of appointing suitable bodies in both higher and lower administrative positions. Therefore between the month April and May another important appointment made and the Administrator of Shewa Sub-country *Dejazmach* Mamo Seyom left office and D/r Bantayhu Gelaw take the position.²³⁸

4.4 Villagization and its process among Mareko people

Villagization, the concentration of scattered homesteads into centralized villages was already underway in 1985. The argument given for the program was a wish to provide modern services

²³⁵ An accusatory letter from *Ato* Selam Ale to Meskanena Mareko *Wereda* (district) Head of Peasant Association, Butajira, reference No. 1019/71, year 1971 EC see the letter at Appendix B.

²³⁶ *Ibid*

²³⁷ A letter from Administrator of Shewa Sub-country to Mareko *Wereda* (district) Administration Office Butajira, reference No. 7898/13861, 1967, file No. 385. See the letter at Appendix D.

²³⁸ An appointment letter from Shewa *Kifle hager* (sub-country) land tenure administrative office to Mareko *wereda* (district) administration office Butajira, reference No. 1387/6/67, file No. 386. See the letter at Appendix C.

such as schools and clinics for the rural population. The full-scale movement began in 1985 in the midst of famine and resettlement.²³⁹

Although it is new to Ethiopia, the policy of villagization and cooperative villages in rural area was not new in other parts of the world. A number of states had embarked on villagization for political and socio-economic reasons. Villagization had been attempted by socialist and non-socialist countries.²⁴⁰

In colonial Africa, drives for collectivization were attempted to deny the peoples access to the liberation struggles fought in their name. In the states that perused the socialist path villagization was then regarded as a means of promoting rural development. Even in the former USSR, the people's republic of China and North Vietnam maximum potentials were utilized to make villagization a success but none of which were able to have fully achieved their ultimate goal.²⁴¹

In May 1979, Mengistu Haile Mariam had referred to villagization as a necessary step in providing government services to peasants'. Producers' Cooperatives were encouraged to build villages for their members, following the Somali war of 1977/78; almost the entire highland of Bale region was villagized, partly for security reasons and partly from a policy of settling shifting cultivators, many of whom had in any case been displaced during the war. The model for villagization was drawn largely from the Wabe villages set up in Arsii and Bale to rehouse Peasants evicted from new state farm sites in the Wabe Shebelle valley. These well-publicised showcase settlements were influential in presenting a picture of the ideal new socialist agricultural community, but their cost alone would prevent them from being effectively copied across the whole country.²⁴²

The campaign had extended to the national level when Mengistu Hailemariam visited Hararge region in early June 1985 and gave directives to create conditions conducive to the expansion of Peasant Producers Cooperatives in the region.²⁴³ Since then, villagization was accepted as national policy, and became the goal of a major government campaign from the end of the rainy season in October 1985 onwards.²⁴⁴

The government began a nationwide campaign in late 1985 designed to move some 33 million rural people into consolidated settlements by 1995. Particular attention was given to its impact on land use patterns, agricultural productivity, marketing practices, and human services. The official objectives and rationale for the campaign were given in an Amharic document entitled villagization guidelines prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture in 1985.²⁴⁵

Its major aims were identified as enhancing extension services aimed at increasing agricultural productivity; promotion, more rational land-use patterns and conserving natural resources; facilitating access of rural people to schools, clinics, water supplies, and service cooperatives; and strengthening security and self defense.²⁴⁶

²³⁹ Clapham Christopher, 1988. *Transformation and continuity in Revolutionary Ethiopia*, Cambridge. p. 175.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 143.

²⁴¹ John M. Cohen and Nils-Ivar Isaksson, *Villagization in the Arsii Region of Ethiopia*. Uppsala: Swedish University of Applied Sciences, 1987, p. 4.

²⁴² *Ibid*, 26-32.

²⁴³ Clapham, "*Transformation and...*," p. 176.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid*.

²⁴⁵ Cohen and Iskasson, "*Villagization...*," p. 5.

²⁴⁶ Clapham, "*Transformation and...*," p. 177.

The implementing authorities put in order Villagization Coordinating Committees (VCCs) at different administrative levels of the country.²⁴⁷ Soon the implementation process of villagization started in Mareko by amalgamating scattered houses into several villages. Concerning the initial and final experience of the Villagization process Tadesse Berisso marked that “[D]espite the successful achievement in village formation, the implementation of the program was not properly planned or organized.”²⁴⁸ Therefore relocated peasants faced different socio economic and environmental problems.

The various natures of socio-economic challenges against the villagization process subsequently came up with some problems in some Peasant Associations after new villages formed in Mareko over taxation process. Such adverse effect of villagization process mainly appeared because of new *kebele* boundaries established where some farmer peasants’ newly constructed house and his farm land isolated and found under different kebele administration. As a result this some peasants complained that he forced to pay annual land tax twice a year when he shift his house in another *kebele* even if he present his receipt for paid land tax at former *kebele*.²⁴⁹ Due to such and similar distortions made on the life of the peasant most of Mareko peasants dissatisfied by the villagization process mainly on its plan and mean of place selection which excluded the well of the peasant.²⁵⁰

4.5 THE FORMATION OF KOSHE URBAN DWELLERS ASSOCIATION AND ITS ROLE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECREE ON URBAN EXTRA HOUSES AND SMALL BUSINESSES

Koshe town which has only one kebele found at the bottom of administrative level under Meskanena Mareko district continued serving as the only socio economic and political center of Mareko people after the revolution. However the new government reforms which holds several proclamations and articles able to change important aspects of socio economic and political life of Mareko people mainly who habitat in Koshe town. Among these reforms ‘the reconstruction and readjustment’ on urban dwellers and urban structure has significant effect both on dwellers life and the growth of the urban areas. Accordingly urban dwellers formed a form of organization throughout the country. However the government used such associations mostly for political consumption rather than changing the life of the dwellers and enhancing the growth of towns.²⁵¹ Towards the end of 1975 Koshe Urban Dwellers Association was formed and the residents were registered as member of the association by which their residence verified.

²⁴⁷ Tadesse Berisso, “Modernist Dreams and human Suffering Villagization among the Guji Oromo”,; *In Remapping Ethiopia: Socialism and after*, Ed. by Wendy James, Donald L. Donham, Eisei Kurimoto, and Alessandro Triulzi, Oxford, Athens, Addis Ababa, 2002, p.121.: Saheed, p.132: Bahru, ”A History...”, p.243:

²⁴⁸ Tadesse Berisso, p.121.: Saheed, p.132: Informants; Hajji Jateno, *Ato Tessema*, and *Ato Buba*.

²⁴⁹ An accusatory letter from 1, Salo Kider 2, Ato Indrise Issa 3, Ato Kemal Issa 4, Mossa sied to Meskan Wereda (district) Administration Office reference No. 3615/68, Sene 18 1968 EC see the letter at Appendix E.

²⁵⁰ Tadesse Berisso, p.121: Informants: Hajji Jateno, and *Ato Buba*.

²⁵¹ Bahru, ”A History...”, p.243: Crewett and et, al, p.15.

Koshe Urban Dwellers Association which headed by Koshe kebele manager, take responsibility to implement every concerning reforms and decrees of the urban population. Withstanding the decree and reforms sometimes the association faced strong challenges to manage according to the decree. The most common challenges were come across the business communities mainly house-letting and millers. The first was due to the decree on urban extra houses and also associated issues like house-letting²⁵² and its order, the second was the new reduced fixed service charge for milling²⁵³ it was decided by the association.

The direct or indirect involvements of the government hand on economic sect initially antagonize the government and business communities not only at the big towns but also in small towns like Koshe. Due to this in Koshe town there was problem in service providing private business sectors particularly after the Koshe Town Cooperatives Association (KTCA) fixed new service charge on milling.²⁵⁴ Subsequently Koshe lost an opportunity to grow and display some fundamental urban features and stay at silence only with formerly established and started small private businesses.

4.5.1 MAREKO PEOPLE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AT VARIOUS LEVELS OF ASSOCIATIONS AND STRUCTURES

The new government soon organized and reconstructs the political administrative structure at a grassroots level and allowing the native people to participate in the political issues of their own area. Concerning this Clapham marked that “the military government,[...] was very much aware of the spatial contradictions of Ethiopian statehood and devised a reasonably coherent policy to deal with them. It amounted to a project of encadrement [...]”²⁵⁵ and the formation of several grassroots associations and organizations invited Mareko’s for the first time since the post liberation period which witnessed the discharge of *dejazmach* Debo Agebo and appointment of *Ato* Mulunh Biru. Now it became the first opportunity for Mareko people to represent their people in several associations for instance the most important were, MMDPA (Meskan and Mareko District Peasant Association), MMYA (Meskan and Mareko Youth Association), KUDA (Koshe Urban Dwellers Association), and CAs (Cooperative Associations) at district, *kebele*, and rural level.

In due course of time, individuals Mareko who found to be able politician and good orator elected by people then verified by district level officials, and take important political positions at kebele and district level. Therefore the formation of MMDPA (Meskan and Mareko District Peasant Association) at centre Butajira paved the way for political participation and involvement

²⁵² An accusatory letter from *Ato* Salo Agebo to Meskanena Mareko *wereda* (district) Administrative Office, reference No.1465/70, 1970 EC see the letter at Appendix F.

²⁵³ An accusatory letter from Meskan *wereda* (district) Administrative office Butajira to Koshe Town Cooperative Association Office Koshe, reference No. 120/69, 1969, see the letter at Appendix G.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid*

²⁵⁵ Clapham, “The Political Framework...,” p.14.

of Mareko people through their representatives. Accordingly *Ato* Korma Antelle became the first to take the position head of Meskan and Mareko Peasant Association.²⁵⁶ Subsequently during the establishment of the National Assembly (*beherawi shango*) in 1987 Mareko people can be represented by *Ato* korma Antelle and he stayed at Shango until the collapse of the Derg government.

Among other individuals who politically active during this period at district level *Ato* Tegenu Rega was important who was vice of Meskanena Mareko district, *Ato* Dilla Iyasu served the district on the establishment of District Peasant Association as committee and then became one of important politician of the time by representing ethnic Mareko's at district level.²⁵⁷

4.6 DEVELOPMENT WORKS DURING THE DERG REGIME AMONG THE MAREKO PEOPLE

4.6.1 Expansion of Education and illiteracy Campaigns towards Mareko people

The revolutionary government of Ethiopia which commonly known as Derg for the transformation of an existing and rearward economic condition of Ethiopia select major areas to give priority for coming plan of action²⁵⁸. Among other major selected areas, the government found that the education system as a pressing area which needs immediate solution so that in February 1974 the 'Educational Sector Review' proposed.²⁵⁹ To eradicate illiteracy in Ethiopia by implementing the proposed plan the government issued a proclamation known as the National Work Campaign for Development through Cooperative, and in early 1975 can mobilize more than 60,000 students and teachers sending them all over the country for two year terms of service.²⁶⁰ The active participants in the Development through Co-operation Campaign were university and high school students, and teachers.

