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**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND HERITAGE**

**MANEGMENT**

**A SOCIO-ECONOMIC HISTORY OF THE MAJANG PEOPLE**

**IN MAJANG ZONE GAMBELLA REGION: 1890s-1991**

**BY**

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**DECEMBER, 2021**

**JIMMA, ETHIOPIA**

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## KEY TO THE AMHARIC TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM

I. The seven sounds of the Amharic alphabet are represented as follows:

1st order	በ	Bä
2nd order	ቡ	Bu
3rd order	ቢ	Bi
4th order	ባ	Ba
5th order	ቤ	Bé
6th order	ብ	Be
7th order	ቦ	Bo

II. Palatalized sounds are represented as follows:

ሸ	Šä
ቸ	Čä
ጸ	Ñä
ሸ	Zhä

III. Glottal zed sounds are represented as follow

ቀ	Qä
ጠ	Tä
ጪ	Čä

---

ጸ/ፀ	Şä
-----	----

ጸ	Pä
---	----

IV. For words having the sound of the sixth alphabet at the end, it is not necessary to add the representing letters of the sound.

Example:-

ገ ባር

*Gäbbar*

ሰፈር

*Säfar*

V. consecutive vowels are usually separated by apostrophe.

Example: - Micha'él

ሜካ ኤል

Esma'él

እስ ሜኤል

Edisa'él

ኤድሳ ኤል

Gäbra'él

ገብረ ኤል

## **LISTS OF ACRONYMS**

AAU-----Addis Ababa University.

EPRDF-----Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front.

CSA -----Central Statistical Agency.

EECMY-----Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus.

GPNRS-----Gambella Peoples National Regional State.

MNZ-----Majang Nationality Zone.

PMAC-----Provisional Military Administration Council.

RRC-----Rehabilitation Relief Commission.

NALA-----National Archive Library Agency.

NDR-----National Democratic Revolution



## **ABSTRACT**

*This study analyzed a socio- economic history of the Majang people who lived in the study area since the occupation of the area by Menelik II in 1890s until the down fall of the Derg regime in 1991. The consequence of centralization coincided with the arrival of different ethnic groups from different parts of Ethiopia. The period was also seen as the Majang people's interaction with the central government. Livelihood of the Majang community depended on the forest from which they obtained food and other resources necessary for their life. The favorable environment and climatic condition of the Majang zone enabled the society to practice different agricultural activities. Thus, the society used to cultivate various crops, for local consumption.*

*The year 1960s recognized as the new era in the life of the Majang community. The main important thing at that time was they accepted Christianity and they abandoned traditional belief preached by Odola in the Majang land. Before 1970s, the Majangir were non-village societies and lived in scattered manner, which helped them easy escape from their enemy.*

*The implementation of villagization policy at the end of 1970s among the Majang that led them to abandon the custom of movement from place to place and many Majang people established their villages along the main roads and Church. This influenced the later way of life (livelihood activity) of the Majangir and many changes have seen afterwards. The Därg government contributed a lot to the Majang people to improve their living conditions by providing them with clothes, different crop seeds and farming tools. During this period, Coffee also became main source of income for the community because the government supply of important support.*

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## **PREFACE**

This study deals with the history of the Majang people from about the last decade of the 19th century up to the downfall of the Derg regime in 1991. The story begins from the conquest and incorporation of the area into the Ethiopian empire and ends with the Derg regime. The work is divided into four chapters. The first chapter consists of the location of the study areas, origin and settlement, language of the Majang Community, incorporation of the area and the relation of the people with central administrative system of imperial rule. The second Chapter deals with the socio-economic activities of the Majang. In this part the main livelihood of the societies agriculture, hunting, honey production, fishing, pottery and other craft works are discussed. Chapter three focuses on socio-economic interaction of the society with their neighbors. It also deals how the Majang people interact with other ethnic groups through economic activity and trade exchange. Finally, the fourth chapter discusses the cultural practices of the society that include indigenous marriage, traditional religion, burial ceremony and other cultural practices. Moreover, non-English words in this thesis have been translated and provided in the glossary.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING AND DEMOGRAPHY

### MAJANG ZONE

Gambella Peoples' National Regional State (GPNRS) is one of the nine regional states established after 1991. It is also found in the southwestern part of the country, at a distance of 777 km from the capital Addis Ababa. Administratively, the area has three zones and one Special Woreda. The GPNRS is among one of the developing states in Ethiopia.<sup>1</sup> The distribution of the population between the Zones in the region differs obviously and the Majang zone has the highest while the Anywa Zone the least populated.<sup>2</sup> According to the 2007 population census, the region has a total population of 307,096. Among these Nuer constituted 143,286, the Agnwa 64,984, the Majang 12,280, Opo and Komo together 1,214, and the highlanders 83,510. Out of these 74.6% of the total population of the region resided in the countryside and only 25.4 % of the populations lived in town.<sup>3</sup>

It is also located between 7°49'59'' North latitude and 34°30'00'' East longitudes, in which the land mass coverage stretched over an area of about 29,782.82 km. The Region is bordered to the North, North East and East by Oromia National Regional State, to the South and South East by the Southern People's National Regional State and to the South West, West and North West by the Republic of South Sudan. Its elevation ranges from 300 to 2300 m a.s.l. with average yearly temperature is 27.6°C. However, the mean monthly temperature differs considerably and the average annual precipitation is 1400 mm.<sup>4</sup> The region was gifted with extremely varied natural resources, in particular the great and vast arable land and appropriate cropland with adequate precipitation and underground water resources that provide the area with better agricultural progress and investments.<sup>5</sup> The economy of the GPNRS was entirely depended on by mixed agriculture. On the other hand, the livelihood of most of the regional inhabitants came from farming activity. GPNRS was gifted with natural resources like permanent rivers, lakes, and huge and productive lands with a suitable environment for cash crops. It was also described by rich jungle, flora and fauna, and fish resources. The Majang Zone accounts about 54% of the beehives possessed among the model families showing that it was the highest source of

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<sup>1</sup> Horn of Africa Regional environment Centre and network, "Integrated Urban and Rural Land Use and Development plan of Gambella people's National Regional State" (Addis Ababa University, 2019), p.2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Ahmed Muhiye, "The ethnic interaction of Majang and Agnwa in Godere, Mengeshi and Abobo districts of Gambella Region: 1890s-1991" (MA Thesis, History, Jimma University, 2018), p.4.

<sup>4</sup> Solomon Thomas, "Status of Tourism Marketing and Promotion: Gambella Peoples National Regional State, Gambella, South West Ethiopia", *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, Vol.7, No 5 (2018), p.3.

<sup>5</sup> Azeb W. Degife, "Impacts of Land Use Cover Change, Cropland Expansion and Climate Change on the Potential of Yield and production in Ethiopia, Gambella Region" (PhD Dissertation, Geography, Munchen, 2020), p.1.

revenue in the Majang zone.<sup>6</sup> The division of the region into three zones was based on the three major ethnic groups that consisted of Anywa zone, Nuer zone, and Majang zone. These three zones were further divided into 13 *woredas*; five under Anywa zone, five under Nuer zone and two under Majang zone and one special *woreda* which were directly accountable to the regional state council.<sup>7</sup> According to the 2007 Census indicated by the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia (CSA), the Gambella Region has total population of 307, 096, comprising of 159,787 males and 147,309 females.<sup>8</sup> In terms of population size the smallest region next to Harari. The region was mainly inhabited by five indigenous ethnic groups. These were Agnuwa, Nuer, Majang, Komo, and Opo. They all belong to the Nilo-Saharan language family<sup>9</sup>.

Geographically, Majang zone is among of the three Zones of Gambella regional states of Ethiopia. The zone has two *woredas* (Godere and Mengeshi). It is located about 633 kms south west of Addis Ababa. Meti town is the administrative center of the zone. According to the 2007 Census indicated, this Zone has a total population of 59,248, of whom 30,567 are male and 28,681 female; with an area of 2,254.65 square kilometers, has a population density of 26.28. The main ethnicities of this Zone were the Amhara (26.96%), Kafficho (25.17%), Majang (16.86%), Shäkächo (11.67%), Oromo (8.84%), and all other ethnic groups 10.5%. Languages spoken in this Zone include Amharic (37.08%), Kaffa (22.89%), Shako (12.78%), and Oromiffa 9.91%; only a negligible number of inhabitants speak Majang. The religion with the largest number of believers was Orthodox Christian with 46.5% of the population, while other groups with great followings are Protestant, 36.4%, and Islam 15.42%.<sup>10</sup>

The Majang zone also found in the region with a distance of 305 kilometers from the regional capital Gambella<sup>11</sup>. The zone is bordered in the north by Illubabor Zone of Oromia region, in the west by Gog and Abobo district, in the south and southeast by southern nations Nationalities and peoples Regional State.<sup>12</sup> The Majang administrative zone was named after one of the ethnic groups live in Gambella

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<sup>6</sup> Horn of Africa Regional environment Centre and network, “Integrated Urban and Rural Land Use Plan....”, p.2.

<sup>7</sup> Ahmed Muhiye, “The ethnic interaction of Majang and Agnwa ...”, p.4.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* Solomon.

<sup>9</sup> Ojot Miru Ojulu, “Large-Scale Land Acquisitions and Minorities/Indigenous Peoples’ Rights under Ethnic Federalism in Ethiopia: A Case Study of Gambella Regional State” (PhD Dissertation, University of Bradford), pp.105-106.

<sup>10</sup> Mebratu Alemu and Belete Mulatu, “Indigenous traditional authority; Peace and socio-economic development in Majang zone of South West Ethiopia” *International Journal of Current Research*, Volume.12, .no.1 ( 2020), pp.9426-9432.

<sup>11</sup> Belay Gebremichael, “Determinants of the success of Recent villagization Program in Godere Woreda, Majang zone Gambella Regional State”, (MA Thesis, Adama, 2018), p.24.

<sup>12</sup> Seyoum Mesfin, “Federalism at the Margins of the Ethiopian State: The Lived Experience of the Majang People, (Dissertation, Addis Ababa University, 2015) p.7.

region. The Majang were the early inhabitants of the Majang zone.<sup>13</sup> Before 1993, the Majang zone was under the previous Yäkki district of Mocha *Awraja*, in Illubabor *täklay gizat* (later *Kifle Hager*) in the name of Yäkki and Godäre woreda. But after 1993, Yäkki and Godäre woreda divided in to two diverse regions. Yäkki included and became part of the South Nations Nationalities and peoples Region (SNNPR) and Godäre became part of Gambella regional state. After 1993, the Majang zone was recognized with only one woreda, Godäre that continued until 2007. But in 2007 Godäre woreda splited in to two different woredas and another new and the second woreda created and named as Mängäshi woreda.<sup>14</sup> The Majang were the third largest indigenous people in Gambella region after the Nuer and Anywaa. In addition to Gambella region, they also lived in dispersed parts of Yäkki woreda of South Nations Nationalities People Regional state (SNNPR) and Oromia Regional state.<sup>15</sup>

Godäre woreda was the second district of the Majang zone that found in Gambella Region in which the Majang and another ethnic group lived together. It was neighbor to the SNNPR, and it has similar natural environment.<sup>16</sup> Greater number of the Majang communities resided in Godäre and Mängäshi Weredas.<sup>17</sup> The total population of the Majang zone was 59,248. Out of this the population size of Godäre weredas was 38,763 and the total population of Mängäshi weredas is 20,464. Although the Majang are the early settlers living in Majang zone, they did not constitute the majority.<sup>18</sup>

The highlanders constitute the Non-indigenous ethnic groups. The general term ‘Highlanders’ related to all Ethiopian ethnic groups who were not indigenous to Gambella. This include Oromo, Amhara, Tigray and SNNPR, mainly Kambata and Gurage. The Majang ethnic groups have their own distinct culture, language and practices in the region as well as in the Majang zone. However, Highlanders have more common, livelihoods systems, and customs.<sup>19</sup> According to the 2007 population census, the highlanders constitute 80% and the Majang are only 20% of the Majang zone. The majority of the highlanders lived in Godäre woreda whereas the majority of the Majang live in Mängäshi woreda.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Gambella, Mimeographed study (Addis Ababa, 2015), pp32-33.

<sup>14</sup> Abebe Getahun, “A historical survey of the Majang people. South western Ethiopia, ca.1890-1974” (MA Thesis, History, Jimma, 2013), P.12.

<sup>15</sup> Yonas Adaye, “Conflict Complexity in Ethiopia: Case study of “Gambella Regional State” (PhD Dissertation University of Bradford, 2014), p.164.

<sup>16</sup> Dessalegn Rahmeto, “Land to the Investor: Large Scale Land transfer in Ethiopia .Forum For Social Studies” (Addis Ababa University), p, 22.

<sup>17</sup> Afera Alemu “, Socio Economic Impacts of villagization and Large Scale Agricultural investment on the Indigenous people of Gambella, south west Ethiopia” (MA Thesis, Geography, University of South Africa, 2015) pp.34-35.

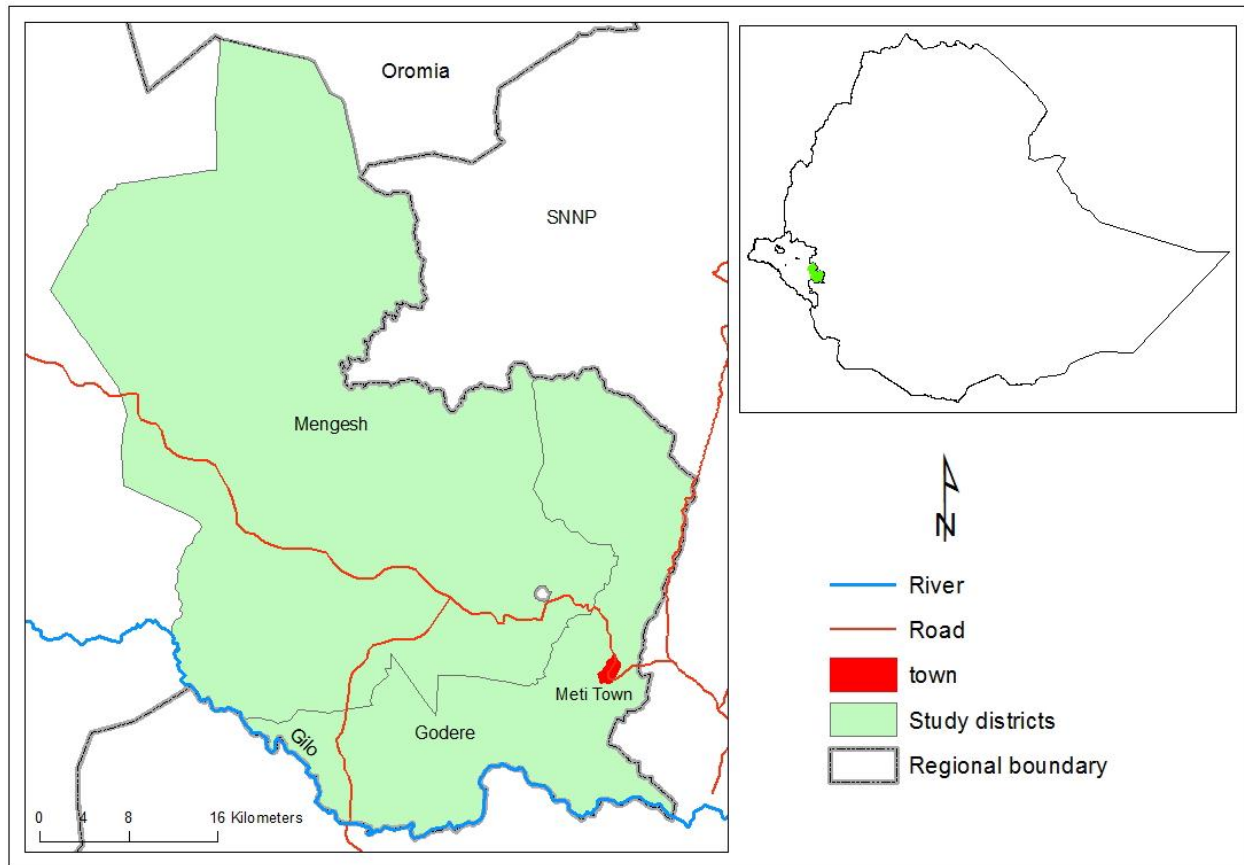
<sup>18</sup> Eshetu Alebachew, “The Rights for Political Participation of ‘Non-indigenous’ People’s in Gambella Region ... P.46.