The Military regime worked toward a more even distribution of schools by concentrating its efforts on small towns and rural areas that had been neglected during the former regime. Like other parts of the rural population of Ethiopia Mareko people's had been considered education as luxury and sought its coverage had restricted only for wealthy and upper class until the first Campaign students arrived at Koshe town.

The establishment of Peasant Association at the bottom of Administration division Mareko people and the arrival of University students for campaign against social backwardness under the slogan of "Education for All" played an active role in building schools and enhance the

²⁵⁶ Edemo, p. 60.

²⁵⁷ Edemo, p.61: Bahru, "A History...", p. 256.

²⁵⁸ Ahmed Hassan Omer, "Close Yet Far- Northern Shewa under the Derg," In *Remapping Ethiopia...*, p.75: Alemayehu Bishaw and Jon Lasser, 2012, p.65.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid*

²⁶⁰ Woubet, p.25: Mammo kebbede Shenkut, "Ethiopia: Where and who are the illiterate?," Education For All Global Monitoring Report, United Nations educational, scientific and Cultural Organization, 2006, p.7.

participation local people. Campaigners of University students as agent of expansion of education take skilful leadership in creating awareness among rural population of Mareko about the merits of educating children for both family and country. Regarding this Ahmed Hassen marked that, the students, as well as their position as the organizers and coordinators of the scheme also contributed by giving important labor service²⁶¹.

The establishment of Peasant Associations beside, their former responsibility now takes additional task to facilitate and manage the expansion of education by enhancing members to actively participate in the whole process of the government plan on education by supporting the Campaigners. The members of Peasant Associations among Mareko people had multidimensional participation which included giving free labor service, putting their skill, donating ones' own land for building school, providing wood, and grass.²⁶²

With technical assistance from the Ministry of Education, individual communities performed all primary school construction.²⁶³In large part because of such community involvement, the numbers of primary schools increase significantly in all regions.²⁶⁴Subsequently the enrollment of children in school simultaneously increases with the growth of schools in Mareko-land where the Imperial government left only one school which constructed by foreigners. However, the primary goal of the educational policy of Derg which gave more priority for the construction of primary schools had side effect on the expansion and construction of secondary schools side by side with primary schools in rural parts of the country.²⁶⁵ Due to this short coming of the policy until the collapse of the regime in 1991 there was no secondary school in Mareko-land. Subsequently for Mareko children the accessibility of secondary school education was determined by the economic potential of their family. So that students from well to do family, to whom basic consumption and other pre-conditions facilitated went far away from home to join secondary school at Ziway²⁶⁶. Due to this inaccessibility to continue their education beyond grade six most of Mareko students during this regime particularly who was from economically disabled family forced to disrupt their school age.

Generally the scope of the expansion of education in Mareko only addressed primary education only up to grade six and most students' hope to sustain and join the following class distorted by the absence of accessible secondary school. Consequently Mareko people like other rural population of the country denied the right and chance to educate their children in producing capable of problem solving generation for the important socio-economic transformation.

²⁶¹ Ahmed, p.77.

²⁶² *Ibid*, stated that the local people gave wood, stone, lime, and cement, as well as their labor. Informants; *Ato Wuletaw, Ato Takele, and Ato Tessema.*

²⁶³ Woubet, p.24: Informants; *Ato Hailu Gebre, Ato Wamisho Tefera, and Inspector Edemo.*

²⁶⁴ *Ibid*, Informants; *Ato Hailu Gebre, Ato Wamisho Tefera, and Inspector Edemo.*

²⁶⁵ Ahmedr, p.75: Informants; *Ato Hailu Gebre, Ato Wamisho Tefera, and Inspector Edemo.*

²⁶⁶ Informants; *Ato Hailu Gebre, Ato Wamisho Tefera, and Inspector Edemo.*

4.6.2 HEALTH SERVICE

Like other rural and backward population of Ethiopia the availability of accessible health post like clinic was out of the range and unimaginable in Marekoland during the period under the study. Until the collapse of this government in 1991, the only option of relatively nearest clinic was at Hamus Gebeya *kebele*²⁶⁷ which was found at the adjacent area of today Meskan district with Mareko district. However it had better accessibility for nearby Mareko inhabitants rather than who habitat at center or the opposite sides of the periphery particularly at southern, eastern, and western corner of the area. These who live in identified parts of livelihood had only one option which was Ziway which was the center Hykochina Butajira Sub-province. At ziway for Sub-province level there was one Health-center²⁶⁸ which alternatively provide health service for nearby Mareko people. Besides its farness and shortage of transportation most of Mareko people forced to conduct journey either by foot or horse to get health service.

Mareko people permanently lives in one of the area which affected by infectious disease like malaria, diarrheal disease and tuberculosis which was major causes of mortality.²⁶⁹ Due to this several death toll recorded as the result of absence of nearby health service center and/or shortage of transportation. Subsequently death rate increase among pregnant mothers and infants.

²⁶⁷ Edemo, p.70: Informants; Ato Hailu Gagoro, Teacher Getu Alemu, and Inspector Edemo.

²⁶⁸ A letter from Administrator of Shewa Sub-country to Mareko Wereda (district) Administration Office Butajira, reference No. 7898/13861, 1967, see the letter at Appendix D.

²⁶⁹ Yemane, p.715:Sintayhu Worku,p.12:Teklu Mulugeta, Socio-Economic, Environmental, and Behavioral Factors Associated with the Occurrence of Diarrheal Disease Among Under-Five Children, Meskanena Mareko Woreda, Southern Ethiopia, MA thesis, Department of Public Health, Addis Ababa University, 2003, p. 17.

CHAPTER 5

5. INTERACTION OF THE MAREKO PEOPLE WITH CHRISTIAN EMPIRE AND THEIR NEIGHBORS

5.1 INTERACTION WITH THE CHRISTIAN HIGHLAND

The available and discovered historical documents about Ethiopia and its people confirms how far different linguistic and cultural groups had have been living together despite their cultural, linguistic and psychological background for a time immemorial. Concerning this Taddesse Tamirat stated that;

Ever since its emergence into the annals of history Ethiopian society
Has been a rich conglomeration of different ethnic and linguistic
Communities. The references to 'red' and 'black' peoples in some of
The ancient inscriptions of Ethiopia have been variously interpreted.²⁷⁰

Moreover, there has been continued process of interaction and inter-connection among diverse peoples of Ethiopia all through their history.²⁷¹ Like every human history of interaction, a history of peoples interaction in Ethiopian attested by negative and positive or either negative of positive circumstance. These historical negative or positive interactions were the result of either the role of political leaders or people's desire to dominate one another socially, economically, or culturally.

One of the earliest indigenous documents, *Kebre Negest* recorded that the northern had fought against the people who lived in around Ziway and Hadiya.²⁷² The document described the positive and age-old interaction between the northern population with Hadiya (including part of Mareko who habitat in West of lack Ziway) and Ziway, and identify them as their historical enemy. As the explanation given by the document it would probably include part of Mareko People which has been living adjacent to west of Lake Ziway had negative interaction with the northern State even before this war which described on the document. The above negative interaction between part of Mareko people and the northern Christian rulers would be the result of political desire of the north to dominate the area where part of Mareko has been living with

²⁷⁰Taddese Tamirate, "Process of Ethnic Interaction and Integration in Ethiopian History: The Case of the Agew": *In the Journal of African History*, Vol 29, No 1, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p.5.

²⁷¹ Asebe Regassa, "Ethnicity and Inter-ethnic Relations: the 'Ethiopian Experiment' and the Case of Guji Gedeo," MA thesis, Tromso University, Norway, 2007, p.36: Donald Levine, *Greater Ethiopia: The Evolution of a Multiethnic Society*, Chicago University Press, 2000, p.40.

²⁷² Sergew Gelaw, Ed. *Kebre Negest (Glory of Kings)* Ethiopian language Studies and Research Center, Addis Ababa. 1994 (2001/2002) p.105.

other communities, and part of Mareko and other ethnic groups' desire and commitment to remain independence both politically and culturally.²⁷³

The process of expansion and conquest of Christian Kingdom intensified after King Amdä-Siyon(1314-44) took the throne. King Amdä-Siyon, to whom conquest and expansion pointed out as a prime occupation with special mission that he taught he would backed by his God, successfully defeated peoples and states which contended his territory.²⁷⁴ Correspondingly the first expanding and conquering mission of King Amdä-Siyon in 1316/17 concluded by integrating Hadiya into his elastic Kingdom after the resistance of Hadiya crushed.²⁷⁵ The expansion of the Christian Kingdom and the conquest of Hadiya (which included Mareko), here is different from the report on *Kebre Negest* due to the vanquished lost their independence and began to ruled by the former contending power. As part of Hadiya group, Mareko people for the first time would begin to introduce with a new socio-political system of their ruling cultural group mainly after they were incorporated for the second time around 1332.²⁷⁶

Besides such information on the above two sources, which describe the negative relation and focused on the political rivalry of the north-Christian Kingdom with the people habitat in the area under the study, other sources identify the area where Mareko people habitat as one among other important network of long distance trade through which highly demanded luxury items passed for export at the then ports, particularly connecting the mainland with Zeila²⁷⁷. Besides the economic and political interaction there would be social interaction between the frequent caravan traders and the local communities and societies in the area where the traders create social contact during their stay for different purposes.

Beyond more of based upon geographical facts, Mareko's interaction with northern Christian society and their culture literally reported by Tesfa Gebreyse particularly concerning the expansion of Orthodox Christianity among the Mareko people. The mission has credited for *Abune Zena Mareqos*, who was the family of the famous *Abune Tekle Hymanot* of Menz.

As discussed in chapter one, *Abune Zena Marqos* built probably the first church in Mareko around 1284 and named Marqos after him. It was habitual for the *Abune* who named three other churches after his name; these are Gädämä Zéna Marqos, Yäbäret Zéna Marqos, and Désa Zéna Marqos in Gurage region. As the first step in the process of Christianization of Mareko the

²⁷³ Alebachew and Samuel, p. 23, Lapiso G Delebo, 1983 (1990/91) *Ye ethiopia Rejim Ye Hezbena Mengest Tarik*, "A Long History of Ethiopian people and Government", Addis Ababa, p. and Gp, pp.139-40: Sergew Gelaw, p.105.

²⁷⁴ Tadesse Tamrat, "The Abbots of Däbrä-Hayq 1248-1535", in: *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, pp. 87-117, Vol. 8, No. 1 (January 1970), pp. 95-96: Tadesse Tamrat, *Church and State in Ethiopia 1270-1527*, Oxford, 1972, pp. 35-36.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid*

²⁷⁶ *Ibid*

²⁷⁷ Kassaye Begashaw, "The Archaeology of Islam in North East Shoa," In: *Proceedings of the 16th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, ed. by Svein Ege, Harald Aspen, Birhanu Teferra and Shiferaw Bekele, Trondheim, P.16. Stated that "the area around and within Lake Zway known by its ancient traces of Islamic activities." Mordechai Abir, p.9: Tadesse Tamrate, *Church and State...*, pp. 83-84.s

Abune destroy *Makosse* a cult worshipped by Mareko and the neighboring communities. It seems an attempt to show the power of Christianity over the identified cult. Moreover there is an argument which articulate the origin of the term “Mareko” from the ancient church named Marqos which built by *Abune Zena Marqos*.

Probably the advance of Christianity and Christian culture began to influence the area particularly after the arrival of Christian people later known as Zay on the islands of Lake Zeway. Buruk Woldemichael reported that these people arrived with their spiritual, cultural and material heritages in securing the Ark of the Covenant.²⁷⁸ Subsequently the arrivals attract the eyes of different Christian rulers, foreign and indigenous individual and even served as place of asylum to neighboring communities particularly during the Fascist era.²⁷⁹

Withstanding the negative interaction narrated in *Kebre Negest* medieval Christian rulers attempted to widen their relation with Hadyia Muslim Sultanate rulers and its population through newly choices better tie. It was calculated by Emperor Zárá Ya’eqob, who married Queen Elēni the daughter of one of the *garad* of Hadyia. Braukemper, Edemo Erego, and Alebachew and Samuel agreed upon the genealogical claim of the Mareko/Libido tradition that sets the renamed Queen Elēni as the daughter of Mehamed who also known as Bimaddo, the brother of *garad* Boyamo. The Mareko tradition remembered her as a sign of beauty and calls her qeneni baltate. Then she entitled honorary title known as Itē Jan Zela. As diversified origin of Mareko people one group traces their origin and sets *garad* Bimaddo also known as Mehamed (Bomed, as pronounced by Mareko) as their ancestral father.²⁸⁰

This political marriage was arranged by Emperor Zárá Ya’eqob to relax the tension and handle up the inconsistency loyalty of Hadyia rulers to whom the Christian emperors permitted religious freedom and autonomous rule until pay tribute. Even though the Hadyia *garads* were half-hearted to their overlords however they were not in position to withstand the mighty of Christian Emperors who conducted continuous punitive expeditions and crushed rebellion.²⁸¹

The golden opportunity to face their anti-Christian Emperors policy and over lordship came across the east. The leader of Adal Imam Ahmed met the *garad* of Hadiya for sake of military

²⁷⁸ Buruk Woldemicheal, “The History of the Monastery of Däbrä Seyon Mariyam in Lake Zeway to 1991”, History Department, Bahir Dar University, 2002, p.10.

²⁷⁹ Buruk, “The Lake Zeway Churches and Monastery, 1941-The Present”, MA Thesis, Department of History, Addis Ababa University, 2009, pp.32-33.

²⁸⁰ Braukämper, “The Correlation of Oral Traditions and Historical Records in Southern Ethiopia: A Case Study of the Hadiya/Sidamo Past”: in *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, pp. 29-50, Vol. 11, No. 2 (JULY 1973), p.44: Alebachew and Samuel, pp.31-32: Edemo, p. 5:Pankhurst, “Ethiopian Dynastic Marriage and The Bèta Esraèl (or Falashas)” in *Africa: Rivista trimestrale di studi e documentazione dell’Istituto italiano per l’Africae l’Oriente*, pp.445-454, Anno 52, No. 3, in *Africa: Rivista trimestrale di studi e documentazione dell’Istituto italiano per l’Africae l’Oriente*, pp.445-454, Anno 52, No. 3 (Settembre 1997), p.445.

²⁸¹ Braukämper, “The Correlation of...,” pp.39-40: Alebachew and Samuel, pp.23-31:

support. The *garad* narrated agony that his people and their fathers under the Christian Emperors. And it became the beginning of the end of the power of the north²⁸².

Due to the age-old relationship which developed with the northern society, in Mareko some customs imported. Due to the frequent military missions in the area to crush rebellious movements by the Christian rulers of the north played a major role for the introduction of military titles among them *Azmach* is one example. According to Herodotus the title *Asmach*, (pronounced as *Azmach* in Ethiopian language) first used in the military organization of ancient Egypt.²⁸³ Which given for soldiers who stands on the left side of the king. Correspondingly due to the age-old Ethio-Egyptian overall relation the title *Asmach* imported to Ethiopia and more or less pronounced as *Azmach* and used in military organization for war leaders. Regarding how the title import in Ethiopia Herodotus marked that since part of these revolted warrior class men “settled in the land of the Ethiopian,” the Ethiopians have come to be of milder manners, from having learnt the customs of the Egyptians.”²⁸⁴

Based on the above explanation given by Herodotus who visited Egypt, the title which used by Christian rulers to develop and strengthen the structure of their military capacity learnt in the area including Mareko area probably after the arrival of *Azmach* Sebhat in Aymalal around Sodo Gurage area the northern neighbors of Mareko. *Azmach* Sebhat was a military leader from Gura the present Eritrea with his army to accomplish mission of expansion by Emperor Amad Siyon around the first two decades of the 14th century²⁸⁵. However in the military structure of Mareko the title began to use probably after the integration into Menelik II Empire side by side with coexisted indigenous military and other titles.

Following the 16th century population movement which was caused by the war of Ahmed Ibrahim and also Oromo population movement, different ethnic and linguistic groups’ settled²⁸⁶ around the present habitat of Mareko people where the interaction with neighboring people increases its magnitude. The 16th century population movement and expansion brought new neighbors like Siltie people, and Oromo people. Moreover the Christian Empire and its interaction ended after Oromo population movement and expansion reduced the power of the north and aborted the former influence until Menelik II renewed after the centuries.

²⁸² Alebachew and Samuel, pp. 42-44

²⁸³ Herodotus, “An Account of Egypt”: in *The Project Gutenberg*, Translated by G.C Macaulay, April 2000, p.12.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid*

²⁸⁵ Taye Haile-Mariam (*Aleqa*), *Ye Ethiopia Hizeb Tarik (Abyssinian History)* Swedish Mission, Asmara, 1922, p.48: Phillip Lebel, p. 101: Tesfa Gebryese, pp.2-3.

²⁸⁶ Lاپسو, 1983 (1990/91) *Ye ethiopia Rejim Ye Hezbena Mengest Tarik*, “A Long History of Ethiopian people and Government”, Addis Ababa,p.and Gp.162, 163,Mehamed Tadesse, *Hazo: A Political History of the People in Gedebano, Gutazer, Welene and Agemjay Localities of the Gurageland-Ethiopia (to 1991 AD)* NP, 2009, p.20: Bahru Zewede, *Modern...*, p.8.

5.2 Interactions of the Mareko People with Hadyia People

Even though presently they did not shared territorial boundary Hadyia and Mareko people had cultural, religious, linguistic, and to some extent ancestral relation and interconnection. Most sources subsumed Mareko/Libido as “Hadyia proper.”

Regarding indigenous religion known as *Fandannane*, Alebachew and Samuel remarked that the religious process of *Fandannane* excluded all non-Hadyia ethnic groups and continued to identify the rank of followers of this religion among culturally related groups, Mareko/Libido ranked the second followed by two Hadyia sub-clans.²⁸⁷

Correspondingly some sources tell us intensity of similarity between Libixxan/Marekekigna (mareko language). For example Mehamed Tadesse numerically stated that “82% of vocabularies in Libido language are identical with Hadyia language”, and identify Libido language as dialect of Hadyia rather than independent language.

Grover Hudson also shared the idea of Mehamed, he strongly opposed the result of the 1994 census of Ethiopian Central Statistics Agency which sets Mareko language as independent language. He argues Mareko is a dialect of Hadyia language. Infected according to informants and my personal observation Hadyia man can communicate with Mareko man with their own language without interpreter.²⁸⁸

According to Tesfa Gebryse, Edemo Herego, and informants, as discussed in introduction part, part of Mareko people split during their journey from Sharka gedeb, and stayed at the present Hadyia people habitat. This group of the present Mareko people accustomed religion, language and other aspects of life Hadyia people during their stay until reunited after the 16th century population movement. Concerning the belongingness feeling my Hadyia informants acknowledge Mareko people as their part and kinsman; however the feeling among Marekos can be divided just like the different in origin identified by three Mareko groups. Among Mareko sub-clans the intermixing group during their stay at Hadyia-land feels that they belong to Hadyia, however neither the “Aneqa” group (pioneers) nor the first Libido settlers at present habitat feel Hadiyahood.²⁸⁹

5.3 INTERACTION OF THE MAREKO PEOPLE WITH THEIR NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES

Since 16th century Mareko people neighbored with Oromo people in east and northeastern direction, Sodo (Kestane) Gurage people in the north direction, Siltie people in the South, and Meskan Gurage people in the west direction. Then Mareko people and neighboring Oromo, Silte,

²⁸⁷ Alebachew and Samuel, p. 200: Braukämper, “The Correlation of Oral...” p.45, even describes garad Bimaddo (Mehamed) the ancestor of part of Mareko people as the introducer of the fandannano religion.

²⁸⁸ Informants: Ato Tamiru Kaltemo, Ato Takele Balcha, Inspector Edemo Kamelo

²⁸⁹ Informants: Inspector Edemo Kamilo, Imam Tuke Aelee, Ato Takle Balcha, Ato Tamiru Keltemo

Meskan-Gurage and Sodo-Gurage had regular interaction through population movements, inter-marriage, religious activities, and trade and continued to be among the causes that facilitate the society's interaction. Let see their interaction with Mareko people as follows.