<sup>19</sup> Afera, p.36.

<sup>20</sup> Seyoum Mesfin, “Federalism at the Margins of the Ethiopian State.....P.5.

The largest number of the people in Majang zone lived in rural area, i.e. about 90.2%. In addition to native ethnic groups there were also other nations and nationalities that lived in Majang zone such as Amhara, Tigre, Oromo, Kafficho, Shakecho, Shako, Bench and others.<sup>21</sup>

**Map.1. Map of the study area**



(Source: Seyoum Mesfin, *Federalism at the Margins of the Ethiopian state...* 2015, p.5.)

The Majang Nationality zone (MNZ) is found in the south western part of Ethiopia in the Gambella National Regional State. It bordered by Gog and Abobo districts of Gambella National Regional State on the west, by Illubabor zone of Oromia region in its northern part, by Sheka and Bench Maji zone of Southern Nations and Nationalities Peoples Regional State (SNNPRS) in its south eastern part.<sup>22</sup> In terms of physical size, Majang nationality zone has a total surface land mass of 2254.65 km<sup>2</sup>. Out of this, Godäre Woreda 592.75 kilo meter square and Mängäshi woreda 1,661.90 kilo meter square. It

<sup>21</sup> Abebe Getahun, "A historical Survey of the Majang People. ....", P.1.

<sup>22</sup> Seyoum Mesfin, "Federalism at the Margins of the Ethiopian State....", p.7.



occupied the transitional zone between the southwestern highlands of Ethiopian plateau and the Savannah lowlands of the Ethio- Sudan border.<sup>23</sup>

Topography, Drainage and Climate of the area was characterized by flat to gentle slope, with some rocky steep and deep valleys along major streams on the hills. The altitude of the district is between 800 to 2100 m a.s.l. It was drained by several small streams joining the Gilo River, which was one of the main tributaries of the Nile. Most of the streams were perennial and with quite high discharge of water.<sup>24</sup> The area was also said to have tropical warm temperature, high relative humidity, and abundant rain fall climates. It was the only zone in Gambella region that was known by its cool temperature, which was comfortable for coffee plantation. Then it has an annual average temperature of 24°C and receives 1,600 to 1,800mm of rainfall but it has been fluctuating recently due to man-made factors, especially deforestation.<sup>25</sup> The area received its rain fall seasons (*kirmet*) from May to October and its dry season (*bega*) was between December and February. The vegetation was uniformly broad-leaved tropical rainforest characterized by large trees and moderately luxuriant under growth creepers, Mosses and ferns.<sup>26</sup> The soils appear to be very fertile. The area was gifted with many rich natural resources and significant in terms of socio-cultural and economic values for the indigenous community. The forest of Majang zone was a major source of livelihood for the local community.<sup>27</sup>

The majorities of the population were rural and depend on subsistence agriculture. The economic activity in the area was mixed farming, i.e., crops production and livestock husbandry. Both annual and perennial crops are grown especially in places where highlanders resided.<sup>28</sup> The Majang people lived in Abobo and Gog weredas in Gambella regional state. But the great number of the Majang population lived in Majang zone i.e. Godäre and Mängäši weredas. Although, the majority of them lived in beekeeping. They also engaged in agricultural activities in settlement areas. They represented six percent of the total population of the Gambella people's regional state.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Nigatu Tessema, "Determinants of local Livelihood Diversification Strategies: Case of Godere Woreda, Gambella Region, Southwest Ethiopia" (Geography and Environmental Studies, Debre Berhan University, 2021), p.14.

<sup>25</sup> Belay Gebremichael, "Determinants of the success of recent villagization Program in... p.26.

<sup>26</sup> Jack Stauder, *The Majang ecology and society of a south west Ethiopian people* (Cambridge University press, 1971), pp.10-11.

<sup>27</sup> Eshetu Alebachew, "The Rights for political participation of 'Non-indigenous' peoples in Gambella Region Particularly in Gambella city, Abobo, Godere, Lare and Itang special weredas"(MA Thesis, Addis Ababa University,2017),pp. 46-47.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* Nigatu.

<sup>29</sup> Abraham Sewunet, *people, space and state: Breaking the cycle of conflict in Gambella region* (Addis Ababa, 2004), P.535.

## 1.1. HISTORICAL BACK GROUND OF THE MAJANG PEOPLE

In the former times (before the Derg regime), the Majang society had different names. People neighbour to the Majang used to call them using several names. These include “*Mäsängo*”, “*Ujag*”, and “*Tama*”. But they prefer the name “Majang”.<sup>30</sup> According to some written sources, the creation of man started with “Ler”, father of all human being. For the Majang Ler was the father of all men on earth given by God (waqoyo) to them. Consequently, Ler was the origin of the Majang society according to their culture. Moreover, Ler shaped the Majang people how to produce crops like maize and sorghum and the technique of preparing bee hives. He prepared bee hives for himself around the Bakko River, near to Dildila Waqa (to the south of Téppi). Ler has two brothers, Walo and Damo. The three brothers fragmented and divided the world among them, Walo traveled to South, Damo to the east and Ler to the north and west, never to return. Ler was believed by the Majang to have gone to the land of the faranji (Ethiopian names of the white).<sup>31</sup>

There were also another legend concerning to the Melanir clan origin they claimed that this clan (Komoy) was not originally Majang. Melanir was one of the most honored clan of the Majang, the spiritual clan leader, known as tapa’d come from this clan. According to the Majang tradition the Melanir clan was from the Mashier clan of Maji. Two brothers lived at Joati, a hilly land escape south of the Akobo River. It was said that one of these brothers was changed in to rock. Rapidly his brother listen crying voice, he took an axe and opened the rock and got a small child.<sup>32</sup> Instantly, a goat was slaughtered as to a gift and the kid (baby) given its blood to sip, and quickly the child grew to man hood. His was named as Padhe .A great tapa’d of the Maji, a tapa’d of the Melanir clan, named Joati, heard of the birth and confirmed that the child was belong to him and padhe became a tapa and a follower of the Melanir clan and attracted for his groups. Later, padhe traveling among the Majang and on voyage, he slept with a Majang girl illegally. A girl of the Dabir clan conceived and gave birth to a son of padhe, named Adube. Adube became the first of the tapa to live among the Majang, and his descendants were the Majang tapa of today. This occurrence was said to have been taken place south of the Boma plateau before the 17<sup>th</sup> century while they were moving to their recent areas.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Wossen Shiferaw, “Gender based division of labour in agricultural production among the Majang community in south west Ethiopia” (Addis Ababa university school of Graduate studies, 2008), P.31.

<sup>31</sup>Stauder “Notes on the History the Majangir and their Relations with other Ethnic Groups of Southwest Ethiopia”, In *Proceedings of the Third International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* (Addis Ababa, 1970), p.107.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

The Majang were ‘people of the jungle’. The name Majang was derived from two words, *ma* which means “let us go” and *jang* means “in the bush”. Hence, etymology the word Majang means ‘let us go to the bush’. Accordingly, the region was very important and suitable for the Majang livelihood. As the meaning indicate, the forest and its resources were essential for their identity and their life was associated with the welfare of the jungle.<sup>34</sup> Their life depends on the products of the forest from which they obtain wild animals to be hunted, to hang bee hives on the big trees, root crops, fire wood, construction materials and other medicinal plants .During the time of war and when slave raiders came to the area, the jungle served as a hiding place to escape from enemy.<sup>35</sup> The Majang lived in south western part of Ethiopia, Gambella, Oromia, and SNNP regional states. They were one of the Nilo-Saharan people existing in places which covered by thick forest. The place settled by the Majangir extends between the area north of the Baro River near Dembi Dolo and Erbu River in south. The Majang zone constitutes more than half of the Majang population who were existed in Gambella region.<sup>36</sup> They also lived in Gambella Peoples Regional State in Anuak zone in four different local villages in Gog and Jor districts. There were also enormous Majang people who were living in SNNPR in Bench-Maji zone in Shäko and Gurafärda areas and in Shäka zones in various places of Yäkki woreda and different settlement areas.<sup>37</sup>

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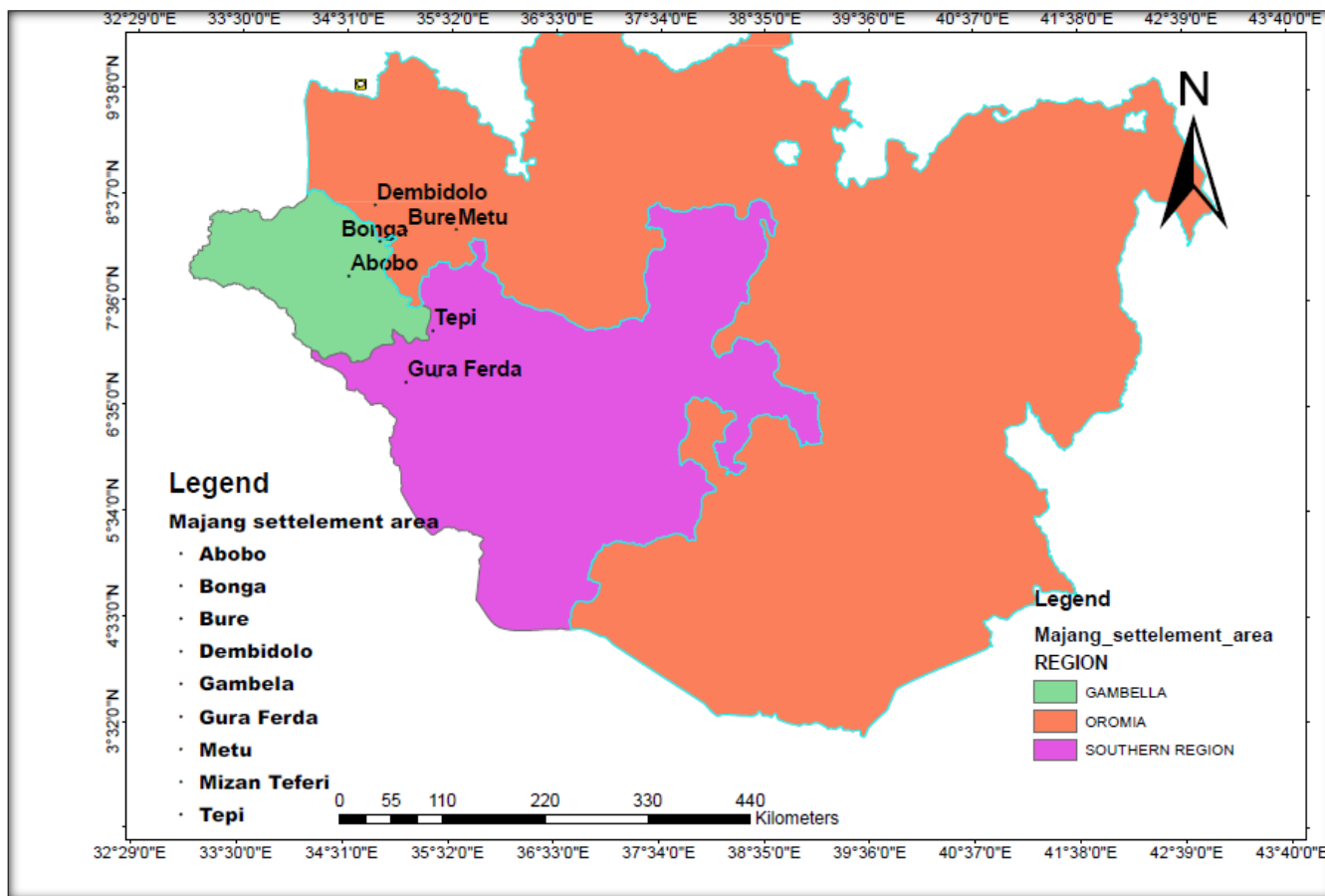
<sup>34</sup> Seyoum,p.12

<sup>35</sup> Informant: *Ato* Biniam Sisekir, *Ato* Eyosiyas Sergaw

<sup>36</sup> Worku Derara, “The Ethnoarchaelogy of coffee production and consumption: Three case studies from south west Ethiopia (Kafficho, Majangir and Oromo), (Dissertation, Madrid, 2019), p.150.

<sup>37</sup> Getachew Anteneh, “wawan the traditional wedding ceremony of Majang” (Addis Ababa University, 2009), p.8.

**Map-2. Map of Majang Settlement areas**



(Source, Ethio GIS, 2021)

Almost all of the Majang people lived in the densely forested area of the three respected regions in similar way of life.<sup>38</sup> Based on some sources, the local ethnic groups, the Majang were supposed to be the first residents of Gambella. They perhaps existed there earlier or in the seventeenth century. From the time after the seventeenth century, continuous waves of peoples have traveled into the area from the Southern part of present-day of Sudan. The Anuak were supposed to have established themselves in the plains by evacuating the Majang into densely forest land.<sup>39</sup> The Majang moved from Kenya through south Sudan then to Ethiopia and dispersed to different directions where they are living today. They were known to be the first to arrive in the area currently live. Starting in the seventeenth century they settled in eastern Gambella extending up to the *Gäba* River in Illubabor. The Majang people came from

<sup>38</sup> Getachew Anteneh, “Grammatical Description and Documentation of Majang”(Ph.D. Dissertation, Linguists ,Addis Ababa University , 2014),p.37.

<sup>39</sup> Bizuneh Beyene, “Historical and Political Origins of Conflicts in the Gambella Region”, *Journal of Oromo Studies* Vol.13, No 1&2 (2006), p.89.

Kenya to Ethiopia, and settled among the Anua people in area known as “*Molan*”; in Gambella. Because of disagreement with Agnwa people, the Majang returned and moved to Gurafärda and lived together with the Shäko people. After they crossed the natural bridge that they called *Gäbé* (God’s bridge) and lived near the river. This occurred earlier than the Italian occupation of Ethiopia.<sup>40</sup>

In addition, regarding to their origin and settlement they have their own history that transmitted by oral tradition. They remind that they had emanated from the southern direction to settle in their current place. They claim that the area between Sudan and South Sudan seems to have been the place from where Majang come. However they emphasis the need to exactly express the cause how their ancestors changed from their original residence to the recent one. Members of the Majang ethnic groups that lived in Godäre weredas formerly existed in various places.<sup>41</sup>

Before 1970s, the Majangir were non-village societies and lived in scattered manner, which helped them easy escaping from their enemy. Currently, they live in settlements covered with jungle. They got various resources like wild animals to be hunted, honey products, and other products that support their livelihood from the jungle.<sup>42</sup> A change of settlement was conducted by the Majang before 1974 within their own territory. There were different reasons for the settlement shift by the Majang. One of the reasons was the decline of the fertility of the soil in their former settlement. As a result, new forest areas were cleared for agriculture to get better harvest.<sup>43</sup>

Another reason was that before the introduction of protestant Christianity to Majang land, there was security problem. There were killings and revenge killing among themselves. This was caused by drinking local alcoholic drinks like *tajan* (an alcoholic drinks made of grain known by others as *borde*) and *ogol*, which was a kind of *täj* (*mead*). But, currently majority of the Majang, particularly the new generation, minimize the tradition of smoking and drinking, and they live in sedentary villages where killing and conflict absent.<sup>44</sup> Even though the problems were gradually solved with the establishment of peace and order in the area by the central government, there were also rare skirmishes of the Majang people with their Nilotic neighbors. Hence to save themselves from such attacks, they forced to change

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<sup>40</sup> Wossen, ,”Gender based division of labour in agricultural production among the Majang . . . , pp.30-31

<sup>41</sup> Gambella, Mimeographed study (Addis Ababa, 2015), pp.24-25.