5.3.1 Interaction of the Mareko people with Eastern and northeastern neighboring people Oromo

Mareko's eastern frontier is neighbored by Oromo of Arsi clan and northeasterly with Sodo Oromo. Their interaction would be begun during the early periods of Oromo population Movement and Expansion in the area where Mareko people habitat. During this early period of interaction Mareko people tries their best to resist Oromo's expansion over their territory which made fighting between them. However Mareko's were not in a position to withstand a new force which is numerically superior than them and defend their territory so that the Christian Highland Kingdom which had a province like Waj and Church in Lake Ziway, which was the neighbor of Mareko people sent a rescue army by the then Emperor Serse-Dengle and fought expanding Oromo's in 1565²⁹⁰ and temporarily saved the area from the influence of Oromo. However this victory over the expanding Oromo was nominal since the effort made by Mareko people who aimed at protecting the territory was meaningless even if they were simultaneously got indirect support from the Christian Highland Kingdom. Subsequently the Oromo expansion in the area witnessed the assimilation of some Mareko by Oromo of Arsi. The most commonly used system of assimilation known as *moggaasa* played a leading role in enhancing Oromo's advance even on the footholds of Rift Valley escarpment. Most of them are living around the hills of Rift Valley escarpment the road from Ziway (Batu) via Adamitulu town up to Bulbula town and Jedo Kombolcha where the genealogical traditions trace on Mareko forefathers.²⁹¹

Despite the end of Oromo population movement in the area and even after the incorporation into Menelik's Empire, Mareko continued being under the pressure of political institutions of the neighboring Oromo. Regarding this Ulrich Braukamper 1980:194 stated that "up to the early 1920's, the Mareko-Hadiyya [...] exposed to the alternative either of subjecting to the authority of the abba gada of the Oliye, neighboring Arsi clan, or to risk the eradication of their own group between the Oromo and Gurage cluster."²⁹²

Besides the Oromo's pursuit of political preponderance over enclaves and also neighboring Mareko communities, sometimes occasional conflicts have been occurred between them

²⁹⁰ Getachew Haile, *Yeabba Bahriy Dirsetoch ena leloch Oromone Kememelektu Senedoch ga, (The Works of Abba Bahriy with Other Documents concerning the Oromo)* Minnesota, 2002, p.84. See also the foot note in the same page.

²⁹¹ Braukamper, "Islamic Principalities..." p.68; Jemila Adem, "Women and Indigenous Conflict Resolution Institutes in Oromia: Experience From Siinqee of the Wayyu Shanan Arsi Oromo in Adami Tullu Jiddu Kombolcha District of the Oromia National Regional State," MA thesis, Addis Ababa University School of Graduate Studies, Department of Social Anthropology, 2014, p.34; Vinson, *Struggle for...* p. 35; Informants: *Obbo* Abdulfeta Ababora and *Obbo* Merjano Odda.

²⁹² Braukamper, "Islamic Principalities..." p.68.

particularly over the scarce resources. In relation to the conflict situation in the contested area, competition and conflicts have been appeared since both had been mainly engaged in animal husbandry economic activity conflict was unavoidable over water and grazing land. The scarcity of water for their cattle particularly in dry seasons made both communities compete to control the available water sources.²⁹³

The Oromo population Movement and Expansion brought about two new political developments in the area in particular on Mareko people and their frontier, firstly the Oromo expansion reduced the size of Mareko's territory by assimilating and diminish the former frontier by pushing the people to the present location, secondly, it exhausted the Christian Highland Kings by whom Mareko people occasionally under political influence and, thirdly it disintegrated Muslim Sultanate of Hadiya in which Mareko belongs.²⁹⁴ These new developments led to the beginning and formation of new political administration over their relatively secured sovereignty which led by clan representative entitled *welab Gerad* who had political authority over Mareko people which check and balance with clan representatives.²⁹⁵

Notwithstanding to resist their frontier and cultural identity mainly the eastern periphery of habitat just west of Lake Ziway, rather they tried to play with every positive opportunities when the ball rolls. Through time and with the formation of centralized government an existing interaction relatively managed both by Imperial and the Military government. In decelerating an already erupted conflict the traditional conflict resolution *ragga* among Mareko and its counterpart *jarsumma* (council of elder) played a remarkable role.²⁹⁶

As an inevitable aspect of a social reality, negative interaction went side by side with positive interaction. And besides interaction, integration of Oromo people among Mareko people is common particularly in Marekoland. The positive interaction between the people can be identified as linguistic, social and economical. Socially they were interacted in which they were intermixed with marriage and tied with different cultural aspects. The neighboring Oromo's has visits weekly market centers in Koshe particularly Koshe market and utilize different social and economic sects. Among social services health center at Ziway the administrative center of Shawa Sub-province was among frequently visited public service areas mainly by adjacent habitat Mareko's to whom it was nearer than Hamus-Gebeya clinic which found under Meskanena mareko wereda until the end of the Derg regime.²⁹⁷

²⁹³ Sintayhu, p.15.

²⁹⁴ Braukamper, "Islamic Principalities..." p.67 stated that, the Hadiyya, who kept their ethnic identity in the region between Lake Zway and the upper Gibe, are only remnants of a formerly much larger ethnic complex: Alebachew and Samuel, pp. 61-63: Taggese, p.7.

²⁹⁵ Edemo, p. 57: Sintayhu, p.5.

²⁹⁶ Informants: Haji Jateno, Imam Tuke, and Dergu.

²⁹⁷ Ibid: Edemo, p.70.

There is linguistic affiliation and other related intermixing has been common in Mareko language known as Libixxain or marekegna from Oromo language *Afan Oromo*.²⁹⁸ The number of using Oromo personal names mainly, among males increase along the periphery of Mareko. In regarding language most Mareko people are bilingual speak Amharic and other neighboring languages.²⁹⁹ Among these second languages *Afan Oromo* said to use as language of transaction at Koshe weekly market and frequently speaks not only by integrated one but also economically and socially interacted nearby Oromos.

Moreover there is some similarity between the name of Bidara *Kebele* and Ilala *Kebele* of Mareko *Wereda* with the word *Ilala* and *Bidaro*³⁰⁰ which identified by Abba Bahriy in his work about the origin and expansion of Oromo, according to some writers the meaning of Ilala and Bidaro has not clear. However these similar words were used by Mareko people to naming two *Kebeles* which found near to the eastern frontier of Mareko *Wereda* territory with Oromia Region. According to Mareko informants the term “Ilala” and “Bidaro/Bidara” are not the word of Mareko language, rather they are the words of Oromo language which has a meaning of “see” and “hill” respectively³⁰¹. These informants believed that these areas were formerly under the hand of the neighbouring Oromos until they retreated back. The landscape evidence justifies that Ilala qebele which sub-divided into Ilala-Gereno and Ilala-Gebiba has a plain surface where movement can easily detect by the naked eye. It is just a neighbor of a new Town of named Qobbo Imanoo under Oromya regional state. Bidara *qebele* also has a hilly landscape feature which has a chained mountain of natural boundary separating Mareko territory with Oromiya regional state³⁰². According to Getachew Haile explanation these terms had a probability to describe the landscape of the area where the Oromo expansionists fight against the Christian Highlanders in 1565.

Admitting the philological evidence and the landscape which suits with identified words, both Ilala and Bidara/Bidaro kebeles’ probably the area which described as “at Zway” would be there where the identified battle field between the Christian Highlanders and the Oromo’s during their expansion.

5.3.2 Mareko people interaction with their southern neighboring Selt’e people

Mareko people’s western frontier intersected by Siltie people who have been living in two *Weredas* of Siltie Zone, namely Lanfaro and Seltie. Mareko people interaction with Siltie people is an age-old and can be pronounced both positively and negatively. The interaction of this ethnic groups began just after the arrival of *Hajji* Aliye, the founder of Siltie nation to whom the people

²⁹⁸ Informants: Haji Jateno, Imam Tuke, and Ato Lile.

²⁹⁹ Dergu, p.21.

³⁰⁰ Getachew, p.84.

³⁰¹ Informants: Teacher Getu, Teacher Gezachew Abseat and Teacher Nemacha Alemu.

³⁰² It is my personal observation to look the landscape of these kebeles’ to verify the name and landscape feature of these areas conducted during my field work.

trace origin. According to some available written sources and oral tradition of the people “the area (Mareko-land and Butajira) was under the influence of Mareko people” when *Hajji Aliye* arrived for conducting missionary activity.³⁰³ Positively the result of their continuous interaction made intermixing among these ethnic groups through marriage and other social, cultural and economic aspects.

Marriage link between those neighborhoods, Mareko and Silte were certainly common throughout their history in this habitat.³⁰⁴ Among the most important age-old marriages between Mareko people and neighboring Silte people, notable one will be the marriage between Futo Mareko women and a man named *garad Abeke* who arrived in Mareko locality. This marriage becomes historical after the couple begot several children and brought a new clan, Futo for Mareko ethnic group, mainly habitat in *Enseno kebele* of the present *Meskan Wereda*.³⁰⁵ This marriage tied Mareko people with neighboring Siltie.

Economically Mareko’s weekly market at Koshe visited by neighboring Siltie people particularly who habitat in the present *Lanfaro Woreda* and *Silte Woreda*, and Mareko people’s also did the same. Most of these transactions particularly Siltie merchants at Koshe market focused on market oriented cash crops like pepper (*berbre*), since Mareko *berbre* red pepper has high demand throughout the country.³⁰⁶

Socially, visiting Mareko land and neighboring Siltie localities by traditional religious followers to celebrate monthly and seasonal ritual ceremonies like *ware* and *neqa* the ceremony headed by women’s. Those ceremonies celebrated by Muslims as syncretism which opposed by strict Muslims of the area as *shirk* which is a Arabic word means “share”.³⁰⁷

Mareko people’s interaction with the neighboring Siltie people resulted in the introduction of new traditional military titles. Among these traditional military titles for different ranks like *abegaja* or *abegaz*, first introduced and used by Mareko locally heroic military leaders namely *Abegaz Wangoro* and *Abegaz Sabicho*, to whom it bestowed after their military support in the side of Siltie’s who live in *Ulbarge* locality when their territory was invaded by neighboring Oromo.³⁰⁸ The then *Ulbarge* locality chief send military help from these Mareko war leaders against invading Oromo’s and the invites’ arrived with their cavalry force in supporting neighboring Siltie people after the end of the war they back home with new military titles. After

³⁰³ Dinberu et al.P.55.

³⁰⁴ Keyrdin Tezera, *Serra: YE Silti hizeb Tark behalena quanqwa (Ke 886-1993)* (Seerra: Siltie People’s history, Culture and Language) (from 886-1993) Eclipse Printing Press, Addis Ababa, (Amharic) 2012, pp.158-160.: Braukamper, “Islamic Principalities ...” P.67: Tesfa, p.15.

³⁰⁵ Keyrdin, p.159.

³⁰⁶ Informants; Inspector Edemo, *Ato Buba*, and *Ato Lile*.

³⁰⁷ Informants; *AtoNune*, *Ato Lile*, *Imam Tuke*.

³⁰⁸ Edemo, p. 84: Informants; *Ato Nune*, *Ato Lele*, and *Imam Tuke*.

the introduction of these titles Mareko people used them for local war heroes and hunters of big game animals like lion and tiger.³⁰⁹

There is linguistic affiliation in Libixxian or Marekegna, (the Mareko language) and Siltigna (the Siltie language). Among Ethiopian Semitic language, the Gurage language shared some words with Cushatic languages. Siltie language which categorized under east Gurage language used some words from Libedo Mareko language, for instance Dembru Alemu and et al stated that “the Siltie word ‘*jira*’ which means ‘fire,’ originated from Mareko word ‘*gira*’ means ‘fire’”³¹⁰

Despite their positive interaction with neighboring Siltie people, Mareko people had pass some negative interactions. Concerning this Kairedin Tezera remarked that “the Siltie communities were in conflict and at times at war with their neighboring groups such as Mareko, peoples”³¹¹ The main cause for their negative interaction had a deep rooted territorial rivalry over fertile land, water sources.

As identified by Daniel Mekonnen the most significant sources of the former border conflicts between these two ethnic groups’ “economic issues, poor governance, and cattle rustling had frequently engaged them in to conflict.”³¹² These an existing basic causes escalated at the eve of Menelik’s conquest and grow up after the new land measurement known as *qalad* made on the land of Mareko which subsequently created shortage of land in Mareko land. Another period for the growing up of conflict among these two neighborhoods was the Italian occupation period in which the Fascist –Italian officials used such conflicts as an opportunity for their divide and rule policy. Instead of land issues the culture of cattle ride which considered as quality of daring among Mareko people brought occasional conflict among the neighboring Siltie people and Mareko.

At the eve of third decades of the 20th century, the former rivalry and skirmish around the adjacent territories of the Mareko people and their neighbors Sileti people over fertile land, most of the time concluded by war. Even though neighboring Sileti people claim over lands which habitat by Mareko people had century aged, the claim grew in to rivalry and erupted after their incorporation in to Menelik’s Empire.³¹³ More over it was exacerbated during the Italo-Ethiopian war of 1935-36 and became serious after Italian fascist officials of the area knowingly remained silent rather than stop the war by calculating the occasion for the land based ethnic conflict of the area, since it calculated as means of dissolving unity of the subject people.

³⁰⁹ Informants; *Ato Jebesso, Ato Takle, and Ato Qoricha.*

³¹⁰ Dinberu et al. P.262.

³¹¹ Kairedin Tezera, *Serra: Siltie People’s history, Culture and Language (from 886-1993)* Eclipse Printing Press, Addis Ababa, (Amharic) 2012, p.66.

³¹² Daniel Mekonnen, “Managing...” p. 70.

³¹³ Kairedin, p.66; Markakis John. ‘The Politics of Identity: The case of the Gurage in Ethiopia’: In *M.A. Mohammed and J. Markakis, (eds.) Ethnicity and the State in Eastern Africa, pp.127-146*, Nordiska Afrikanistitut, Uppsala, 1998, p.132; Tesfa, p.16.

Among these conflicts the 1935 and 1936 wars were the notables when neighboring Sileti's wage war in controlling Dugeo and Goflala localities in which majority Mareko's habitat. These conflicts' broke out contemporarily to Italian invasion in which the Imperial and provincial officials were busy in organizing and leading different war fronts against anti colonial and anti fascist force. The remaining newly appointees some of them were new for office and most of them have clan based rivalry over land lording between Imperial verified Meddore ruling clan and Shebo clan.

Due to these smooth political administration in the area force of neighboring Sileti people which supported human material by adjacent Meskan Gurage, who had irredentist question like Sileti's marches against Mareko people who live in Duggo locality in 1935 under the leadership of known Sileti fighters namely Ermora and Befella, and Meskan Gurage force Abegaz Bameda. Mareko people inhabitants of Duggo under the leadership of local chief named Halelo Sodoma carefully wait the advanced army combated.³¹⁴ Initially the invaders were at the position of dominating the battle but at the end Mareko localities that have numerical superiority and fight on their land defeated the force of neighboring Sileti people who have Meskan Gurage support. The result of the war heralded the death of *Abegaz* Bameda, leader of Meskan Gurage force and, death and casualties were increase among Siltei and Meskan Gurage.³¹⁵

The neighboring Silti people aimed at revenging the 1935 war re-organized and invaded other localities called Goflala in 1936 in which they lost their proposed plan.³¹⁶ Death and casualties were more or leases equal both sides. The local chief who led Mareko's force namely Halelo Sodam who wounded during the course of the war died after he admitted several days at his home.

After these war ended elders of both ethnic groups solved land issue which was basic cause of the war and tension relaxed through *ragga* a traditional dispute mechanism among Mareko people and Sileti People, consequently former positive relation around frontiers back.

The Imperial era and its feudal social system sometimes opened the way for conflicting factors. The collapse of Haile Selassie regime brought relatively better socio economic opportunity for both communities. Subsequently these economic and social changes minimize the degree of conflict and positive interaction, and simultaneously the chance for positive interaction boosted during the Military regime.

³¹⁴Daniel Mekonen, "Managing..." p.70. Daniel identified competition over resources like grazing land and water as a fundamental causes for border conflict between Mareko and neighbouring Siltie people.: Edemo.p.43: Tesfa, p. 16.he stated that there was continuous boundary conflict and war between Mareko and neighboring Siltie due to the sake of fertile land mainly over adjacent areas.

³¹⁵ Edemo, p. 43: Informants; W/ro Ayegude, *Ato* Beraso Metiro, and *Ato* Lemado.

³¹⁶ *Ibid* and Informants: Imam Oddo, Imam Tuke and Hajji Jateno.

5.3.3 Interaction of the Mareko people with the Meskan-Gurage people

The western frontier of Mareko-land neighbored by Meskan Gurage who separated from their cultural groups, Sebat-Bet Gurage by mountain ring named Zebidar. Like Siltei people of the area, Meskan Gurage interacted with Mareko people through different cultural, social and economic aspects of life including marriages.

Mareko people economic activity had been dominated by keeping of animals almost just like pastoralist until farming became alternative economic activity which widely used after farming technique introduced as a result of age-old interaction and influence of neighboring Gurage people. More over mixed economy particularly farming brought technique of building better house than their former pastoralist house uncovered wood wall and unsafe roof replaced by traditional house of rural Ethiopians known as *gojjo* made of wood and mud wall, and grass roofed which efficiently protect cold, wind, rain and warm temperature after they learnt from neighboring Gurage people as a result of interaction.³¹⁷

The positive interaction among these people has been greater than negative one which manifested in occasional conflict which mainly bases on land issue tensions grow and led to serious of war. Among these conflicts Meskan Gurage irredentists tried to fulfill their question and control fertile land where Mareko neighboring people live through war. Meskan Gurage who waits an opportunity to their age-long demand invaded Mareko land by collaborate with Sileti people who numerically greater than them. However, after their attempt failed with gun and spear the condition of conflict became volatile. Consequently the positive interaction of these ethnic groups who visited nearby weekly markets and other social services more or lease back to normal circumstance specially after the evacuation of Italian colonialist and the emperor retake his throne through which brought relative peace and stability in the area. Since Italian fascist administration established camp in Butajira which exacerbate ethnic conflict through their divide and rule policy the area which was named Mareko Wereda (district) was epicenter of ethnic conflict among Mareko, Meskan Gurage, Silti and Kestane (Sodo) Gurage.³¹⁸ The positive interaction gives relief for both ethnic groups until the beginning of 1954 as the result of elder's effort to solve the problem through *Ragga* traditional dispute mechanism and effective administration of feudal political structure. However at the end of 1954 conflict broke out between Meskan and Mareko ethnic groups which was different from former conflicts due to two reasons; firstly it was broke out during the existence of relative stability in the area, and secondly the conflict rise from the side of Mareko people. The war began after a local man named

³¹⁷ Edemo, p. 74: Informants; *Abegaz Nunese, Ato Tolossa Bakiso, and Ato Ekemo Goneboro.*

³¹⁸ Edemo, pp. 42-45: Tesfa, p. 111, identified the war between Sodo-Gurage youths and Mareko communities at the mainland of Mareko on the eve of Italian occupation in the area: Sintayhu Worku, p.15. Marked that in the period between 1936-41 Mareko people were in the full scale boundary conflict with their neighboring people like Meskan-Gurage, Siltie, and Oromo.

Lemecha Debo and his followers in demanding to evacuate integrated neighboring Meskan Gurages from Bammo area around a small town called Hamus Gedyā.³¹⁹

Accordingly local Mareko youths under a direct command of their ring leader, Lemecha to whom growing population of Meskan Gurage in that locality created fear of domination and will lose their land and political right over their fathers land designed how to evacuate integrated Meskan Gurage neighbors. Tactic used by Lemecha and his followers applied in 1954 it was making fear on the integrated by looting cattle and evacuate them to their home land.³²⁰ This action led to a serious of conflict when integrated Meskan Gurage organized and well defended their property through counter attack after some cattle raided. The conflict become ethnic war after neighboring Meskan Gurage engaged to support their kinsmen by crossing the border. This war is known as Lemecha's war after its ring leader. Lemecha and his followers armed the then weapons regarded themselves undisputable by undermining integrated ones until they were chased from Bammo locality both by Meskan Gurage and local chief.³²¹

At the end of Lemecha's war death and other consequences of the war like, woundeds both sides produced in addition to property destruction and cattle ride from Meskan Gurage. Tension in Bammo locality only relaxed after Meskan Gurage victims appeal the case to *fitwrari* Fisha Welde-Michael the then provincial administrator of Meskan and Mareko *Wereda* (district) who decides verdict on Mareko and as punishment sentenced to pay compensation to Meskan victims who lost their life, casualties and destructed properties and lost their cattle.³²²

Lemecha's war which concluded with bloodshed created gap between two ethnic groups formerly integrated and live in relative harmony until local elders organized from both sides and meet to refresh former positive peaceful interaction through traditional dispute solving mechanism. Even though Lemecha and his followers accused by Provincial administrator he is remembered Mareko people generation as a hero with several heroic songs by cattle keepers of Mareko and these songs known and even sing in the area by contemporary individuals in Butajira town.³²³ Among those songs the most widely known and which able to describe the cause of the ethnic conflict will be present as follows;

መስቃኖች ቢበዙም በዲዳዎ ጊቻ ሁለት
ልጆች አሉን ዘውዱ እና ለሜቻ ::³²⁴

The above song would be translated as follows;

Even though the Meskan populated at Dida

³¹⁹ Informants; Kebede, *Ato* Wuletaw, and *Ato* Yebase.