<sup>42</sup> Worku Derara, p.150.

<sup>43</sup> Informant: Ejigael Rika, Kedimael Erkana.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid* .Ejigael Rika, Kedimael Erkana.

their residence.<sup>45</sup> Another reason for abandoning their residence was in order to acquire security from a new *tapa* due to the death of their previous *tapa*. It was also to forget their departed *tapa*. This tradition continued up to the 1970s.<sup>46</sup> The occupation of the area in 1890s and the beginning of land measurement resulted in the loss their land. It was taken by the settler soldiers from the north. The event was also another factor that forced the Majang to withdraw from their initial residence to thickly forested places.<sup>47</sup> In most cases the Majang people abandon their dwelling areas again and again due to various reasons, such as, ecological factors and disagreement with neighbors that led to conflict and wars. High death rate due to epidemic or conflict among the Majang was another factor that increased the rate of shifting settlement area as their tradition prohibits at a site where death occurred.<sup>48</sup>

## 1.2. LANGUAGE OF THE MAJANG PEOPLE

Language is one of important thing/devise which enables human being to communicate with each other in their daily life. It also helped human being to maintain and convey their values, customs and practice to the future generation.<sup>49</sup> It is also one of the tools that encourage social interactions and participation among various ethnic groups that guarantee continuation of human history and culture.<sup>50</sup> There were different language groups which are spoken by various ethnic groups in south western part of Ethiopia. The language of Majang is one of those languages spoken in the region which categorized as the surmic sub-groups under the eastern Sudanic cluster in Chari-Nile division among the Nilo-Saharan super family.<sup>51</sup>

Ethiopia is a country with different ethnic groups with more than 80 nations and nationalities having their own history, language culture and religion.<sup>52</sup> The Ethiopian constitution approved the declaration of language diversity and granted equal respect to all ethnic groups and the right to learn by their own mother tongue to develop their own culture.<sup>53</sup> Even though, Amharic was retained as the official language for the regional government as well as Majang zone, the major three local languages (Anywa,

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<sup>45</sup> Demeke Mola, "The cultural history of Majang nations of Mengeshi woreda" (BA Thesis, History, Jimma University, 2019),p.8.

<sup>46</sup> Informant: WajineTaro.

<sup>47</sup> Informant: Lencho and Adiето.

<sup>48</sup> Informant: Ato Biniam Sisekir, Juhar Tefera and Wajine Taro.

<sup>49</sup> Ahmed Muhiye, "The ethnic Interaction of Majang and Agnwa in Godere, Mengeshi and Abobo districts of Gambella Region: 1890s-1991" (MA Thesis, History, Jimma University, 2018), p.13.

<sup>50</sup> Ojot Miru Ojulu, " Large-Scale Land Acquisitions and Minorities ... , p.93

<sup>51</sup> Getachew Anteneh, "Grammatical Description and ... , p .44.

<sup>52</sup> Gambella Mimeographed study,p.17

<sup>53</sup> Ojot Miru, p.94.

Nuer and Majang) were introduced as the medium of instruction and as subjects in the primary schools and high schools in the respective woredas belonging to these ethnic groups.<sup>54</sup>

This was a radical change from the past where school textbooks from primary to secondary levels that enable easily access to education of the area and its peoples.<sup>55</sup> The Majang were classified in to east Sudanic language cluster. Today all the Majang populations live in Ethiopia. By constant population pressure from the Sudan they were pushed out and displaced by the Anuak and by the raids from other north of the Baro River. Then through time they were expanded to their present settlements.<sup>56</sup> The Nilo-Saharan language family has sub-branches like Nilotic, surmic and Koman .In surmic sub-group here were phylum called south surmic and north surmic. Under south surmic grouped several southern Ethiopian languages. However, there was one language that categorize under the north surmic group which was the indigenous language of Majang.<sup>57</sup>

### **1.3. INCORPORATION OF THE AREA BY MENELIK II**

Gambella regional state and its peoples become part of the new political rebuilding in Ethiopian empire at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>58</sup> The second half of the 19th century witnessed the birth of a centralized Ethiopian state. This territorial expansion was intended to attain economic advantage from the areas which consolidate his political and military position in the central part of the country that was not happened before by his predecessors. Menelik's territorial expansion began before he became emperor.<sup>59</sup> He expanded his rule from the central highland regions to the south, southwest and east of the country and united the borders of the contemporary Ethiopian state.<sup>60</sup> Emperor Menelik II, known as the modernizer, followed a policy of territorial expansion. He defeated powerful traditional kingdoms including some who had not previously been under the rule of Abyssinia such as the Wolaita in the south, the Oromo, the Sidama, the Kaffa and others.<sup>61</sup> It was known that Ethiopia is among the earliest nations with a long history of state hood. Nevertheless, Ethiopia took its recent shape at the end of the nineteenth century. Emperor Menelik II who conquered, the larger

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<sup>54</sup> Informant: Tsegay Bekele, Tadele Berhanu.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> Donald L. Donham and Wendy James. eds, *The southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia* (Oxford, Athens, Addis Ababa, 2002), P.239.

<sup>57</sup> Ahmed , “The ethnic Interaction of Majang and Agnwa in Godere, Mengeshi ...”, pp13-14

<sup>58</sup> Ojot Miru Ojulu, “Large-Scale Land Acquisitions and Minorities ...”, p, 116.

<sup>59</sup> Girum Kinfemichael, “Federalism and Interethnic relations in Multiethnic Ethiopia” (1995-2018). (PhD Dissertation. University of Graz, 2020), pp.62-63.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.* Girum, p.63.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

portion of the Ethiopia's land mass was integrated into the central territory and gave its current physical shape and cultural, language and ethnic structures by the end of the nineteenth century. The independent smaller states of south, south-west, and south-eastern Ethiopia were defeated by Emperor Menelik II as a consequence of military supremacy in spite of strong struggle made by several of these states.<sup>62</sup>

The process of territorial expansion to the south and south west of Ethiopia started in 1870s when Menelik II was the king of Shäwa. The possessing of Gambella was one of the great significance political decisions of Menelik II which expected the advance of the British from the Sudan following the collapse of Mahadists.<sup>63</sup> After the 19<sup>th</sup> century a few Nilotic peoples had a connection with peoples from other parts of Ethiopia through the exchange of trade items. Later on the incorporation of Illubabor, Wellega and Kaffa by Menelik II in the 1880s and 1890s brought the Nilotes to the political member of Ethiopia.<sup>64</sup> Menelik II (1889-1913) who succeeded to control the imperial throne after Yohannes's death followed the dual imperial policies of modernization and centralization. He played a vital role in making a centralized and unified Ethiopian state. His expansion and control of these areas which never before under his rule was as a reaction to the European threat to the Ethiopian periphery as well as for the purpose of economic exploitation so that he would strengthen his power better than before.<sup>65</sup>

In the course of emperor Menelik's fights of integrating the diverse societies in southwest Ethiopia, the Majang were submissive by *Däjazmach* Tässäma Nadäw who marched from Gore to the area where settled by the Majang. The situation happened at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>66</sup> The Majang land along with Shäka and Gambella was conquered by the force of Ras Tässäma Nadäw in 1898 and the peoples put resistance against the conquerors but due to army superiority both in technology and experience, the conquering force won the battles quite easily.<sup>67</sup> During the occupation of the area by the Emperor's soldiers, the response of the Majang people was simply by leaving their residence and hide in to the densely forested areas. Even after the Imperial force occupied the area, the ruling system and the relation with the Majang people was not smooth.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Temesgen Thomas, "The politics of Ethnic Identity and Conflicts under Ethnic Federal System in Ethiopia", *Journal of International Politics*, Volume.1No 2 (2019), p.17.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* Ahmed, pp.18-19.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, Girum.

<sup>66</sup> Worku Derara, p.154.

<sup>67</sup> Informant: Adieto and Lencho.

<sup>68</sup> Abebe, "A historical survey of the Majang people ...", p.10.



The British and Emperor Menelik II of Ethiopia Signed a treaty of consent in 1902. According to this treaty Menelik II of Ethiopia rented a part of land in Gambella town near by the Baro River to the British to serve as a national harbor for Ethio-Sudanese trade. Moreover, the 1902 boundary agreement and the creation of the Gambella harbor were primarily intended to defensive struggles from the view of British and to weaken the growing interest of French commercial and political impact in Ethiopia as consequence of the construction of the Ethio-Djibouti railway From the point of view of Ethiopian empire this was additional evidence and achievement for Menelik II's territorial expansionist to the western part to extract wealth and income from the resourceful low land region.<sup>69</sup> The territorial expansion and creating of a centralized and unified state was the result of a number of factors. The primary interest was a need to control both the vertical (north south) and the horizontal (west east) trade routes. In this regard, Gambella area, the territory of Nuer and Anuak peoples, were rich in ivory and other trade items. Menelik reacted in two ways: diplomatically and militarily, which helped him to incorporate the peoples and areas of Gambella. The expansion campaign reached to Gambella where slaves and ivory were easily available. The items which come from the highland of Ethiopia were coffee, Wax and gum exported to Sudan and from Sudan cotton goods; salt and empty sacks were imported.<sup>70</sup>

### 1.3.1. THE MAJANG PEOPLE DURING MENELIK II

The territorial expansion and empire building process of emperor Menelik extended from the center to the lowland border to obtain lands, resources, conquer and rule the people.<sup>71</sup> New socio-economic and political system was recognized. The resourcefulness of the Majang land and its environments had attracted great numbers of vassals and family followers and supporters of the emperors. Plots of lands were allowed to local army adherents who also involved in slave raiding activities. The Majang were suffered from both land prohibition, slave raiding and attacks.<sup>72</sup> But the Majang simply run away in to the densely forest settlement areas to escape from their enemies.<sup>73</sup> In addition to this, different types of attacks were occurred in the area in the coverage of keeping peaceful trade activity in the region which helped the soldiers to get slaves from indigenous inhabitants. Those who were arrested by imperial Ethiopia's soldiers were sold as slaves in the highland parts of the state. Consequently Gambella area

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<sup>69</sup>Ojot Miru Ojulu, "Large-Scale Land Acquisitions and Minorities ...", p.116.

<sup>70</sup> Ahmed, "The ethnic Interaction of Majang and Agnwa in Godere, Mengeshi ...", p.19.

<sup>71</sup> Yonas Adaye, "Conflict Complexity in Ethiopia ...", P.85.

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Kurimoto, "Eisei, Natives and Outsiders: Historical Experience of the Agnwa of Western Ethiopia", *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, No 43 (1992), p.4.

became one of the main suppliers of slaves in south-western Ethiopia, like other neighboring border areas. The advents of the imperial Ethiopian state brought about not only economic and political marginalization, but also the inhuman experience of slavery to native population.<sup>74</sup>

The aforementioned impacts were also inevitable to the Majang community in their respective areas even they escaped the attacks by vanishing in to the thick forest. The thick forest helped the Majang people as natural defensive weapon during invasion and attack from enemy. Nevertheless, after the integration of the area, the ruling system was harsh in contrast to the life of Majang community. Above all, they were continuously chased by the imperial armed forces for slavery. Slave raiding was also conducted by the higher officials including the administrator of Illubabor awraja, Ras Tessema Nadew.<sup>75</sup>

### 1.3.2. THE MAJANG PEOPLE DURING LEJ IYASU

After the incorporation of south and south western part of Ethiopia, the regions were placed under the domination of emperor and his important war leaders who were accountable for tax collection from the surrounding area and maintained peace and order from the side of the king. The outcome of subjugation and territorial expansion of Menelik II has clearly seen that Ethiopia is the home multi-ethnic groups with different language, culture, belief and values<sup>76</sup>

In the early 1898, the force of Menelik led by Ras Tässäma Nadäw seized the area with slight resistance from the local population. At that time, Ras Tässäma recognized his main Stronghold at Gore, which helped as the administrative center of Illubabor province (*täkélay Gézat*). In the meantime, the Mocha (Shäka) and Majang society in Yäkki district became part of Illubabor province.<sup>77</sup> After the domination of the area by central administrative force, Yäkki district under Mocha sub-province (*Awurajas*) come under the symbolic rule of *Fitawurari* Mäshäsha Bärcha. This caused for the creation of social, economic and political impact over the integrated people. In this manner, the people also lost their own communal practice that they had before the integration of the area. Like other integrated peoples, they also forced to pay annual tribute to the central government. The annual tribute was in kind which includes ivory, animal skin, honey and others.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Ojot Miru Ojulu, "Large-Scale Land Acquisitions and Minorities ...", pp.118-119.

<sup>75</sup> Ahmed, "The ethnic Interaction of Majang and Agnwa in Godere, Mengeshi ...", p.20.

<sup>76</sup> Girum, pp.63-64.

<sup>77</sup> Ahmed, p.21.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

It was during the administrative period of Lij Iyasu that the Majang community hosted the initial harsh governmental attack in Yäkki area. In the struggle between the Majang ethnic groups and the government military force, the Majang were highly injured and harshly massacred. They also forced to change their residence to Abobo and Gog to save them from attack. Others were scattered to the present day Oromia National Regional State and Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Regional State. The main reason of the mass killing was the refusal of the Majang to permit Lij Eyasu's force when they attempted powerfully to use the forest resource for their own advantage.<sup>79</sup>

1.3.3. THE MAJANG RELATION WITH THE CENTER DURING EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE  
As mentioned earlier, the history of the region and people was linked with territorial expansion and centralization of Ethiopia. The consequence of centralization coincided with the arrival of different ethnic groups from various directions of Ethiopia specially from places of densely populated area to sparsely populated low land area. Among the ethnic groups that arrived in the region following centralization were Amhara, Oromo and others identified by the native population as "highlanders". This period was also seen as the Majang people's interaction with the central government. Their interaction with the conquerors was not smooth and peaceful. The Majang recalled that the invasion was tyranny and biased against them.<sup>80</sup>

#### 1.3.4. THE MAJANG DURING THE ITALIAN OCCUPATION

The arrival of Italians in Addis Ababa on May 5, 1936 was the result of the defeat of the force of Emperor Haile Selassie at the battle of Maychew on March 31, 1936 which caused the Emperor to flee for Europe. Even the Emperor departed to Europe, it was already decided to shift the center of government to Gore since its significance for military purpose. Unfortunately, Gore fall under the control of Italian force on November 25, 1936 without long existence.<sup>81</sup> After the fall of Gore under Italians, Captain Tilinti Calebro, identified by the Majang, Shilentu became the administrator of Yäkki. The Italian troops led by him were stationed at Yäkki and Teppi town.<sup>82</sup>

The first interaction of Majang with modern government and domination began during the Italian occupation. The Italian administrators were established around in today's Kumi *kebele* in Majang zone. The Majang had no peaceful relation with the Italian invaders at all. Italians were recalled for their great and brutal oppression of the Majang. Before the invasion, the people used to pay tax to tapa'd not

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<sup>79</sup> Seyoum, "Federalism at the Margins of the Ethiopian State ...", p.98.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.* pp.91-92.