³²⁰ Informants; Kebede, *Ato* Wuletaw, and *Ato* Yebase.

³²¹ *Ibid*

³²² Informants; *Ato* Wuletaw, and Kebede: Edemo, pp. 44-45.

³²³ Informants; *Ato* Wuletaw, *Ato* Tessema, and *Ato* Wechiso.

³²⁴ Informants; Teacher Demeke Ambessa, and Teacher Mulugata Jateno.

We have two childrens Zewdu and Lecmecha

Since the separation of meskanena mareko wereda that conflicting locality demarcated under Meskan *Wereda* (district).

The coming of the Military government into power played its role in managing border conflicts by giving an opportunity to the implementation of traditional conflict resolution mechanism. And more or less throughout the Derg regime negative interactions reduced³²⁵. However the former positive interactions continued between the two communities.

5.3.4 Mareko people interaction with their northern neighboring Sodo (Kestane) Gurage people

Northern frontier of Mareko-land is neighbored by Sodo (Kestane) Gurage people with them Mareko people had have been living for centuries. Like other neighboring ethnic and linguistic groups, Sodo Gurage people developed cultural, economic and social ties even before Imperial conquest verify former traditionally demarcated boundaries.

Marriage among these ethnic groups had have been common. They visit weekly markets in both localities for transaction. Particularly, Koshe weekly market visited by neighboring Sodo Gurage people who buy and/or sell agricultural products like dairy products and different homemade crafts, animals, cereal crops. Socially neighboring Sodo Gurage people had tied through several social institutions with Mareko people particularly with adjacent localities. Among those social institutions a traditional banking system known as *Iqub* has had a very important role in the development of positive relation between these neighboring people. Besides *Iqub*, *Idir* also played its own constructive role in the existence of positive relation and minimizing occasionally happened conflicts.³²⁶

Despite their positive interaction there were conflicts particularly around the adjacent areas among localities. The cause for occasional conflicts can be stated as search of fertile land by Sodo Gurage in the expanse of Mareko towards Mareko-land and cattle riding were mainly practiced by Mareko men as expression of daring traditionally among the then youth.³²⁷ However serious of conflict which grew in to war which traced its immediate cause to a 1935 sudden looting and ill-treatment by Sodo Gurage youths on Kembata and Mareko fighters who had in a way returning home after the unsuccessful Makele and Maychew battles of 1936 against Fascist Italian Colonialists.³²⁸ This unlawful act of Sodo youth's discouraged by the father's of these

³²⁵Informants; Teacher Demeke Ambessa, and Teacher Mulugata.

³²⁶Informants; Kebede, Inspector Edemo, and Ato Lemado Gobebo.

³²⁷Bahru, "System of Local Governance among the Gurage; the Yajoka Qicha and the Gordenna Sera": In *The Challenge of Democracy from Below*. Ed by Bahru Zewde and Siegfried Pausewang, Nordiska Afrikanstitute, Uppsala and Forum for Social Studies, Addis Ababa, 2002, p.21. He remarked that, Kistane Gurages strengthen their internal defense to defend external aggression from neighboring Hadiya and Mareko.

³²⁸ Tesfa, p. 111; Edemo, pp. 43-44.

outlaws. Mareko people informed the happening in Sodo over their war veterans after remnants of the conflict escaped and arrived in Koshe qebele. The then governor of Dobenna sub-district *Qegnazmach* Tujji Anjilo at his office in Koshe *qebele* received exhausted soldiers well treated and safely sent Kembata soldier's to their home land.³²⁹ Mareko people who proposed to revenge what happened over their veterans summoned elders among Sodo people's living around Dugda locality in bordering area of Mareko land to present the case in solving correlation through *ragga* a traditional dispute solving mechanism among Mareko people and/or its counterpart *Gordena* of Sodo people.³³⁰ Mareko elder's who designed how and when began to attack in due course of negotiation killed with hidden sword most of Sodo unequipped elders. This act of intentional revenge reached its climax and Sodo youths who better armed with gun organized and penetrated deep in to Mareko-land as far as Koshe town and fighting takes place at a place between Koshe town and Uddassa *kebele* in May 5, 1936.³³¹ The conflict was sever mainly Mareko people relatively ill-equipped fired by armed Sodo youths. Consequently some local chiefs of Mareko with their fighting group exiled in to Halaba area and became asylum after accepted by Chief of Halaba named Shedon until *Qegnazmach* Tujji Anjjilo governor of *Dobena sub-district at Koshe qebele* returned from exile after liberation in 1941.³³²

After the liberation of Ethiopia and the Emperor retake his throne the area which became battlefield among ethnic groups fall under strict supervision under higher military officials besides solving the former conflict through traditional dispute solving mechanisms.

The collapse of the Haile selassie government and the coming of Military government in power reduced the former border conflicts and the existence of other negative interaction between the two communities.³³³ This situation paved the way to allocate the positive interaction until the end of the Derg regime.

5.4 MINORITY GROUPS IN MAREKO AND THEIR RELATION WITH THE NEIGHBORING PEOPLE

In Ethiopia there are minority groups living with integration in most of ethno cultural groups. For most cases the base for casted groups mainly associated with their occupation. The major sect of occupation is handcraft to which pottery and tannery skilled groups particularly victim of isolation and discrimination.

The area around Lake Zway and its west as far as Gurage-land described as one of the ancient area of settlement where the supposed pioneers dominated in most part of life by the late arrivals. More over them faced several types of discrimination. Regarding this Ketebo Abdiyo explored us about the existence of social discrimination against *watta* and *cawwa* groups of occupational

³²⁹ *Ibid*

³³⁰ Informants; Inspector Edemo, Kebede

³³¹ Edemo, p. 44: Tesfa, p. 111.

³³² *Ibid*

³³³ Informants; *Ato* Hailu Gagoro, *Ato* Nune, and *Ato* Qoricha.

minorities.³³⁴ Concerning the origin of *watta* Buruk Woldemichael remarked that their life was directly associated with Lake Zeway which made them maritime experts when the first part of Christian immigrants from northern part of Ethiopia arrived on islands of the Lake.³³⁵

Gurage-land, which shares most Mareko frontier, experienced the existence of caste groups collectively known as “*fuga*”, who are handcraft experts but remained as occupational minorities³³⁶ and like other societies here also marriage between Fuga and Gurage is forbidden.³³⁷

Like neighboring areas, in Mareko also there are minorities assumed as caste due to their ancestry to occupational specialization groups which was tanner.³³⁸ They are known as Kontoma and the local communities has a derogatory term for them called “*faqi*” (the name given for tanners), but they does not used it publicly.³³⁹ Part of “Kontoma” lives in neighboring Meskan *wereda*. They change former hereditary occupational field and only economically integrated with Mareko ethnic groups and other integrated ethnic groups in Enseno town of Meskan *wereda* bordering of Mareko *wereda*. However like other communities, Mareko people pay more attention to inherited status than achieved status and what so ever economic, academic and religious status, Mareko culture strongly banned marriage with “Kontoma.”³⁴⁰

There is controversial usage for the meaning of the term “Kontoma” by authors who studied the area. Alebachew and Samuel, and Edemo marked that the term “Kontoma” in the tongue of Hadiya and Mareko “*Kontomichcho*” is a title with other traditional titles.³⁴¹ And Demberu and et al reported that “Imam Kontem” is a title which given among Sielti people.³⁴² Correspondingly, they stated that “Kontoma” or *Kontomichcho* is a title given to brave men. Moreover other groups by this name live in Kembata Zone, where they regarded as caste groups whose hereditary occupational specialization was tanning and there is change of parent’s occupation results in grave and intolerable social shame and exclusion.³⁴³

Phillip LeBel, and Wolf Leslau as cited in Denberu et al. admitted that fuga’s who live in Gurage-land would be the first settlers in the area since they have approaching behavioral

³³⁴ Ketebo, p.13.

³³⁵ Buruk, “The History of the Monastery...”, p.9.

³³⁶ Phillip Lebel, p.95: Dinberu Alemu et al. P.26, 106, 107, William A. Shack, The Gurage: A People of the Ensete Culture, London New York Nairobi, 1966, pp.8-9: Teclhaimanot Gebrwselassie, “The Low-Caste Fuga Occupational Group under the Italian Administration in the Horn of Africa”: in Northeast Africa Studies, New Series, Vol. 10, No. 3, pp. 33-44, The Horn of Africa between History, Law, and Politics, Michigan State University Press, 2014, p.41.

³³⁷ Shack, p.9. Tesfa, P. 27.

³³⁸ Teclhaimanot Gebrwselassie, p. 41. Stated that, in Mareko there were Fuga communities: Dinberu Alemu et al. P.107. Informants: Inspector Edemo, Wegene Belachew, Genet Eremecho.

³³⁹ Informants: *Ibid*

³⁴⁰ *Ibid*

³⁴¹ Alebachew and Samuel, p. 246: Edemo, p. 75, 79.

³⁴² Dinberu et al. P. 125.

³⁴³ Data Dea, Berihu Desta, and Alemu Tafese, “Aze Debo’a: Kembata”: in *Ethiopia Village Studies*, Eds. By Philippa Bevan and Alula Pankhurst, p. 29.

similarity with the first east African inhabitants.³⁴⁴The “Kontoma” communities would be among the earliest inhabitants of the area which was known as Kontem Hadiya before it renamed as Mareko.³⁴⁵ Majority of “Kontoma” communities living in Mareko are followers of Protestant religion.³⁴⁶

Even though it is out of our scope of the study, recently there is division among “Kontoma” communities, mainly who live in Mareko *wereda* concerning their identity. Regardless of their some total homogeneity, on question of identity they divided into two; one group admitted their community as part of Mareko ethnic group, and the other went for separate identity recognition.³⁴⁷

Either due to the above segregation and social stigma or truly quest for identity, part of “kontoma” community advocated that they do not belongs the to Mareko ethnic group rather they have their own separate identity and recently present their petition for House of Federation for recognition as independent identity.³⁴⁸ However, the House of Federation dropped their quest and as a solution ordered the concerned body mainly Mareko *wereda* government to integrate and participate them in government positions.

³⁴⁴ Lebel, p. 95: Dinberu et al.107.

³⁴⁵ Tesfa, p. 15.