<sup>81</sup> Abebe, "A historical survey of the Majang people ...", p.23

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.* p.24.

to the state. For the first time in their history, the Majang started to pay tax during the Italian period. Yet, it was the *tapa'd*, who pay tax on behalf of the people. The *tapa'd* had been forced to pay tax both in *birr* and in kind.<sup>83</sup>

To make the condition even worse, the Italian invaders often raped Majang women and girls, strangled, and killed the local people without any reasoning and evidence. The Italians also gathered all spiritual leaders and imprisoned them in Gore. Later, almost all of them were killed. This action of Italian murder of Majang traditional political like leaders really weakened Majang strength and left them as leaderless and stateless community. This was the first major event that ended Majang fragile leaders. The matter went to a serious dispute especially when they murdered a highly respected Majang *balabat*. It was a very painful event for the Majang.<sup>84</sup>

Thus, they decided to face the Italians to stop the domination for the last time. Since the Italians were superior in military and number supported by some bandit of Highlanders, the Majang asked the Shako for help. The Shako's reply was positive since the Italians were their common enemies. The fight happened around Kumi and Yäkki *kebele*. The Majang and Shako joined force confronted and killed lots of Italian along with the highlander who were supported them. The Majang also tried to kill the Italian leader but they failed to do so". After this incident, the Italians were forced to minimize their cruelty and lastly expelled out of Ethiopia by the Ethiopian patriotic forces. Through their stay, the Italians avoided going deep into Majang land.<sup>85</sup> In general the Majang people during the Italian period suffered a lot and they remembered them oppressors and the Italians did not brought any economic and social change for the people.<sup>86</sup> When the Italian occupied the areas around Yäkki, they attempted to make partition between different peoples to pave the way for brutal administration. For instance; they initiated the Majang and Shäko by maximizing conflicting thoughts against the newcomers. To encourage this hostility, the Italians also provided to the *balabats* garments and additional offerings. They also created different activities in which common people of Shako and Majang engaged in daily labor with payment.<sup>87</sup>

Except the Shäko and the Majang, the settlers were mistrusted by the Italians at Yäkki. Because they supposed that the highlanders would provide different provision and materials to the patriot. The harsh and unjust ruling system from the highlander soldiers was minimized for the local people throughout

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<sup>83</sup>Seyoum, p.92.

<sup>84</sup> Informant: Fikre.

<sup>85</sup> Seyoum, p.93.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

the Italian invasion. Even though the Italians gave recognition to the local leader and freedom in the area as a pretext. The Italians prohibited even holding different agricultural tools and spears that the local people used regularly before Italian invasion.<sup>88</sup> To evacuate the Italians from the area, the patriots played an important role by attacking them. Several fighters from the side of Italy were dispersed and retreated to Gore. A number of soldiers were arrested when they tried to escaping. The force of Italy could not resist the patriots struggle. Lastly, the Italians force were crushed and forced to leave the occupied territories.<sup>89</sup> After liberation, the imperial regime under Emperor Haile Selassie proclaimed another and new type of administrative structure after the Italian withdrawn from Ethiopia. In this new structure, Yäkki became one of the Woreda in Illubabor *Täkelay Gezat*. Later on, in 1966 the name of Yäkki was changed to Yäkkina Godäre Woreda (Yäkki and Godäre district).<sup>90</sup>

Administratively the area was under control of Crown Prince *Märid Azmaç* Asfawossen Haile Selassie. There were *balabats* who were responsible for tax collection. Among them Ato Altaye Yäkki from Shäko and Ato Abate Fogeli from Majang were *balabats* at Yäkki and Godäre respectively, whom for the first time was given recognition by the central government administration. In 1960 Balti was also known as *balabat* of Godäre Mission. This was to bring the Majang people systematically under the central government. These *balabats* would serve the government as weapons to entirely control the people for taxation. Through *Wurse*; the area became imperial property of the crown prince (*Béta rest*).<sup>91</sup>

Through time, the Majang people started to give the requested tax to the central government through their *tapa*. These appointees from among the Majang and some *tapa* played intermediary role between the officials of the district and the Majang people. They were accountable for accumulating tax from the people and supplying to the government representatives. They were also accountable in keeping law and order in the area.<sup>92</sup> Attentions were not given to important public services giving institutions and other developmental sectors during the imperial period in the Majang land. Nevertheless, attempts were made to lay a base for the establishment of service giving institutions like education and health by foreign missionary.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Informant: Ato Lencho.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> Abebe, p.12.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid*, Informant: Ato Lencho.

<sup>92</sup> Abebe, "A historical survey of the Majang people, p.49; Informant: Ato Lencho.

<sup>93</sup> Informant: Ato Biniam.

### 1.3.5. THE MAJANG PEOPLE AFTER 1960s

The year 1960s recognized as the new era in the life of the Majang community. The main important thing at this time was they accepted Christianity and alleviated from traditional faith that preached by Odola in the Majang land.<sup>94</sup> Even though the year 1960 recognized as the new era in the Majang history, the missionary work of Odola continued through the period of 1960s. Gradually Odola started and founded his project and worked in the area of Godäre mission (now Mängäši Woreda).<sup>95</sup> Odola traveled to Godäre area after he got permission from Emperor Haile Selassie and carried written letter from 'Bete rest'. During that period the surrounding land was under the control of Madferiashwork Abebe the wife of the crown prince Asfawossen. The representative of the 'Bete rest' was ordered to host and to give the amount of the required land to Odola to start missionary project. After all process completed he started his activities.<sup>96</sup> In addition to teaching and spreading Christianity, Odola provided the community with modern education. He opened a primary school from grade 1-4. The teachers were his children, few Highlanders and Odola himself. They have taught them in Amharic and English. Children of the Majang largely from the Melaneer clan got modern education for free. The current political elites of Majang are also the products of this Missionary School. Furthermore, Odola also taught the Majang how to grow coffee and other cash crops and he brought coffee seedlings by plane from Tapi Coffee Plantation. He also introduced to them bananas, pineapples, mangos, peanuts, and sweet potatoes and taught them how to grow these things.<sup>97</sup>

After the launching of missionary project in the area, the area named as Godäre mission where school and clinic established. In addition to school and clinic Odola built air strip. The building of air strip has its own advantage to transport missionary workers and his families. The air strip also served as to transport those patients who were not cured at the level of missionary clinic to higher health institution for better treatment like Mettu missionary hospital. According to my informants, the gratitude of Odola never disappears from the memory of the Majang people forever. They also expressed that Odola greatly contributed for the Majang society in his all rounded services in the sector of medical treatment, education and in the introduction of Christianity among Majang communities.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Informant: Wajine Taro.

<sup>95</sup> Ren'ya Sato, *Evangelical Christianity and Ethnic Consciousness in Majang: Remapping Ethiopia Socialism and After* (Athens, 2002), P.187.

<sup>96</sup> Informant: Ato Adieto, Ato Biniam Sisekir, Timotiws and Eyosiyas.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.* Ato Adieto, Biniam, Timotiws and Eyosiyas

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.* Adieto, Biniam, Timotiws, Eyosiyas.

### 1.3.6. THE MAJANG DURING THE DERG REGIME

The rise of the *Därg* to power recognized a fundamental transformation in Ethiopian history as the King was eliminated and substituted by a new administrative system. One of the popular mottos throughout the protests against the imperial rule was ‘*Märéte lä Arašu!*’ an Amharic translation for ‘land to the tiller’<sup>99</sup> The *Därg* had reformed the way of growth and progress from mixed economy to the socialist economy with a number of socio-economic and organized fundamental reforms. The basic modifications under the socialist economy were a Proclamation to Provide for Government Ownership of Urban Land and Extra Urban Houses,” The revolution intended improving severe and crucial socio-economic difficulties; putting down the material and technical base for socialist system.<sup>100</sup> After the overthrow of Emperor Haile-Selassie, the Derg Military Regime launched the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) in 1974. The NDR promised to destroy the organization of the old feudo-bourgeois system and transform culture and technology by eliminating illiteracy and exploitation. The largest number of the population was mobilized through a campaign and adult literacy was essential to realize the goals of the new revolution. Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) stated in the National Literacy Campaign that “All essential actions to eradicate illiteracy will be started”. This Campaign was one of its plans for nationwide carrying out with great pressure on the countryside as well as those who were very distant and ignored areas.<sup>101</sup>

The *Därg* promised to amend imbalance between the middle part of the state and border areas. Various and useful actions were implemented to improve a feeling of national awareness among the local people. Social facilities were extended and attempts were also made to encourage expansion of education by the policy of the literacy movement and the representation of citizens in the regional government.<sup>102</sup> After the deposal of the imperial regime, the state power was transformed and fell on the hand of the *Därg* regime. The *Därg* was famous among the Majang community by encouraging villagization program and contributed to lay base for the improvement of their living conditions. Paying tax was also implemented by the *Därg* period that was started and collected during the imperial rule.<sup>103</sup> The administration of the *Därg* recognized that the government had greatly profound interaction with

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<sup>99</sup> Abebe.p.78.

<sup>100</sup> Berhanu Zeleke, “Challenges and Opportunities of Development in Ethiopia through Urban-Rural Economic Linkage” (Ph.D. Dissertation, development of Studies, University of South Africa, 2016), P.95.

<sup>101</sup> Bholu H.S, “Adult Literacy for Development in Ethiopia: .31<sup>st</sup> Annual conference of the comparative and international education society meeting” (Indiana, 1987).pp.3-6.

<sup>102</sup> Temesgen Gebeyehu, “Identity, centralization and Resistance in Ethiopia: the case of Nuer and Anuak”, *African Journal*, Vol.8, No 6 (2014), P.160.

<sup>103</sup> Seyoum, “Federalism at the Margins of the Ethiopian State ...”, pp.100-101.

the Majang which resulted in the beginning of Majang participation in different institutions for the first time. After the Därg took over the power and implemented the socialist idea, different types participator associations were established in which men, women and youths were organized.<sup>104</sup>

The coming of the Därg administration to power reformed the situations of Majang community. The implementation of villagization policy at the end of 1970s and the approval of this policy by the community was one of important event at that time. There was also the establishment numerous villages in the Jungle. A number of homesteads founded with their own village leaders and administrators.<sup>105</sup> The general concept of villagization policy was to gather dispersed agricultural societies all over the state in to a particular homestead to support and offer access to pure water, health care, education and other infrastructures. The Därg's villagization policy that implemented in all regions including the Majang community seems to follow from the constitution provision which reads as:" the state shall encourage the scattered rural population to aggregate in order to change their backward living conditions and enable them to lead a better social life". Accordingly, the government justified the objective of *Mändär Mesereta* (villagization) program; to regroup scattered farming communities throughout the country into small village clusters, so as to improve agricultural production, to introduce social and economic change, rational land use as well as to make the distribution of people compatible with that of the natural resources.<sup>106</sup>

However, villagization program of the Därg regime was mostly beneficial to the people, but to some extent it was inconsistent with their way of life such as field shifting agriculture, since settlement places were far from the forest where big trees not available to hang their beehives.<sup>107</sup> As a whole the villagization program significantly changed their way of life, they abandoned the custom of movement from place to place and many Majang people built their hut along the main roads.<sup>108</sup>

In addition to villagization, the Därg implemented Resettlement program that also reached to the Majang territory. Resettlement has been used to indicate difficulties occurred by natural and human made calamities such as starvation, drought, war and the like. Before the 1974 revolution, there was an extension of the imperial state and advance of stronghold towns and stable residences of settlers, in the south, south west and western part of Ethiopia into the regions integrated by the conqueror royal armed

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<sup>104</sup> Informant :Wajine, Efrem

<sup>105</sup> Ren'ya Sato, "Dynamics of Subsistence and Reproduction among the Majangir: Preliminary Report on Demographic Construction", 16th *International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* (Trondheim 2-7 July 2007), p.4.

<sup>106</sup> Belay Gebremichael.p.15.

<sup>107</sup> Informant: Ato Tailem, Ato Ephraim and Juhar.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.* Ato Eyosiyas, Zerihu Nebiyat.



forces. Nevertheless, later 1974 resettlement comes to be a matter of government plan and the pace of settlement extremely greater than before. In 1974, while the Provisional Military Administration Council (*Därg*) held power, the major and immediate action in response to the famine and drought stricken areas was the beginning and implementation of “resettlement” into the places where sufficient amount of resources available and to sparsely populated regions.<sup>109</sup> However, the large numbers relocation and arrival of the highlanders into the area was started in the 1980s, especially in the 1984/5 starvation, several thousands of people mainly from Wollo and Tigray provinces were moved in to different areas of the country that supported by the Rehabilitation Relief Commission (RRC). The aims of the relocation plan comprised: relieving residents’ burden on a place by shifting societies from densely populated, drought-stricken and deteriorated northern and central highland regions; transferring people displaced by natural and man-made calamities.<sup>110</sup>

Another important achievement of the *Därg* regime was that the declaration of eradicating illiteracy the educated to teach those who were not educated through the campaign of adult education. In this way the *Därg* government encouraged the Majang people in the education sector in addition to the agricultural activity.<sup>111</sup> After the collapse of *Därg*, reforms and rearranging of state power took place on the basis of ethnic federalism under the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). The establishment of democracy and peace also supposed to bring progress in the sector of social and economic development of Ethiopia’s nation’s nationalities and people.<sup>112</sup> After 1991, in the new governmental arrangement Gambella developed in to self-governing regional state. By this opportunity of self-governing principle the situation of the Majang people given special attention. The regional boundary line was also extended to the east direction and Godäre woreda became part of Gambella region.<sup>113</sup>

Yäkki and Godäre woreda was also separated in to two different governmental regions. Yäkki included in to South Nations Nationalities and peoples Region (SNNPR) and Godäre was placed in to Gambella regional state. After a time the Majang zone was recognized with only one woreda, Godäre. The Majang zone having only one woreda and continued until 2007. But in 2007 another new and the

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<sup>109</sup> Amare Kenaw, “Institute for Peace and Security Studies” (Addis Ababa University, 2013), pp.48-49.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.* p.50.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.* Wajine.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> Harold Marcus, “New Trends in Ethiopian Studies”, *the 12<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, Volume II, p.910.

second woreda created and named as Mängäš Woreda.<sup>114</sup> During the Imperial Period and the *Därg* era Gambella had the status of an *awraja* (district) in the Illubabor Province but it recognized as Gambella and gained its regional status only after the collapse of the *Därg*.<sup>115</sup> The changing of Gambella in to the level of a regional state and founding of various zones including the Majang zone created numerous noticeable improvements in the area of political representation and social progress. In contradictory to the imperial and *Därg* rule, under the new decentralized ruling system, the right of regional administration was permitted to the indigenous people. In the sector of social improvement, education and other services indicated great progresses.<sup>116</sup> In Ethiopian history, all ethnic groups had no equal right; especially, during the imperial periods led by Emperor Menelik II and Emperor Haile Selassie I. But nowadays, the Ethiopian people are categorized by extensive diversity in religion, language, culture, socio-economic activities and traditional governance arrangements.<sup>117</sup>

After the 1991, the Majang people practiced their right of self-determination, the right to learn by their own mother tongue, the right to develop their culture and identity based on the Ethiopian constitution. Schools were opened in each Kebele especially from grade one up to four by the mandate of the woreda council and by the woreda education office. Junior and high schools were also opened to facilitate the access to education of the people.<sup>118</sup> During the *Därg* period there were no sufficient educated man powers. But in contrary, after 1991, hundreds of teachers in education sector, in health, agriculture and in other fields a lot of man power are graduating from different colleges and universities. From among the Majang nationality one doctor graduated from higher institution in health profession. Different institutions were also constructed. For instance health posts in every Kebele, farmers training centers, clinics, health centers and above all one referral hospital constructed and giving service in Majang zone.<sup>119</sup> Other types of infrastructures such as roads that connect Kebele to Kebele, Kebele to woreda, woreda to woreda and woreda with regional city were constructed. Electricity, telecommunication (mobile service), were widely expanded after 1991.<sup>120</sup> The Majang controlled all political power and played a pivotal role in the local politics and they started to govern Majang zone since they are the third

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<sup>114</sup> Abebe, p.12.

<sup>115</sup> Simon Tut Pal, "Federalism and Economic Empowerment ...", p.26.

<sup>116</sup> Ojot Miru Ojulu, "Large-Scale Land Acquisitions and Minorities ...", p.125.

<sup>117</sup> Informant: Wajine Taro.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.* Wajine.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

major ethnic groups next to the Nuer and Anuak in the region. The main remarkable thing in 1991 was the annexation of Godäre woreda in to the Gambella region.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Ahmed, The ethnic Interaction of Majang and Agnwa in Godere, Mengeshi ..., p.27.

## CHAPTER TWO

### A SOCIO-ECONOMIC HISTORY OF THE MAJANG PEOPLE IN MAJANG ZONE

In this chapter, attentions are given on some of the socio-economic activities like different agricultural activities; crop production, fishing, land tenure system and craft works. In addition to this the importance of trade for the development of economy for the national level as well as Majang zone could be discussed below.

#### 2.1. AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is a common word that comprises various activities such as crop production, animal husbandry, forestry, horticulture, hunting, gathering, fishing and the like. This section of the thesis focuses on crop production, co-operative working, trade, crafts works and some other related agricultural activities. The study area was full of resources such as coffee, honey and various types of spices. Highlanders are engaged in activity of coffee and other crop harvesting while the Majang engaged in hang bee hives, hunting wild animals and collecting wild fruits. Some of the ethnic groups have started to produce coffee and different types of crops including animal rearing very recently.<sup>122</sup> The commencement of taming of plants and animals reinforced the establishment of farming techniques. The change from hunter-gatherer livelihood to stable food production (the ‘Neolithic revolution’) was one of the greatest significant happenings in human past.<sup>123</sup> The source of income to the southwest Ethiopia’s agriculturalists mainly depend on harvest of forest yields such as honey, spices, medicinal plants, fuel wood and building supplies.<sup>124</sup>

Socio-economically the study area and its peoples have been among the developing nations in Ethiopia in relations to government services. Even though some improvement were made, mainly in the area of public facilities and basic development set-ups, the socio-economic gap among the local people and the highlanders remains amazing. The commercial sector and, the overall economy of the area were completely dominated by the highlanders while the native communities engaged in farming activities some of them employed in government jobs.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Afera Alemu, “Socio Economic Impacts of villagization and Large Scale Agricultural investment....., p.29.

<sup>123</sup> Worku Derara, “The Ethnoarchaeology of coffee production ....., p.2.

<sup>124</sup> Henok Kassa, “ Impacts of deforestation on biodiversity ,soil carbon stocks soil quality, run off and sediment yield at South west Ethiopia’s forest frontier” ( PhD Dissertation ,Geography, Ghent University ,2017) ,p.41 .

<sup>125</sup> Ojot Miru Ojulu, “Large-Scale Land Acquisitions and Minorities ... , p.107.

### 2.1.1. AGRICULTURE UP TO 1941

The Majang societies settled in the fertile and densely forested lands of the Gambella region, Majang zone. This favorable environment and climatic condition with sufficient rainfall in the region enabled the society to practice different agricultural activities. Thus, the society used to cultivate various crops, for local consumption. Like many other neighboring ethnic groups, the Majang people depend mainly on seasonal rains for agriculture activity. The peasants of the area produced maize, sorghum and other root crops and vegetable.<sup>126</sup> The Majang believed that land and forest as a main advantage for their survival. They were largely relied on honey collection, hunting, and crop cultivation for their daily consumption. There were several signs and facts that indicated the special link between the Majang and the forest that was most of the Majang people resided in the densely forested area.<sup>127</sup> In this respect, the Majang expressed themselves and their connection with the forest as ‘the Majang without the forest was the same as a fish out of river’. The connection between the Majang and the forest “their land was like their blood”. It was everything and to miss jungle would be to miss their identity” Forest was a place where they inhabit, hanging bee hive to collect honey, hunt wild animals and harvesting various agricultural products and get cultural drug and traditional worship.<sup>128</sup> The Majang depended on their environment for almost all the items which go to make up their material culture. From wild forest tree, they make their shelters, baskets and beehives. The social changes were happening among the Majang community they kept and strengthen their cultural tradition particularly their rich traditional life of the forest.<sup>129</sup> Before the 1940s coffee was known as forest tree. There were strong links between the Majang people and coffee. Before the people understood the use of coffee beans, they simply went to the forest and cut the leaves of coffee and brought to their home to prepare *chämo* (*Kari*). However, gradually the seeds of coffee in the forest grew. Some people who saw these coffee seedlings brought and transplanted from the forest to their villages and planted near their home to domesticate it without any awareness of its use and how to take care of planting, weeding and collecting it.<sup>130</sup> Maize was among the most essential staple food crops used for household feeding in the Majang community since ancient time. In the shifting farming system that experienced by the community, clearing the land and slashing in preparation of land for the growing maize frequently started in January and March. Preparing the land and cutting forest (clearing) taken place by traditional farming tools machet

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<sup>126</sup> Informant: Wajine and Lencho.

<sup>127</sup> Seyoum, pp.10- 11

<sup>128</sup> Informant: Wajine and Lencho.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.* Aron, Rome and Yimam.

<sup>130</sup> Informant: Wajine, Zekiwos.

(*Jamai*). After the land was prepared properly, males dig the hole by using traditional digging tool *horda*, with a pointed ends which is made of wood. Females and children placed maize seeds in to the hole and cover it again. The suitable time of sowing maize was in March and the harvest is collected from June to September.<sup>131</sup> Before the coming of the recent machet, *Jamai* the older one was a slightly bigger than large knives; its holder was unfastened and not suitable for working effectively. During working, it would drop from the hands of the workers in the jungle while cutting trees and grasses.<sup>132</sup> In addition to maize and sorghum, the Majang also cultivated various kinds of root crops like taro (*shakoy*), Cassava (*baburé* or *anshoté*), varieties of yam (*kawn* and *badéy*) and sweet potato (*bambé*). The farming and harvesting of these root crops was chiefly for daily feeding. They also obtain these mentioned root crops from the rich natural jungle. These crops were creepers and wooden sticks were important to support from every side to prevent from falling on the ground. These harvests were frequently cultivated around the dwelling places.<sup>133</sup>

Before 1970s, Majang were not raised livestock, they have different reasons for these the first thing was that they had no interest since they lived in the forest and the tsetse fly prevents them not to keep livestock. The only domestic animals kept by them were dogs and chickens. In the Majang society, most of the time hens were regarded as women responsibility and their property. The Majang keep dogs, since dogs were significant for hunting in the forest and were very essential in the Majang society.<sup>134</sup>

### 2.1.2. AGRICULTURE FROM 1941-1991

The main livelihood of the Majang people in the area was hunting, bee keeping and shifting cultivation. Since the incorporation of the area, there has been slow arrival of highlander mostly Oromo, Shākächo and Kafficho into the Majang land (in the previous time Yäkki woreda, and now Majang zone). But the Oromo were the first to reach in the Majang land to sell their agricultural yields and to hunt Buffalo.<sup>135</sup> Majority of the residents of the area were highlanders who were resided in the rural area. Those highlanders come in to the region by the Därg government in settlement program because the Northern part of Ethiopia was affected by famine and drought. These immigrants controlled the economic activities of the zone in relation to the Majang ethnic groups with the help of improved harvesting method and animal husbandry since the area was productive and appropriate for various crops

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<sup>131</sup> Abebe, p.28; Informant: Ejigael, Juhar.

<sup>132</sup> Demeke, "The cultural History of Majang Nations . . . .", p.13.

<sup>133</sup> Informant: Juhar, Kedimael, Lencho and Tinbit.

<sup>134</sup> Informant: Kibrnahom, Tinbit and Yimam.

<sup>135</sup> Seyoum, p.185.

production such as coffee; fruits and variety of harvests were the main production in the Zone.<sup>136</sup> Due to external pressures and advent of other communities into traditional Majang areas, some changes have been rapidly taken place in the Majang livelihood system. Although 1980s they used to avoid these pressures by moving deep into the forest when intruded on by other communities. But after 1980s due to a shortage of more space to move into, they have begun to adjust to these new conditions by changing their livelihoods. For instance, some Majang have started to settle permanently in villages as settled farmers as opposed to their traditional shifting cultivation style. As a result, they have adopted planting trees that take several years to produce fruits/crops, such as coffee trees, mangos, and avocado. More amazingly, herding of domestic animals had been non-existent among the Majang communities before end 1970s. But, after the beginning of the 1980s some of Majang communities have started to adopt rearing domestic animals such as cow and sheep from highlanders who were encroaching onto their settlements.<sup>137</sup> The coming of highlanders and internal population growth (the Majang), both contributed the overall population density in the area. On the other hand, the growth of population in the region caused the declining of land size, slow down and hinder of their traditional mobility among the Majang community. They blamed that the coming of other ethnic groups (highlanders) in to the area caused to the degradation of their natural environment.<sup>138</sup>

The Därg government contributed a lot to the Majang people to improve their living conditions and depend on themselves by giving different crop seeds like maize and other vegetables such as banana and sugar cane including farming tools for digging and cutting trees and grasses. The Därg's role was never disappeared from the memory of the Majang people. The government allowed the community to engage in different economic activities.<sup>139</sup> Different socio-economic tasks done by societies categorized by a certain types of division of labor, among which the others gender aspect was obviously recognized. In the development of social and economic growth, people specified in certain jobs and hence it was socially recognized that there were males' jobs and females' responsibilities. However, people shared these activities to genders varied from one tradition to another and from time to time, a gender division of labour occurred in all communities. It has been seen that females, like males play

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<sup>136</sup> Eshetu Alebachew, "The Right for Political Participation of 'Non-Indigenous' Peoples of Gambella Region Particularly in Gambella . . .", pp.46-47.

<sup>137</sup> Informant: Fikre, Wajine and Efrem.

<sup>138</sup> Asfaw Mekonnen, "Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus Illubabor Bethel Synod (EECM), Developmental and social service commission Majang Feasibility study" (Mettu, 2003), p.25.

<sup>139</sup> Informant: Wajine, Lencho, Dawit Goyin and Kibrnahom.

important roles in economic progress.<sup>140</sup> Like other neighboring areas and ethnic groups, labor division among the Majang was based on natural biological classification that was male and female engaged in different activities. For instance women involved in pottery and house hold works whereas males engaged in bee keeping, hunting and fishing as the basis of their livelihood which was not plenty but only for daily consumption.<sup>141</sup> In addition to this, males were responsible in collecting and selling honey production and attending remote markets. Household works including collecting fire wood, fetching water, child care, preparing food, collecting maize and sorghum production, controlling income from sorghum and maize, attending nearby markets were responsibilities of women. Children also had the responsibilities of assisting their parents after school. Most of the time in the Majang society, house hold assist each other for certain tasks initiated by eating together. Several works were communal and the group members worked to gather until the activity was completed.<sup>142</sup> Since their occupation was agriculture, they produced different crops such as cereal crops, root crops, oil seeds and vegetables. The commonly produced cereal crops maize, sorghum, which were the essential food crops among the community.<sup>143</sup>

They harvest these different crops by the method of slash and burn system. The reason why they apply this system, they justify that to get new farmland they cut down big trees every year because the new farmland gives better yield than the former (older) one. Another reason why they burn the cut down forest was in order to reduce the weeds and to obtain much crop harvest. The material that they used to cut forest (trees) was machet (*gäjjära*) that look like big knives and axes (*kabbi*). After they cut down the forest they would wait for two or three weeks till the cut down forest lose its moisture. After weeks they burned the forest. This was known as slash and burn method or system.<sup>144</sup>

Forest was everything for the Majang society. Therefore, the forest land and its properties are essential element of the Majang identity and their chief basis of living. In general, the very existence of these societies is related with the welfare of the jungle.<sup>145</sup> There were various sources of subsistence and incomes for the Majang. These include honey, field crops, spices, root crops and hunting and gathering. Some sources serve for both purposes: household consumption and cash income (e.g. honey), others were mainly for market to sale and earn cash income (e.g. coffee) and others like root crops for

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<sup>140</sup>Fenet Belay, "Gender Role in Agricultural Activities in Ethiopia: Country Review", *Journal of culture, society and Development* (Vol. 22, 2016), pp.1-2.

<sup>141</sup>Simon Tut Pal, "Federalism and Economic Empowerment...", P.52.

<sup>142</sup>Asfaw Mekonnen, "EECM, p.15.

<sup>143</sup>Seyoum,p.12 ., Informant,: Yimam Temenjet and Rome Kon.

<sup>144</sup>Ahmed, p.41. Informant, Ejigael Rika.

<sup>145</sup>Abraham Sewunet, "people, space and state: Breaking cycle of the conflict in Gambella....p.535.



consumption. Honey was still mentioned in the first place, but seen generally declining because the depletion of forest, decline of production area and reduction of shifting agricultural activity.<sup>146</sup>

The Majang also produce roots and tubers, which make the staple food of the Majang and consumed throughout the year. These include shakoy (*taro*), babure (*cassava*) kawon and badey (*yam*), and the like. These were highly important to the Majang, especially during bad times of food scarcity. Such times were called *bange* (hunger). After 1980s, horticultural crops such as banana, mango, avocado, and pineapple and papaya have become part of the list of crops that the Majang cultivated. Among vegetables, pepper, local cabbage and beetroot were produced in the backyard.<sup>147</sup> Clearing and cut down of forests to get fertile land for harvesting crops was regular task of Majang people. The Majang named the newly cleared fertile land *gedhi* which give better yield than field cleared from non-forested land.<sup>148</sup> The initial step was to cut the jungle, an activity known as *purik or ragadh*. Obtaining new fields from the cleared jungle to substitute their old-fields that the Majang must repeatedly abandoned to the bush. They favored places covered by well-grown forest rather than those where the trees small and under growth.<sup>149</sup> Most of Ethiopian people have developed a long experience of social, cultural and economic history or doing activities in coordination to satisfy their socio-economic desires. Farming activities such as *Däbo*, *Wänfäl*, social participations *Idir*, *Equb* etc. were performed by cooperative labors. Usually, several social events are still taking place in countryside of Ethiopia through cooperative labors.<sup>150</sup>

The Majang people had a culture of working together for the purpose of mutual benefits especially in the time of farming activity and building of house. There were two Kinds of cooperation at work. The first one was pool labor (*gamadh*). This was ancient habit of doing activity in group among the community. In this activity participants were mainly from the nearby settlements .During this work culture, the owner who organized that program provides the participants with food and traditional drink *tajan* or *ogol*. Such type of cooperation at work was also the culture of other ethnic groups in our country known as *Däbo*.<sup>151</sup> The second type of doing such activities together among the society was *tokogn* .It was different from the first type pool labor (*Gamadh*) . In this kind of cooperation and labor

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<sup>146</sup> Asfaw Mekonnen, “Ethiopian Evangelical church Mekane Yesus Illubabor Bethel Synod Development and Social Service Commission: Majang Feasibility Study” (2003, Mettu), p.20.

<sup>147</sup> Wossen, “Gender based division of labour in agricultural production among the Majang . . . .”, p.32.

<sup>148</sup> Informant: Cheneke Sanan, Kibrnahom and Negussie.

<sup>149</sup> Stauder, “The Majangir Ecology. . . . .”, p.28.

<sup>150</sup> Seid Mohamed, “Working traditions and their contributions to Rural Development, Awra-Amba Community” (MA Thesis, Cooperative Marketing, Mekele University, 2008), p.126.