³⁴⁶ Informants: Edemo Kamilo, Lile Odo, and Tuke .

³⁴⁷ *Ibid*

³⁴⁸ *Ibid*, in June 2015/16 Ethiopian Broadcast Corporation on its News hour presented that the House of Federation dropped the question of Kontoma communities who live in Mareko *wereda* because they have no their own language and different culture which cited as criteria. As the same time the HoF gave recognition for Kement community living in Amhara Regional State at Gonder.

Conclusion

Historians neglected writing a history of Mareko people due to several reasons. Among these factors the attitude of indigenous and foreign writers would be important to notice. Many subsumed Mareko people under Hadiya ethnic group and categorized them as one clan of the Hadiya. Notwithstanding, the membership of Mareko people in the Medieval Muslim Sultanate of Hadiya as population until the 16th century which marked its disintegration when they shared common culture, history, religion and language. However from the 16th century onwards Mareko people despite of different origin and identity made common new identity and pass their own historical experiences both due to internal and external developments.

After the disintegration of Hadiya Sultanate in the 16th century until the incorporation into Menelik's empire, the Mareko people mostly formed clan based chiefdom led by *welb gerad* and sometimes lived as stateless societies formed war time unity. On the eve of Menelik II's expansion and incorporation campaign towards Gurage-land, the Mareko people's war time unity was hated due to clan competition over leadership in the area. This created favorable condition for King Meneilk II to incorporate them. The incorporation brought both negative and positive consequences on the former socio economic and political life of the Mareko people. Among them, the land expropriation and the introduction of modern institutions had played a major role in the later socio economic and political development of the people.

The reign of Menelik II hadnot totally excluded the former clanship system of government in Mareko. Rather, it transfer the peacefully submitted clan leaders into northern form of loyalty known as *balabbat*. Subsequently, Burqamo and his family from Medore clan recognized as *balabbat* until the end of Emperor Haile Selassie regime in 1974.

The reign of Emperor Haile Selassie I and its imperial government followed the former socio-economic and political system in Mareko until the post-liberation period. The brief Occupation of Italy disrupted the former socio economic and political system of the country. The people of Mareko also experienced both negative and positive developments both internally and externally. Besides the legacy of the establishing of Koshe town, the Italians are notoriously remembered for their mismanagement in handling border and ethnic conflicts in Mareko district.

Post-liberation era witnessed the socio-economic and political changes in the life of Marko people. The political change had its background mainly the collaboration of *Dejazmach* Debo Agebo, the governor of Mareko who discharged and Mulunh Biru from Menz replace him. Economically the 1950s witnessed high magnitude of the land grabbing in which patriots and government officials were rewarded land at the expense of the Mareko people who were transformed them into tenant. However, few indigenous Mareko *balabbats*' shared for their role in facilitating the government system. The imperial government played its role in the expanding the coverage of development works, based on the 1942 plan. Subsequently some development

works covered the habitat of Mareko people and benefited the people even though it was very late and also a few.

The end of the reign of Emperor Haile Selasse heralded the separation of the former exploitive and oppressive feudal relations throughout the country. However, like other areas where land owners and socio-economic beneficiaries opposed the change of the regime among the Mareko land owners dissatisfied by the collapse of the Imperial regime following the land reform made by the new government.

The new military government came up with revolutionary reforms which aimed at changing the former socio economic and political system. The reform introduced in 1975 as a decree. Among these changes the reform made on the land satisfied the majority of Mareko people. However its implementation program faced several problems mainly by the former land owners' direct and indirect interference. Like other peoples of Ethiopia, Mareko people also benefited from the reforms made by the Military government known as Derge. The development works began to engulf the habitat of Mareko and sought relative change in its coverage. Mainly the campaign to the expansion of education among the mass changes the former level of literacy in the area. Politically from the grass root level up to the *beherawi Shengo* (judicial tribune) Mareko people represented by their own elected members. However the short comings of the regime negatively affect the economic, social and political life of the people under the study.

The history of interaction of Mareko people with their neighboring communities and the Christian highland Kingdom is age-old, in which both negative and positive effects deserved on the social, economic, political and cultural experience of the people under the study. Mareko people's interaction with the Christian Highland Kings first recorded in *Kebre negest*, in which only the negative interaction of the period explained. However, the 15th century kings of the Christian Highland Kingdom began to relax such relation particularly through marriage, in which Emperor Zare Yacob married the daughter of Mareko's *gerad*. The interaction and relation of Mareko with Hadiya is long and different from other neighboring due to linguistic affinity and also partly identical ethnic background. Besides the above interactions, Mareko people had experienced both negative and positive interactions with the neighboring Oromo, Gurage, and Silte people. These communities shared frontiers' with Mareko in different direction. Mareko people tied economically and socially spheres' of life with these neighbors. There is also linguistic and cultural diffusion here and there. Besides the above positive interactions Mareko people experienced negative interactions with these neighboring communities. Most of these negative interactions originated from the existence of economic and social competitions.

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List of Informants

No	Name of informant	Age	Date of interview	Place of interview	Remarks
1	Abeba Bezabhe (W/ro)		2/5/16	Butajira	She is daughter of <i>Ato</i> Bezabhe Agune, worker of Mareko <i>Awraja gemija</i> bet (treasury) just its establishment. Who conducted Italian resistance movement until he captured and imprisoned in Mogadishu, Somalia during the Italian Occupation period.
2	Abedeleletf Ababore (obboo)	35	3/7/16	Zeway (Batu) town	He is Health Officer at Adami-Tulu town. He belongs to the Wege clan of Arsi Oromo. He mentioned the assimilated Mareko and Hadiya clans in the area.
3	Alemu Werkicho (Ato)	35	7/6/16	At Koshe Secondary and Preparatory school.	He is from former <i>ballabat</i> family, his grandfather named <i>Azmach</i> Degefe. He has a good knowledge on tenancy.
4	Aygede Gebure (W/ro)	65	7/6/16	Koshe Secondary and Preparatory school.	She is knowledgeable on the traditional institutions, and also served as chairperson of women association in Ilala Gebiba <i>kebele</i> PA during the Military (Derge) regime. She informed me about the Swedes Mission and the opening of school at Koshe.
5	Anbese Tira (Abegaz)	78	2/6/16 3/6/16	Enseno town	He was among the traditional war leaders entitled <i>Abegaz</i> . He is knowledgeable mainly on the period of Italian Occupation in Mareko.
6	Beraso Metiro (Ato)	66	2/6/16 3/6/16	Koshe Secondary and Preparatory school.	He is co-founder and member of Mareko Culture Group. He informed me about the 1935 conflict between Mareko and neighboring Silte and

					Meskan-Gurage.
7	Buba Balcha (<i>Ato</i>)	52	2/7/16 3/6/16	Koshe Secondary and Preparatory school.	He is the member of Koshe Secondary and Preparatory School <i>Welaje memehran heberte</i> (Family and Teachers Coordination). He belongs to the Hunderema clan. He has a good knowledge on settlers and also the interaction of Mareko with their neighbors.
8	Demeke Ahmed (<i>Ato</i>)	54	3/6/16	Koshe Municipal office	He is government worker at Koshe Municipality since its establishment. He has a good knowledge mainly on the legacies of Italian Occupation in Koshe.
9	Demeke Anbessa (Teacher)	30	6/6/16	koshe Secondary and Preparatory school.	He learnt about the war of Lemecha and songs which was sings for Lemecha from his father. He also has a good knowledge on the social relation of Kontoma communities mainly who has living in Enseno town of neighboring Meskan Wereda,
10	Dergu Gemechu	36	6/6/16	koshe Secondary and Preparatory school.	He is teacher in Koshe Secondary and preparatory School and also MA student in Geography at Gonder University. He is trilingual, speaks Afan Oromo, marekgna and Amharic. He has a good knowledge mainly about the interaction of Mareko people with neighboring Arsi Oromo and Mareko groups assimilated by neighboring Arsi Oromo.
11	Edemo Kamillo (Inspector)	46	8/6/16 9/6/16	his house in Koshe town.	He is Officer at Mareko <i>wereda</i> Police. He is knowledgeable mainly social and political historical experiences of Mareko people.
12	Ekemo Gonboro (<i>Ato</i>)	52	6/6/16	koshe Secondary	He is locally famous history teller and informed me about

				and Preparatory school.	how Mareko peoples learnt <i>gojjo</i> building from the neighboring Gurage people.
13	Genet Eremecho (W/ro)	32	6/6/16	her home in Koshe town.	She is a teacher in Koshe Secondary and Preparatory School. Her birth place is in Enseno town where she looks the social relation of Kontoma communities with the rest town's population.
14	Gebabo Bafa (<i>Abegaz</i>)	60	5/6/16	Koshe town	He is well known cavalryman who entitled a traditional military title known as <i>Abegaz</i> . He conducted and led formerly happened border conflicts.
15	Getu Alemu (Teacher)	53	7/6/16	koshe Secondary and Preparatory school.	He is a teacher in Koshe Secondary and Preparatory School. He is among the first literate personalities of the Mareko and also he had been a teacher since the Derge regime. He informed me about the development works that established by the Imperial regime and the Military regime (Derge) in Mareko.
16	Gezachew Abessana	34	6/6/16	Koshe town.	He is a teacher in Koshe Secondary and Preparatory School. He is multilingual and also well acquainted the culture and interaction of Mareko people and the neighboring Arsi Oromo
17	Gonna Tamirat (<i>Ato</i>)	70	6/6/16	Koshe town.	He is the grandson of <i>Qegnazmach</i> Oshebe Mesebo the <i>ballabat</i> of Mareko during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie I. He himself was landowner who settled landless neighboring Silte's as tenant peasant.
18	Hailu Gagoro (<i>Ato</i>)	64	8/6/16	LMDA (Libido-Mareko	Since the formation of MDO (Mareko Democratic Organization) in 1993 and the

				Development Association) office	subsequent split of Mareko <i>wereda</i> from Meskanena Mareko <i>wereda</i> , served in several key political positions including governorships. Even he was co-founder of MDO. Recently he retired from government office and become staff member of LMDA.
19	Hailu Gebere (<i>Ato</i>)	48	6/6/16	koshe Secondary and Preparatory school.	He is accountant At koshe Secondary and Preparatory school. He is from Amhara ethnic group of settlers who integrated with Mareko people.
20	Hamdino Beyene (<i>Ato</i>)	67	3/5/16	Koshe Municipal office.	He served in several government post position during the Military regime and has a good knowledge on the past several readjustment s on Administrative Divisions.
21	Jateno Meke (Hajji)	74	2/3/16	In his home at Mareko <i>wereda</i> Bidara Faqa <i>Kebele</i> .	He served as member of the <i>ferede shengo</i> (judicial tribunal) in Bidara Faqa PA during the implementation of the Land reform during the Military regime. He was nationalist and locally famous history narrator.
22	Jebesso Getisso (<i>Ato</i>)	48	2/5/16	Koshe town.	His home place is in Jereno <i>kebele</i> which is the frontier of \the <i>wereda</i> which neighbored with Oromya Regional State.
23	Koricha Shebiru (<i>Ato</i>)	55	2/5/16 3/5/16	koshe Secondary and Preparatory school.	He is local business men in the town and also elected representative of Students' family in Koshe Secondary and Preparatory School and member of <i>Welaje memehran heberte</i> (Family and Teachers Coordination). He is well acquainted with interaction of Mareko people with their neighbors.