<sup>151</sup> Informant: Fikre Tefera, Yimam and Cheneke.

sharing the members who take part in the work was limited; that was not exceeding than six. Here, the participants who involved in the work would be organized based on their age and ability to work. This was also called *Dado* among other ethnic groups in Ethiopia.<sup>152</sup> A person known by the name Grazmač Ayänäw Woldämariam, who was the representative of the parliament by the year of 1960s brought the current matchet (*gäjära*) and acquainted it to the Majang people of the area. Finally when he completed his service year, he brought this material and trained the community the advantages of the material in increasing production and efficiency.<sup>153</sup>

**Maize** was among the most essential staple food crops used for household feeding in the Majang community since ancient time until recently. The Majang community also started to supply maize to the market after 1974. Maize as it was staple food; it was prepared and eaten in different ways. After it was grown and ripped, it was prepared and eaten in various methods. For instance, when it was fresh (before it became dried and harvested), the Majang prepared it as *kijo*. It was spherical (round) shaped and soft and like bread. Its preparation was coiling it by maize leaves and cooked by heating it by water and vapor. When it was also fresh, it was eaten roasted.<sup>154</sup> After it was dried and harvested, it was grinded by *pañi* (mortar) that was placed under the earth. After it was dried and grinded, the well grinded maize flour was prepared in to porridge (*šapatan*), the most essential traditional food among community. While grinding maize, women drink *Kari* to stimulate and encourage themselves because the grinding process was very difficult and tire some activity.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>152</sup>*Ibid.* Fikre, Yimam and Cheneke.

<sup>153</sup>Abebe, p.28. Informant: Ejigael Rika, Juhar Tefera.

<sup>154</sup>Ahmed, p.42.

<sup>155</sup>Eyilachew Sewagegnehu ‘‘Sapatan and Kari’’ traditional food and drink in Majang community (Millennium Gambella, August 2008), pp.20-21.

**Figure 1. Woman preparing traditional food šapatan (porridge) from maize flour**



(Photo by the researcher, October, 2021)

After the completion of the grinding, little amount of the flour dilute with water and added in to the *léwi*, a pot used to prepare porridge and stirred by *kumañi* a wooden material to stir porridge. After the boiling process completed the porridge (*šapatan*) distributed and eaten by the family members and neighbors.<sup>156</sup> After maize was collected, it was become dry in the sun and put in storage place over elevated bed like constructed stage called as *palé*. This was done to avoid maize from pests that damage the growing parts of the maize.<sup>157</sup>

**Sorghum** (*ñidhin*) was additional and the main food crop that the Majang began to make available it to market currently. Its production was different from maize .Because its field preparation was done at the same time with the sowing of sorghum. The grasses that cut down during the seeding of sorghum were not burned like the preparation of maize fields. Instead the grasses were remaining on the land for the purpose of preventing the seeds from being eaten by insects. The suitable time of seeding sorghum started in May and extended up to June and July. Its yield was collected and taken to home from November to December<sup>158</sup>. After its yield collected, sorghum was put in the storage place over elevated bed like constructed stage called as *pale*’ like that the storage place of maize.<sup>159</sup> Sorghum as that of maize it was also favorable traditional food in the society. After it was grinded, it was ready for food by baking *injära* and bread. It was also significant for porridge and preparation of drinks *tajan* like

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<sup>156</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>157</sup>Worku Derara, “The Ethnoarchaeology of coffee production and consumption-----, p, 193.

<sup>158</sup>Demeke, p.14. Informant: Adieto Wolde Senbet, Tiyalem Bejen.

<sup>159</sup>Worku, p.193.

maize. *Tajan* was made from both grains (Maize or sorghum) by the adding of the grown seeds of both of the two grains. *Tajan* was essential traditional drink for the Majang community and it also used to prevent hunger.<sup>160</sup>

**Figure: 2. Woman preparing (peeling shakoy), traditional food from root crop**



(Photo taken by the researcher, October 2021)

## Coffee

Coffee played a significant role in the socio-cultural and economy in the area, where the plant developed a greater value as it became crucial in feasts and rituals. By the 1920s, the increasing economic significance of coffee was recognized by the former rulers which resulted extended the coffee agricultural plantation in the occupied areas. The consumption of coffee in the community of Ethiopia is linked with customs. Drinking of coffee makes a significant communal gathering a ceremonial that helps household members to socialize themselves at family level and with members of close neighbors at large. It was also a vital drink used in welcoming guests. It was also one of the plants that related to different practices of ceremonies.<sup>161</sup>

Compared to other places, the beginning of coffee farming in the Majang land is seemingly current occurrences. The farming of coffee in the Majang territory was not familiar even until the 1960s. This

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<sup>160</sup> Demeke, p.15; Informant: Biniam Sisekir, Ejigael Rika

<sup>161</sup> Informant: Wajine and Lencho.

was because of it was incompatible with their practice of shifting settlement and agriculture system of the community. But Some Mäjäng around Yäkki started the production of coffee in small amount in the 1960 who had contact with highlanders especially the Oromo and the Amhara played an important role in the beginning of planting and harvesting of coffee.<sup>162</sup> The Majang began planting coffee seedling in backyards by uprooting coffee seedlings grown naturally in the forest and gave the required attention necessary to produce the continuous harvest. At the same time, they also started to understand the use and profit of the economic income from the sale of coffee beans. Currently, the community has realized drinking coffee which was ready from coffee beans.<sup>163</sup>

But many Majang started coffee production recently after 1974. Plantation of coffee by the Majang had begun by those who had contacts with Galier/highlanders. But by the time of Därg government, due attentions were given and agricultural development workers were assigned in each kebele and training has given to farmers about the digging of coffee holes, how to plant coffee seedlings, how to weed, how to collect and dry coffee harvest by those agricultural development workers. All these training and care helped and encouraged the Majang community in planting and harvesting coffee. After that time on wards, the people started producing coffee and provided it in to local market with some quantity.<sup>164</sup>

Concerning the economic value of coffee, it was sold in local markets at a relatively low price because of the absence of transportation that connects with other domestic markets. But recently, the amount of coffee harvest was increased especially some model farmers produced more than 50 sacks( quntal) of coffee and the price also increased from time to time and the life of the people gradually improved.<sup>165</sup>

As mentioned earlier, during the time of imperial regime, the Majang had no the knowledge to use coffee beans. .Before 1970s, however, Majang used the leaves of wild coffee to make *Kari*. They had never been using the beans of coffee. But gradually many Majang began producing it for market and consuming the beans. However, most of the Majang community started coffee cultivation after 1974.<sup>166</sup>

Before they started the use of coffee beans, the Majang used coffee leaves for the preparation of *Kari* The Majang are usually associated with the drinking of *Kari*, a mixture made from coffee leaves with a fusion of garlic, jomu, (*bäsobela*), pepper (*mirmidak*), salt and other spicy components. The preparation and the drinking of *Kari* was recognized a very distant past. *Kari*, which is also known as *chämo* among other ethnic groups(highlanders).It was consumed not only by Majang society but also

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<sup>162</sup> Worku Derara, p.93.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> Informant: Efrem, Biniam

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.* Efrem, Biniam

by the people living in neighboring areas of Shäka, Kaffa and Bench-Maji zones of Southern Nations, Nationalities and Nationalities and People's Region (SNNPR).<sup>167</sup>

*Kari* which was an essential traditional drink prepared in farming activities of the Majangir. Mainly in group activities (*dado*) where members contributing in such agricultural activities as collecting maize and sorghum or during house building were provided *Kari* along with other prepared meals.<sup>168</sup> In the preparation and drinking of *Kari*, the Majangir needed two main kinds of tools: clay and plant products. Two kinds of pots, *kebet-karionk* and *kebet-sid'anonk*, were used while boiling and purification of the mixture of different herbs. In addition to this, earthen cups known as *mätägoy* were important at the drinking time.<sup>169</sup> *Chämo (Kari)* which was a traditional drink made by adding variety of spices, was important and believed that it has medicinal values for diseases like common cold, typhoid, malaria and others.<sup>170</sup> Since it was current economic activity to the area, some of the people interested in coffee cultivation and become an important source of cash crop. The preparation of land for coffee seedlings (clearing land), digging holes for seedlings and weeding of seedlings was the task of males. Collecting of coffee during its harvest was the duty of the whole family members. Land for coffee plantation was ready in June and planting seedlings done in July. Collection of coffee was started from mid of October up to the end of December. The Majang exchanged coffee with other ethnic groups for salt and other items.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>167</sup>Worku Derara, pp.323-332.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*p.357

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*p.323-324.

<sup>170</sup> Informant: Wajine.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.* Eyosiyas, Juhar

**Figure.3. (A) a woman carrying fire wood and coffee leaves to prepare Kari. (B) a woman while preparing kari and important utensils for preparation**

A



B



Source: Worku Derara, the Ethnoarchaelogy of coffee production and consumption-----, pp.328-329)

**Hunting** was an important part of the economy of the Majang community. Traditionally, the Majangir considered themselves as cultivators, hunters and bee keepers. The livelihood of Majang community greatly depends on hunting and collecting forest products. But agriculture has currently been significant



basis of livelihood for Majang community.<sup>172</sup> Hunting was maybe the ancient economic activity of human beings. It was the case also for the Majang that was a duty reserved for men.<sup>173</sup> It was a common experience in Ethiopia since ancient time and was done for various aims. It was also a common understanding that hunting started by earlier communities and sustained through the historical eras. Hunting and killing dangerous and big wildlife gave the hunter recognition and courage among the society.<sup>174</sup> Hunting had been practiced among the Majang to provide with them animal protein, for valuable trading items, social and ritual well-being.<sup>175</sup> But hunting and gathering among the Majang community has been declining from time to time since 1974. This was because of the decline of forest coverage due to deforestation that resulted reduction of animals to be hunted. The people changed their living style to permanent settlement.<sup>176</sup>

The Majang society in the study area had different seasons which were suitable for hunting wild animals. The time from the mid of October to the beginning of May was advantageous for hunting, since in this dry period ,the volume of the rivers reduce and the wild animals travel from one area to another in search of water and grass. At that time, animals were clearly seen by the hunters from a remotest place and different hunters exited for their hunting events in the forest.<sup>177</sup> Hunting was an important part of the economy of the Majang society .For instance killing of some wild life such as elephant, buffalo and lion were considered as significant with courage and ritual welfare. Another wild lives were also hunted to minimize the damaging of crops. These included various species of birds, warthogs, ground hogs and large bush rats. Some of animals like bush pigs, and antelopes were simple to chase and snare, and were captured to obtain meat. Chasing of these wild animals could also initiated by the interest for essential trade items like elephant tusks, skins of deer, antelope and leopard.<sup>178</sup>

However, hunting in the Grassland, burning long grasses is essential to make easier it. Trapping system was performed in the jungle. Traps were applied for grasping elephants that were killed with big lances throw down from trees. Hunting dogs were important particularly for the grasp of wild pigs.<sup>179</sup> These tusks and skins of animals were highly needed not only for trading items but also needed to pay

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<sup>172</sup> Ojot Miru Ojulu, p.113.

<sup>173</sup> Abebe, p.33; Informant: Aron Mak and Dawit.

<sup>174</sup> Abenew Debalkie, "A History of Dangur woreda, 1905-1991" (MA Thesis, History, Addis Ababa University, 2016), p.24.

<sup>175</sup> Seyoum, "Federalism at the Margins of the Ethiopian State ....", p.12.

<sup>176</sup> Informant: Wajine.

<sup>177</sup> Informant: Zerihun Nebiyat, Efrem, and Adiето.

<sup>178</sup> Worku, p.196.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*



yearly tax to the Ethiopian central government during the imperial regime. Before 1940s, the instrument used for hunting by the community was spears (*beya*). However, since the 1940s, they have begun to acquire and use recent guns for hunting.<sup>180</sup> Most jungle chasing of small wildlife on the grassland, was not by searching, hunting, and killing, but relatively by trapping. This was the hunting method by which Majang most succeed. They made an extensive variety of traps: snares, springs, dead falls of all size, and traps initiated with loaded rifles. Traps can be prepared to catch most jungle game wildlife.<sup>181</sup>

There were two types of chasing methods in the community. These were chasing by a surprise attack and chasing and murdering the wild life. This was done frequently in the winter time. Because during this time foliage of tree and tall grasses dried and fall. Therefore, the would be hunted animals simply visible to hunters and captured easily in the jungle.<sup>182</sup> Another kind of chasing was performed by making various types of snares. This kind of chasing was done during summer season. The snare that was prepared from creepers plant rope like thing (*mälti*) used to grasp the legs or the necks of the animals. This type of snares named by the society as *kangi*.<sup>183</sup> The last form of snares were prepared from wood in a stage (raised area) and overloaded with diverse tools such as stones. This is known as *gomoy*. In this case, the snare would arrested all part of animals' body as it was ready to fall against the animals, the instant the animal come into it. Traps were prepared not remote from residence. The traps were spied repeatedly at the dawn and dusk by the owner of the trap.<sup>184</sup>

### **Fishing**

Fishing was one part of economic activity taken place on the rivers. It was significant source of survival and revenue and thus essentially contributed to income security for a great number of families. Fishing has mutually a direct and indirect support to domestic livelihoods. The direct benefit was that, fish can be used up by the family or can serve as a source of revenue to buying food. It was additional economic duty of the Majang community especially for males. This occupation was different from that of hunting because it was done on the water body/rivers which were near to their residence and it was not group activity. They used fishhooks and baskets for catching fish. They did not given more attention for catching fish in relation to hunting.<sup>185</sup> The Majang had many techniques of fishing such as

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<sup>180</sup> Demeke, "The cultural History of Majang Nations . . . . .", p.18.

<sup>181</sup> Stauder, "the Majangir Ecology . . . . .", p.17.

<sup>182</sup> Informants: Biniam, Eyosiyas and Yosef.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>185</sup> Abebe, p.35.

poles, basket-traps and poisoning. Fishing was usually personal duty performed individually. When fish was obtained, it was consumed within a few days. This was because they have no methods for preserving and storing meat and fish.<sup>186</sup>

**Gathering** was mentioned as one of oldest economic activity of the Majang. Gathering was still important among them to supplement their daily food. It was done all over the year. However, it was extremely performed at the time of serious starvation and scarcity of diet (*bangi*). They collect leaves, fruits and roots.<sup>187</sup> But in recent times, hunting of wild animals and gathering wild fruits decreased from time to time due to deforestation, large forest lands were cleared for the production of coffee. In addition to this, the Majang changed their living style to permanent settlement. The animals to be hunted and the products to be gathered were also reduced from 1974 onwards.<sup>188</sup>

## **2.2. BEE KEEPING**

Honey yield was categorized by the extensive use of traditional knowledge causing in comparatively low honey supply and poor quality of honey harvested when compared to the potential honey yields and quality gains associated with modern beehives. Most of honey harvested within the area comes from traditional beehives that usually deliver low yields and low quality of honey. This widespread use of traditional knowledge in honey production resulted in relatively low honey supply and poor quality of honey harvest. The price of honey also very low especially before 1970s. However, even the supply and quality of honey production was low, the price increased from time to time from 5 ET birr to 60-80 and above ET birr in kilo gram after 1980s. Honey production and beekeeping were ecologically friendly activities and relatively easy to involve in. These non-farming commercial activities have the potential to offer a wide range of economic contributions. The main economic values could be derived from engaging in beekeeping: income generation from marketing honey and its by-products (beeswax) and the household consumption by preparing it in different form. Additional benefits from beekeeping are associated with the keeping the balance of nature by preserving natural resources like forest and water.<sup>189</sup>

Collection of honey from bee hives was the most important occupation of the Majang people since ancient times. It was the base of their economy and source of income. It was traditionally obtained from jungle. As that of hunting, gathering, fishing and shifting cultivation, honey was a vital economic

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<sup>186</sup> Stauder, "The Majangir Ecology ...", p.17.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.* Abebe.

<sup>188</sup> Informants: Eyosiyas Sergaw, Efrem Gebreyesus.

<sup>189</sup> Informants: Eyosiyas, Efrem.

accomplishment largely done by the Majang men to increase their livelihood.<sup>190</sup> The Majang made two kinds of bee hives (*dané*). The first one was prepared from strong thin rods held (tied) together and interwoven in a cylinder form and covered by mud. Most of the time this type of hive was not preferred by the society because it was simply damaged by heat and rain and less durable. The second type and that the Majang commonly used bee hive was prepared from the logs of *dampéi /Cordia africana/* tree. They hewed out the logs of dampé'i tree to make this kind of bee hive. After they finished the preparation; they hanged on the branches of a big tree. Unless the necessary care is taken there was a danger of dropping and injury while ascending big tree for the collection of honey production. The suitable time for honey collection was at the night. The night or the dark is preferred for honey collection because the stinging ability of bees was less compared to the day time. The Majang also prepared a torch from rods tied together to smoke while collecting honey.<sup>191</sup>

In most Majang residences, starting from winter seasons until spring (January to April) , they went to the jungles for the purpose of collecting honey from hives made up of hollowed logs hanged on the trees. By the time when rainy season began, from around May to August, the Majang involved in farming activity. The season from October to December was good time to them in collecting wild roots and fruits, which was mostly the occupation of women.<sup>192</sup> For honey production, they largely depend on the forest. They make beehives from tree logs and also once hung on a tree, a hive can remain there for many years. Honey production not only contributes to the economic benefits of the households but also a strong incentive for forest conservation.<sup>193</sup> The forest remained the major source of livelihood for the local community. Some products from forest include honey, coffee, spices, wild fruits, animal meat and wood products. Therefore, the forest was the major source of income and a sign of the identity of the local communities.<sup>194</sup> The Majang area produces the region's well-known 'Ethiopia's liquid gold' of red honey. They used honey for medicine, traditional honey- wine and as market commodity.<sup>195</sup>

There was a great decline in honey production as a result of deforestation. Forest clearing for shifting cultivation by the people also contributes to depletion of big trees. Population growth among the community was contributing factor to the reduction and depletion of forest. Following deforestation the

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<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.* Wajine, Fikre.

<sup>191</sup> Abebe, pp.36-37; Informants: Aron, Rome and Cheneke.

<sup>192</sup> Ojot Miru Ojulu, "Large-Scale Land Acquisitions and Minorities . . . . .", p.113.

<sup>193</sup> Asfaw, "Ethiopian Evangelical church Mekane Yesus . . . . . p.3. Informant Juhar Tefera.

<sup>194</sup> Afera Alemu, "Socio Economic Impacts of villagization and Large Scale Agricultural investment on the Indigenous people of Gambella, south west Ethiopia" (MA Thesis, Geography, University of South Africa, 2015), p.29.

<sup>195</sup> Informant: Ejigael Rika, Yimam and Negussie.

widespread disappearance of honey bees and flower plants affected /reduce the production of honey.<sup>196</sup> Selection of the proper site for hanging hive was primary task of the society. The place where there were plenty of water and blossoms available were preferable. The community collects honey at least three times in a year in different seasons. Honey was greatly valued by the Majang. Some amount of honey is given to the family to be eaten. They sold half of the collected honey and most of the production of the honey used for preparation of honey wine.<sup>197</sup> The quantity of honey production was influenced by the stability of the locality where beehives were found. The flowers of these trees blossom at different times throughout the year. Some of the most important flowering trees were/are *Gomoy, Gojje, keyan, Andi, geshi, Dampe ,ñidhiñ, Šamppoy*, etc. among these trees, the Mäjäng prefer the honey of *gomoy* because its quality and sustained for a long period of time without damaged. The amount of honey collected in a year was estimated more than 200kg. But the amount raised up to 600kg. This variation depended on the activity and ability of individual farmer. Nowadays, the numbers of beehives owned by farmers reduced compared to the past due to the introduction of coffee as cash crop in substitution of revenue for the Majang community.<sup>198</sup> *Ogol* is a traditional drink made of honey and bark of a tree. To prepare this drink first bark of a tree will be collected and pounded. Then after it will be washed properly and dried up. The shaving of this tree was boiled, squeezed and the squeezed liquid was put in to earthen pot with honey. With the addition of water, the pot will be put on the side of fire. After two weeks the *ogol* become strong alcoholic drink to be served.<sup>199</sup> But its high alcoholic content than other drinks the preparation of *ogol* was decreasing due to the influence of protestant Christianity since 1970s.<sup>200</sup>

### **2.3. CRAFT WORK AMONG THE MAJANG**

Hand craft has been another economic activity among Majang peoples in the study area. The hand craft products include pottery, basketry, wood products and calabash works etc. The Majang society used various handcraft in their day-to-day activities; locally made by the people or exchanged through trade from the neighboring people. As common to any other society, these people had the experience of doing different handcraft from locally available materials like clay, skin, animal horns, iron, and others. These items are parts of the people's culture and identity. These craft works could be used for different

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<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>197</sup> Informant :Efrem ,Fikre ,Kedimael ,Lencho

<sup>198</sup> Abebe, pp.37-38.

<sup>199</sup> Tsegereda Bikes, "Majang people traditional food and drink preparation analysis" (Jimma,2010),pp.6-7.

<sup>200</sup> Abebe, p.37.

purposes. Some of the craftworks and their functions include for preparing and eating various food items.

In the Majang community caste system was not existed among potters and their relations with non-potters. Unlike their neighboring people (Kafficho, Oromo and others); Majang community craft workers including potters live without social stigma and discrimination that manifested in the pattern of settlement and marriage relations. While potters live in villages settled by other members of their own community, it was difficult to identify exactly the artisanship of making pots with a particular Majang clan. Rather, the crafts men are recognized and respected by societies.<sup>201</sup> Handcraft knowledge is talents that enabled human beings to simplify their life by producing different tools by using various innovations. Handcraft knowledge reveals how human beings interconnected with nature to utilize natural resources. The craft working knowledge was attached to the life style of the Majang and their values, natural resources and materials they use for food preparation and other purposes.<sup>202</sup>

### **Pottery**

The Majang were known for pottery making which supplement their livelihood. This occupation was reserved for women.<sup>203</sup> In order to produce these earthenware materials, women travelled very remote areas from their residence for hours in group to obtain a clay soil. (*Suphoy*). The clay for earthenware was excavated and transported to home in baskets known as *kanté* carrying on the back of women. After that, the clay was grounded with a rod made of wood and then made into diverse types of dishes, jars, and different kinds of pans.<sup>204</sup> The Majang made a variety of products from clay for different uses; for storing, cooking, eating and drinking. Earthenware materials used for cooking food include *léwi*, a bowl-shaped container used in making porridge, *maté*, used to boil tubers and root plants. The other kind of clay material was used to store water and prepare beverages. Whereas *kebet-gorowonk*, also known as *kebet-mawon*, is important to store water. A bigger jar, *gan* in Amharic, used to make two kinds traditional drinks known by the people as *tajan* and *ogol*. Another type of clay utensils vital to intake drinks is *mätägoy cups* used to drink Kari and *kebet-karionk* the material used for preparation of *Kari*.<sup>205</sup> Pottery among the Majangir was regarded as ability and a means of supporting family desires. Potters, on the other hand, were not observed as a distinct social group. The Majang potters in Majang

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<sup>201</sup>Informants: Ato Ejigael Rika, W/ro Mariam Lukas, W/ro Tinbit Dirayin.

<sup>202</sup> Gambella mimeographed study (Addis Ababa, 2015), p.74; Informant : W/ro Tigist Bekele.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>204</sup> Abebe, p.35.

<sup>205</sup> Worku, p.420.

zone from surrounding areas sell their pottery products in the weekly and different local market places to neighboring villages. But unlike recent time, the price was also very low in the former times.<sup>206</sup> However the amount of cash income earned from their pottery sale used not more than for exchange of salt. The Mäjäng used these products mainly for home service. In the Majang territory, since ancient time people had entirely relied on the earthenware utensils produced by the Majang in traditional way. Nevertheless, nowadays, the significance of those utensils made from pottery was diminishing. This was because of the substitution of clay tools by factory made utensils like glasses, iron goods, and plastic tools after 1991. But the income that obtained from their pottery was very low during the 1960s and 1970s. But after that time the price of pottery products slowly raised. Currently even the pottery products substituted by modern utensils the price highly increased from 3 birr to 35birr of a single coffee pot.<sup>207</sup>

The occupation of pottery in Majang zone was made by Majang who produced cooking utensils and other equipment like kettle, pots, and others. These traditional products were sold in the weekly markets. All these were operated and sold by women. So the Majang women were economically powerful to buy whatsoever they needed from the local market. Before the spread of modern cloths they also produced different types of clothes from barks of trees. They used a traditional mattress made of wood bark made by Majang called "*Täng!*" which was the best and comfortable mattress for the household.<sup>208</sup> For a number of years, peoples in the Majang territory and the Majang had totally depended on the pottery made by the Majang. But today, the importance of pottery was declining that is because glasses, metal goods and plastic materials of factory products have been replacing clay products. Even more the Majang themselves the usage of clay products came to steady decline<sup>209</sup>.

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<sup>206</sup> Informant: w/ro Mariam, W/ro Tinbit.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>209</sup> Informant: Ato Ejigael, Ato Juhar.

**Figure 4 (A) a Majang woman making water Container (pot) and (B) making Coffee pot.**

A



B



(Photo taken by the Researcher, April, 2021)

**Figure: 5. Majang women selling coffee pots and kari-pots, Meti market, Gambella Regional State.**



(Source: Worku Derara, 2019, p.438).

### Wood and Calabash Work

In Majang tradition wood work was considered as a duty of men among the society. They produce various types of household and field furniture. Wood work covers a wide range of activities starting from construction of houses to household furniture and a traditional mat made of wood. There was also specialization in household activities. Men provide homemade tools for instance, baskets, wooden mortar and pestle for grinding and handles for iron tools.<sup>210</sup> In addition to wood work, they produce different types of materials from iron like Knife, axe, spear and others. The Majang society has also a culture of preparing calabash in different way for different purposes. They had a talent of drying it by placing under the tree and using it for honey container, as water jug, *kondé* for drinking *tajan* and for tobacco pipe were examples of significances of calabash.<sup>211</sup>

**Figure. 6. (A) Calabash (the Majang used for honey container) (B) Making handle of knife from wood**



A



B

(Source: Gambella Mimeographed study, page.79& 89)

### 2.4. TRADE

Trade was a livelihood which practiced by the people since ancient times. It had been also one of important economic activities in Ethiopian history which enabled many countries, governments, and peoples to interact.<sup>212</sup> Particularly, from the time when the area occupied by the emperor Menelik II, trading in slaves and ivory conducted in Gore from Majang territory (including the current Majang zone). The relationships of Majang with neighboring people have not been restricted only to conflict

<sup>210</sup> Worku, “The Ethnoarchaelogy of coffee production and consumption.....”, p.153.

<sup>211</sup> Gambella, Mimeographed study, pp.79-89.

<sup>212</sup> Abdu Seid, “A History of Teppi Town From its foundation to 1991” (MA Thesis, History, Addis Ababa, 2016), p.33.



and slave raiding. Particularly after the Ethiopian state abolished slave raiding in the 1940's and Odola built roads in the Majang land, the Majang have established a peaceful relation with their neighboring people. This contributed the Majang the chance to trade easily with their neighbors. Much borrowing of items of culture and some mixing of blood have happened. In addition, the Majang traded honey for tobacco, dogs, and guns of Anywaa. Majang hunters highly demanded Anywaa dogs' for hunting.<sup>213</sup>

Trading activity was done by Oromo, Kaffa and Amhara merchants. They sold to other society's items like cloths, salt, sugar, and soap in the local market. In return, they bought ivory, slaves, hides and small amount of coffee.<sup>214</sup> Regarding to export trade items ivory, coffee, bee wax, animal skin, horn, slaves and musk had been available in south western part of Ethiopia while imported items were salt, cloth, iron and the like. The increasing demand of Ivory attracted local governors to establish an effective monopoly over the trade. For instance, *Ras Tässäma* of Gore and *Ras Woldé Giorgis* of Kaffa had a complete control over ivory trade.<sup>215</sup> In particular, *Ras Tässäma* governor of Illubabor took advantage of the commercial importance of Gambella trade including the Majang land (the current Majang zone). He monopolized ivory trade and controlled its movement on his own account for his own benefits. *Nägadräs Birru* was the agent of *Ras Tässäma* to buy and store ivory and to send to the Gambella.<sup>216</sup> Starting from 1920s to 1930s, Gambella was the main outlet of Ethiopia's export and import items. This indicated that Gambella boarder trade symbolized a new era in the development of Ethiopia's foreign trade of global economy. Coffee became essential export from Ethiopia and cloth and salt were significant import items from Sudan.<sup>217</sup> The opening of the inland port of Gambella on the River Baro indicated a new period in the effective commercialization of coffee beginning from 1907.<sup>218</sup> The founding of Gambella as a trade post, improved the interaction of the Majang with the Anuak. The Majang began to obtain goods like spears (*biyya*), knives (*are*), beads (*Kedhefan*), axes (*kabbi*) and grounded tobacco (*taphe*) from the Anuak in exchange for their honey. This contact was great between the Majang and the Anuak who lived in the northern territory around the Godäre River. The Majang who lived in this area would travel over the Anuak land to Gambella carrying their honey to exchange for other goods. With the establishment of this trade post at Gambella, the Anuak became free to trade in ivory. When they faced scarcity of ivory in their territory, the Anuak acquired ivory

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<sup>213</sup> Seyoum.p.91.

<sup>214</sup> Informants: *Ato Biniam, W/ro Tigist, Ato Tiyalem.*

<sup>215</sup> Ahmed, p.52.

<sup>216</sup> Informants: *Ato Lencho, Ato Adiето.*

<sup>217</sup> Ojot Miru Ojulu, "Large-Scale Land Acquisitions and Minorities ....., p.117.

<sup>218</sup> Worku, "The Ethnoarchaelogy of coffee production and consumption ....., pp.105-106.

from Majang area in the 1920s. The Majang, mainly; those who existed north of the Godäre River had near link with the Anuak. This was because of the vicinity of their living area. The Majang around here could speak the Anuak language and vice-versa. The socio-economic relations of the two ethnic groups was/is high.<sup>219</sup> However, up to 1935, the trade was in the hands of emigrants none of the local people took part in it till after 1941 except serving as gatekeepers and employees. The traders were primarily Greeks and Syrians.<sup>220</sup>

Trade was also one of the most crucial ways that interconnect diverse societies from different parts of the country. People from various regions with their products which were essential for different purposes in daily use. There were also traders who travelled long distance by crossing different regions to exchange their products. In those markets people met from various directions and places for buying and selling their agricultural and craft products which played a vital role for interaction of different ethnic groups.<sup>221</sup> In addition to others, inter trade-exchanges between the Majang communities and other ethnic groups were also very strong. For instance, the Majang people provided products like honey, animal Horns, animal skin, pepper and hen; while, other highland traders provided industrial outputs such cloth, soap, salt, and other commodities. Therefore, the exchange in these commodities brought about the strong relation with other ethnic groups and the Majang communities. The long period of mutual interdependence and co-existence was not interrupted.<sup>222</sup>

The establishment and expansion of local markets facilitated the interaction of Majang community and other societies. That was widely happened especially after the coming of Därg regime to power. The Majang had constant commercial relations with shäko, shäka, Oromo, Amhara and other people at the market places of neighboring areas such as Gurafärda, Mizan Täfäri, Téppi and Metti (Majang zone).<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> Abebe, p.58.

<sup>220</sup> Ahmed, p.52.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.* p.47.