24	Kebede (teacher)	Gadissa	32	6/6/16 7/6/16	Koshe town.	He a teacher in Koshe Secondary and Preparatory school. He is from Oromo father and Gurage mother, and became multilingual in local languages. He had lives for many years in Koshe town and well acquainted with interaction and integration of different ethnic and linguistic groups in Mareko <i>wereda</i> .
25	Lemado (Ato)	Gobebo		7/6/16	Kohe towns	He is locally known chairmen of <i>Idir</i> (traditional social institution) in his <i>kebele</i> . He informed me the role played by <i>Idirs</i> in conflict resolution.
26	Lile Oddo (Ato)		53	7/6/16 2/7/16	his home in Dida Midore kebele.	He is the son of locally famous history narrator, Imam Oddo Eba. He was chairman of Dida Midore kebele. He has a good knowledge mainly on origin and settlement of different groups in the area.
27	Merejano (Obbo)	Odda	42	3/7/16	Ziway (Batu) town	He is Development Agent (DA) worker in Adami-Tulu Jedo-Kombolecha. He mentioned the assimilated Mareko and Hadiya ethnic group in the area particularly around the <i>Wereda</i> .
28	Mohammed Berhanu		36	14/6/16	Jimma	He is MA graduate of History from Jimma University in 2016. He is from Wolayita ethnic group who has a good knowledge on the interaction of Wolayita people with their neighbors.
29	Morke (Abegaz)	Demeke	70	7/10/16	Koshe town	He is among socially respected persons in Mareko entitled with a traditional military title <i>Abegaz</i> . He is knowledgeable on the interaction of Mareko with their neighbors.
30	Mulugeta Jateno		30	7/10/16	Koshe	He is a teacher in Koshe

				Secondary and Preparatory school.	Secondary and Preparatory school. He is well acquainted with Mareko's interaction with their neighboring communities.
31	Mulu Fereja (W/ro)	82	2/5/16	Butajira town	She was the wife of Ato Mekonnen Aramede who was appointed official for the government of Haile Selassie I in Lemu Forestry and later served as judge in Sebat bet Gurage area until the collapse of the Imperial government.
32	Nemecha Alemu (teacher)	28	6/6/16	Koshe town	He is a teacher in Koshe Secondary and Preparatory school. He is well acquainted with Mareko's interaction with their neighboring communities.
33	Nine Alemu (Ato)	60	2/5/16 3/5/16	Enseno town	He is the brother of <i>Abegaz</i> Anbese Tira. He informed about the Italian Occupation period.
34	Nunese Mentero (<i>Abegaz</i>)		6/6/16	Koshe town	He entitled traditional military title known as <i>Abegaz</i> . He informed about the Italian Occupation period and also post liberation period.
35	Oddo Ebba (Imam)	89	7/6/16	Dida-Halibo kebele.	He was among the former famous Islamic religious leaders in Mareko who entitled Imam. He informed about the genealogy of different clans and communities which conglomerates and made Mareko. He has a good knowledge about the origin and settlement of these clans.
36	Takele Balcha (Ato)	56	12/8/16	Alage Agricultural Technical and Vocational	He is the father of <i>Ato</i> Mechal Takele secretariat of Ethiopian council in Cuba. He is from the Hunderama clan to which the settlers

				Collage.	acknowledge them as early settler.
37	Tamiru Keletamo (Ato)	54	12/8/16	Alage Agricultural Training and Vocational Collage.	He is from Kembata ethnic group working and living in Alage ATVC. He informed about the assimilated Mareko living around Ziway and Bulbula area and the pronunciation difference between the assimilated and assimilator.
38	Tefri Bezabhe (Ato)	60	2/5/16	Butajira	He is son of Ato Bezabhe Agune, worker of Mareko <i>Awraja gemija</i> bet (treasury) just its establishment who conducted Italian resistance until he captured and imprisoned in Mogadishu, Somalia during the Italian Occupation period.
39	Terge Darge (W/ro)	70	5/6/16	Koshe town	She is among the most respected women in Mareko <i>wereda</i> . She is from the family of landowners. She is well acquainted with land and associated issues of the Imperial regime and the land reform of the 1975.
40	Tesfaye	35	14/6/16	Jimma	He is MA graduate of History from Jimma University in 2016. He is from Wolayita ethnic group who has a good knowledge on the interaction of Wolayita people with their neighbors. His MA thesis was on the history of a Silte people in which he explored the neighbors of Silte, including Mareko.
41	Teshome	52	6/7/16	Butajira town at Behere Secondary	He is the Director of Behere Secondary School in Butajira. He is from Meskan-Gurage ethnic group. He acquainted

				school.	with when and why the first school opened in the former Mareko <i>Awraja</i> . He also displayed me a specific place where <i>Ras Desta Damtew</i> gun down by Fascist Italian in the compound of the school.
42	Tessema Asefa (<i>Ato</i>)	66	2/5/16 3/5/16	Koshe Secondary and Preparatory school.	He is from the family of the first <i>ballabats</i> (Burqamo). He is served as elected representative of Students' family in Koshe Secondary and Preparatory School and member of <i>Welaje memehran heberte</i> (Family and Teachers Coordination). He is well acquainted with land and land system, and interaction of Mareko people with their neighbors.
43	Tolossa Bakissa (<i>Ato</i>)	47	2/5/16 3/5/16	Koshe Secondary and Preparatory school.	He has a good knowledge on the interaction of Mareko with the neighboring communities.
44	Tuke Aela (Imam)	72	2/5/16 3/5/16	Koshe town	He is well known narrator of Mareko history and also representative of Mareko in cases like; the question of identity, origin and settlement. His grandfather served the government of Menelik II by keeping cattle for royal consumption which farmed in Mareko.
45	Wamisho Tefera (<i>Ato</i>)	58	6/6/16	Koshe town	He is among the students who attended school at Ziway before the opening of school at Koshe town. He informed about the difficulties which he passed as student faring from his family.
46	Wangoro Debele (<i>Abegaz</i>)	70	6/6/16	Koshe town	He entitled a traditional military title known as <i>Abegaz</i> . He conducted and led formerly happened border

					conflicts, and also has a good knowledge on interaction Marek with the neighboring communities.
47	Wegene Belachew	34	6/6/16	Koshe town.	He is a teacher in Koshe Secondary and Preparatory School. His birth place is in Enseno town where he looks the social relation of Kontoma communities with the rest town's population.
48	Wuletaw Bezabhe (Ato)	70	2/5/16	Butajira	He is son of <i>Ato</i> Bezabhe Agune, worker of Mareko <i>Awraja gemija</i> bet (treasury) just its establishment who conducted Italian resistance until he captured and imprisoned in Mogadishu, Somalia during the Italian Occupation period. <i>Ato</i> Wuletaw himself served in different government offices, like in Yefatena-Temuga <i>Awraja</i> , in Meskanena Mareko <i>wereda</i> as head of Adult Training Center during the Derge regime, and teacher at Butajira High School until he retired.
49	Yebase Lemecha (Ato)	50	6/7/16	Koshe town	He is the son of <i>Ato</i> Lemecha Debo who led the "Lemecha war." Yebase engaged in local business. He informed about the interaction of Mareko with the neighboring communities mainly concerning the conflict between Meskan and Mareko communities in Bamo locality around Hamus Gebya town.
50	Zewde Chumeto (Ato)	56	7/6/16	Koshe town	He is head of Mareko wereda Culture and communication Office. He is from Kontoma clan. He is knowledgeable on culture and the origin of

					different clans in the <i>wereda</i> .
51	Zelege Welde-Michael (<i>Abba</i>)	66	7/6/16	Koshe town.	He is clergy in Koshe Saint Michael Church. He informed about the role of this church in expansion of education in the area before the opening of modern school.

Glossary

Ato	A civil title given to ordinary people equivalent to Mr. in English
Abba	Father, a title given for elders and particularly at Ethiopian Orthodox Church given to a priest or a monk.
Alaqa.....	Head
Awraja	Administrative sub- province
Azmach.....	war leader
Balabat	Landlord or local hereditary chief
Balambaras.....	A military title just below that of Gerazmach
Ĉiqashum	Village chief empowered to collect tax during the imperial regime
Däjach	A military title below Ras and shortened or abrevated as Däjach
Daña	Judge
Derg	The military government of Ethiopia
Fitawrari	Commander of the Vanguard, a military title below Däjach
Gasha	Unit of land equivalent to 40 hectares
Geber.....	Tribute
Gabbar	Tribute paying peasant
Grazmach.....	Commander of the left front, title below Qäña
Gezat	An administrative unit
Idir.....	traditional self-help association
Iqub.....	traditional saving system
Lam	Fertile land
Lam-taf	Semi-fertile land
Madarya land.....	A land given as a lieu of salary to the remunerated officials services
Mahbär.....	Association
Mamher	Head of Monastery
Mektel Warada	An administrative unit below the level of district
Mälkänga	A name that the local people used to call the naftaña
Naftaña.....	a gun-bearer settled and ruled over the area incorporated
Qebele.....	Lowest administrative unit
Qegazmach.....	Commandre of the right front
Sefera.....	Resettlement
Tekelay-Gezat.....	Province
Wereda.....	Administrative unit next to Awraja
Wayezero.....	Atitle given to married women equivalent to Mrs, in English
Zemecha.....	Campaign

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis on “A History of the Mareko People (in Southern Ethiopia-(1880s-1991)” is my original work and it has never been presented for the degree in any other University, and that all sources of materials that I have used for the thesis are duly acknowledged in the references.

Name: _____

Sign: _____

Date: _____

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university advisor.

Advisor's

Name: _____

Sign: _____

Date: _____

Submission

Place: Jimma University

College: Social Sciences and Humanities

Department: History and Heritage Management

Date: _____

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