<sup>222</sup> Informants: Fikre, Wajine.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*

### CHAPTER THREE

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL INTERACTION OF THE MAJANG WITH THEIR NEIGHBORS

Interaction indicates the relationship between groups or societies in which its members participate in mutual interest. Ethiopia is a country where ancient civilization occurred. It was also a state composed of people from different ethnic groups having different languages, religion culture, life styles and the like.<sup>224</sup> Since Ethiopia is the owner of different ethnic groups with their own diverse linguistic, there were also connections of traditional and spiritual beliefs between various ethnic groups in a given area.<sup>225</sup>

There has been uninterrupted process of relations and combination among different people of Ethiopia throughout their life. Some means of people's relations include of intermarriage, trade and other social events. There were also some tribal conflicts among these people from their interest to dominate some resources such as fertile land and forest and other matters. But there are traditional conflict resolution mechanisms that solve such kinds of disagreements.<sup>226</sup> The Gambella Regional State is predominantly inhabited by five indigenous ethnic groups, namely the 'Anywa', 'Nuer', 'Majang', 'Opo' and 'Komo'. The other ethnic groups who arrived to the area were the outcome of settlement program that were stricken by drought and starvation while others come to the place to look for better employment and to run their business activity in the area were named Non-indigenous.<sup>227</sup> The incorporation of the Gambella region into the central government of Ethiopian at the end of the nineteenth century acquaint with a different group of Non-indigenous societies of diverse ethnic origin in the region who are collectively referred to as 'high landers' by local community.<sup>228</sup>

The occupation of Gambella by Menelik II caused influx of various ethnic groups from different parts of Ethiopia largely from Amhara, Tigray, SNNPRS and Oromia regions.<sup>229</sup> The Majang were the early inhabitants of their territory (Majang zone) prior to the arrival of other ethnic groups. But the Oromo were the first to reach in the Majang land to sell their farming yields and to hunt Buffalo.<sup>230</sup> .By the time when the Oromo reached to the Majang land for the purpose of hunting, they brought some

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<sup>224</sup> Ahmed, p.1

<sup>225</sup> Werkitu Ketema, "Ethnic interaction between the Jimma Oromo and the surrounding Omotic states, 1880s-1974", (MA Thesis Jimma University, 2014), pp.6-8.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.* Ahmed

<sup>227</sup> Eshetu Alebachew. 28.

<sup>228</sup> Seyoum, p.91.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.* p.185.

<sup>230</sup> Belay, p.26. See also Appendix E.

important products such as salt, bullet, tobacco, beads, knives and spears to sell to the Majang in the land. After they hunted Buffalo, tiger, elephant and other animals, they also bought additional products from the Majang hunters. The Majang also showed the directions and places where Buffalo and elephant found. They also cooperated in hunting activity which was the beginning of interaction between the Majang and the Oromo people.<sup>231</sup>

### **3.1. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INTERACTION FROM 1941-1991**

The introduction of coffee farming in the Majang area has also stimulated new wave of migrants to the area.<sup>232</sup> Later in the 1950s, the introduction of coffee as a large-scale cash crop near Yäkki (current Majang zone was part of Yäkki at that time) saw the arrival of some highland peoples functioned behind the authority of the Ethiopian government. This was how migration and settlement in the area started. Actually, in this period it was just around Yäkki area these highlander settlers rested among the Majang.<sup>233</sup> The 1980s' resettlement programme brought thousands of settlers to region from the Northern part of the country that contributed to the larger nation-building programme which finally led to assimilate different peoples of the region into the majority of Ethiopian society and culture.<sup>234</sup>

#### **3.1.1. TRADE**

After 1940s, the Majang have established a peaceful relation with their neighboring people which gave the Majang the opportunity to trade freely with their neighbors and much borrowing of items of culture and some intermixing of blood have occurred.<sup>235</sup> The trade of Teppi and Metti (Majang zone) in the internal markets had been conducted and expanded by pack animals and human gatekeepers without road transportation. It was accompanied at the homes of traders and in the open local market. Before the liberation period the open market of Teppi had been a joining area of traders who came from Bonga and Gore. Predominantly, since the conquest, exchange in slaves and ivory took place in Gore from Teppi. These were sold in the local market in the interior and also sent to the outside market. Since the 1941 with the opening of all-weather road and later on Air transport services, the growth of Teppi market and that of the neighboring areas were improved. Hence, interchange of goods in the areas significantly developed. During the 1960s Teppi(Yäkki) which was very nearby market place to Metti (Majang zone) served as the center market for the local products of slave, ivory and animals hide which

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<sup>231</sup>Informants: Lencho, Wajine

<sup>232</sup> Dereje Feyisa, p .644.

<sup>233</sup> Abdu Seid, p.28.

<sup>234</sup> Informant: Zerihun Nebiyat.

<sup>235</sup> Abdu, p.19.

were brought from Godere(Majang zone), Guraferda and Andracha *Waredas*. Then, these items were taken to Gore and Bonga markets.<sup>236</sup>

Trade was also one of the most important means that interconnect diverse societies from different parts of the country. People from various regions with their products, which were/are essential for different purposes in daily use. There were also traders who travelled long distance by crossing different regions to exchange their products. In those markets people met from various directions and places for buying and selling their agricultural and craft products which played a vital role for interaction of different ethnic groups. Since ancient time people have very long history of trade relation with each other and neighboring people. Like other societies, the Majang societies also kept a culture of trade activity between themselves and other communities that encouraged ethnic interaction. In addition to others inter trade-exchanges between the Majang communities and other ethnic groups were also very strong.

<sup>237</sup> For instance, the Majang people provided products like honey, animal Horns, animal skin, pepper and hen; while, other highland traders provided industrial out puts such cloth, soap, salt, and other commodities. Therefore, the exchange in these commodities brought about the strong relation with other ethnic groups and the Majang communities. The long period of mutual interdependence and co-existence was not interrupted. Because, the connection was established on common benefits; even in certain places, they were blood related and shared the culture.<sup>238</sup>

The establishment and expansion of local markets facilitated the interaction of Majang community and other societies. That was widely happened especially after the coming of Därg regime to power. The Majang had constant commercial relations with shäko, shäka, Oromo, Amhara and other people at the market places of neighboring markets of Gurafärda, Mizan Täfäri, Téppi and Metti.<sup>239</sup> Before 1970s there were lack of transportation facilities which were the main obstacle to conduct trade relation with different parts of the society and markets. However, after the 1970s the roads were constructed and that made suitable conditions for trade relation between societies. Later on, the constructed and improved roads allowed the traders travelling and rich very distant market places from Majang zone to neighboring area. This interaction of the Majang with neighboring areas facilitated the society to society interconnection and socio-economic interaction.<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>236</sup>Abdu Seid, p.33.

<sup>237</sup> Informants: Lencho, Wajine.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.* Lencho, Wajine.

<sup>239</sup> Informants: Fikre, Wajine, Biniam.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.* Fikre, Wajine, Biniam

Since the medieval period trade tied the southwestern part of Ethiopia with the Northern Ethiopian region. Besides, the caravan merchants of different societies travelled long distance by crossing different regions to exchange their products which were essential for different purposes in daily use. In those markets people met from various directions and places for buying and selling their agricultural and craft products and they established strong ties and relations, with the neighboring regions and ethnic groups.<sup>241</sup> Since ancient time people have very long history of trade relation with each other and neighboring people. Like other societies, the Majang societies also kept a culture of trade activity between themselves and other communities to encourage ethnic interaction.<sup>242</sup> Therefore, the exchange in these commodities brought strong relation with other ethnic groups and the Majang communities. The long period of mutual interdependence and co-existence was not interrupted. Because, the connection was established on common benefits; even in certain places, there were blood relation and shared the culture.<sup>243</sup>

A contemporary society and culture has been the result of diverse types of inter-ethnic relations since ancient times. Migration, relocation and relations have played extremely vital role in the history of Ethiopia as well as in the Majang zone.<sup>244</sup> Culturally, one ethnic group share from the other ethnic group through their daily activity, such as language, religion, wedding ceremony, mourning ceremony, dressing style, hair style, feeding style, and others. For instance, most of the Majang have spoken Amharic language; some of them practiced and participated wedding ceremony mourning ceremony. They also adopted dressing styles, hair style, food preparation and feeding styles after 1974. There was a great deal of friendly cooperation between the local societies. Through social interactions, they had sharing one other's sorrow or happiness. They also interact through economical aspects in which one depends on the other or they have been economic interdependence.<sup>245</sup>

Before the arrival of other societies, the Majang were the residents of the region and had initial interaction with other ethnic groups such as Shätko and Shäka, Agnwa, Oromo and others. Similarly to the Majang, the Shäko were the first dweller of the area, in the South Nations Nationalities Regional State of the present-day of Yäkki district. Regarding to their interaction, the Majang had strong relations with Shäko and they had marriage relations. In addition to marriage, they also had trade relation. In their trade interaction, the Shäko supplied the Majang with items such as knives, axes and

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<sup>241</sup> Ahmed, p.47

<sup>242</sup> Informants: Fikre, Wajine.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.* Fikre, Wajine

<sup>244</sup> Seyoum, p. 25.

<sup>245</sup> Informants: Moges, Arshid.

spears. The Shäko also acquired these objects through transaction from other societies. The Majang traded these objects for honey, clay products, and chickens.<sup>246</sup>

In the past, the Shäko and the Majangir had conflicted and fought so many times. The Shäko raided the Majangir for slaves. They raided into Majangir territory to capture their women and children and anyone they could capture. These raids were the cause of conflicts and fighting among the two groups.

<sup>247</sup> The last raid of the Shäko against the Majangir was after the Italian departure, in the transition period. After the war, the Shäko fought against the Majangir. They killed many men and took the women and children of the Majang.<sup>248</sup> In response to this attack, the Majang made a counter attack against the Shäko. They destroyed the settlement of Shäko in some places. Later, peace and order was restored by the Ethiopian government forces. Since this time, the Shäko and the Mäjäng continued their peaceful interaction. The conflicts, wars, raids and counter- raids between the two ethnic groups stopped after the restoration of imperial rule in the area since 1941.<sup>249</sup>

The relations of Majang with neighboring tribes have not been confined only to warfare and slave raiding, especially after the Ethiopian state abolished slave raiding in the 1924.<sup>250</sup> The contact of the Majang with the Oromo, Amhara and other ethnic groups become more than the previous time especially after the annexation of the region by Menelik II. The Majang were also attacked by these societies for slavery till it was forbidden by decree in 1924. Later slavery was prohibited as illegal; and the contact of these immigrants (ethnic groups who come to the area from other places) with the Majang continued. The relation of the Majang with these settlers weakened through the Italian conquest. This happened since Italians tried to use the Majang and the Shäko communities in contradiction of other inhabits.<sup>251</sup>

There were also conflicts between the Majang and peoples of shäka. The Shaka people had fought against the Majang in the southern border. The Majang by creating coalition with shako fought twice against the Shäka, the battles came to be known as Gimira Mocho shoto (the war between shako and Majang in one front and Shäka people in the other front) in the first attack, and the Shäka overthrow the Majang and shäko and killed their king named Matte. In the second conflict, the Shäka were beaten by

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<sup>246</sup> Ahmed, p.16.

<sup>247</sup> Worku, p.150.

<sup>248</sup> Seyoum, pp. 89-90

<sup>249</sup> Stauder, "Notes in Majang...", p.111.

<sup>250</sup> Abebe, p.59.

<sup>251</sup> Abebe, p.59.

Majang and shäko. This battle was occurred because the Shäka people crossed the current day Shakko-Majang settled areas in the low lands of Yekki woreda<sup>252</sup>

When the Italians withdrew from the occupied area, the relations between these ethnic groups continued again. These societies supplied the Majang with objects such as tobacco, salt, iron tools, beads, and clothes. On the other hand, The Majang also supplied honey, wax, pottery and chickens. More than other products, the most important and desirable for the Majang community was salt for their regular consumption.<sup>253</sup> The Majang can tolerate the lack of other goods. However, they could not withstand the lack of salt because it was the most essential item and given priority in the society. The Majang also supplied to other societies with timber products like mortars, wooden trays, diverse types of baskets and trays using their natural skills in making these things (wooden products). The immigrants described their socio-economic relations with the Majangir as: “by providing them material such as salt and garments they slowly approached nearer to other ethnic groups. Formerly they were not come close to other ethnic groups.”<sup>254</sup>

The Majang shared borders with various ethnic groups. Therefore their history, their identity and culture has been very much shaped by their relations with their neighbors. They were surrounded between Nilotic people such as the Anywaa and the Nuer to the west on the savanna of the Sudan and the Cushitic people of the Oromo and the Omotic groups of Shaka and Shako to the east on the highland plateau of Ethiopia. The Majang had good and hostile link with Anywaa. They had trade and inter-marriage relationships and the Anywaa also raid the Majang for their women and children. In the former times, the Majang have also faced harsh territorial invasion from the neighboring Anywa people in the west. Basically, the Majang frequently thought that the Anywa as traditional rivals who used to raid them. The Majang and Anywa people had both peaceful and conflict relations between themselves and with their neighbors. They had been fought each other and also with their neighboring people for slave raids and economic resources.<sup>255</sup>

The study area was a home to several highlanders and the indigenous community. Social relationship was very significant to build social links and coordination among the highlanders and the indigenous community. But there were some obvious restrictions between the indigenous ethnic groups and the highlanders in socio-cultural, political and economic aspects which affected relationship between the

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<sup>252</sup> Ahmed, p.35.

<sup>253</sup> Abebe, p.59.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>255</sup> Ahmed, p.28.



two groups.<sup>256</sup> There was clear religious difference between the two-groups yet it was not a main barrier. The majority of the local people were protestant Christians while the highlanders were basically Muslims and Orthodox Christians. Since the majority of the highlanders are followers of Orthodox Christianity, they did not attend in the same traditional institutions such as *Mahebär and Sänbäté* with the Majang even these religious institutions were a very fundamental tool for Socialization among the highlanders.<sup>257</sup>

The other indication of boundary for social contact among the Majang and other ethnic groups was the difference in drinking and eating custom. In the study area both in rural area and town areas, coffee ceremony is an essential way of life for social relation and sharing of ideas and mutual understanding of each other. In addition to this, these groups have a diverse culture. For instance, most the Majang are not interested in drinking coffee bean. They had a unique tradition in this regard. They drunk their own traditional drink called *Chemo* (Kari) which prepared from coffee leaves and different spices. On the other hand, most of the highlanders did not drink *Chemo*, regularly as coffee. Moreover, *Injera* is a staple food for the Highlanders while porridge was a staple food for the Majang, which was particularly observable in rural areas. Social distance was also revealed in the way of settlement. The aforementioned issues were also strengthened by the existing segmented settlement pattern. The difference between the Majang and Highlanders settlement manner was also visible not only in rural areas but also in urban area. They resided in a distinct place in each *kebele*.<sup>258</sup>

### 3.1.2. LANGUAGE INTERACTION

Language was another mode of interaction between the Majang and other ethnic groups. The neighboring and primary relations of the Majang people with the Oromo also influence the language of the two societies. It was clearly seen that some words in the Majangir language has driven from the language of Oromo. *Waqoyo* (God), *kawe* (arms), *Adamo* (hunting) and the like were some of the words spoken by the Majang community borrowed from language of Oromo. Gradually, with the increasing and significance of coffee as a source of income and livelihood, the demand for land was also became greater than before. All these shows that the role of trade and other activities in relations (interaction) of Majang people with other ethnic groups.<sup>259</sup> These ethnic groups had been interacted in different ways since the area incorporated by Menelik and their interaction was continued currently.<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> Seyoum, p.206.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*p.207.

<sup>259</sup> Abebe, p.60.

<sup>260</sup> Ahmed, p.16.

Majang had spoken highlander's language such as Amharic, Oromiffa, and Shekacho after they began interaction in 1940s. Majang in rural areas particularly in Mengesh *Woreda* spoke highlander's language. Mengesh *Woreda* was a place where the highest population of Majang and highlanders live together; few Highlanders are able to speak the Majang language well. Amharic is the working language of the Gambella region as well as in the zone after 1991. Therefore Amharic language is often used as a measure of transformation, literacy and opportunity for work and appointment. The Majang, however, have the interest to study Amharic and other Highlanders language since it is a working language in the regional state and Majang zone. Hence, the indigenes ethnic groups are interested to study Amharic in addition to their own language.<sup>261</sup>

### **Majang- Highlanders Relations and Impacts**

Since the incorporation of the area in 1890s a number of Majang in the area have been evicted of their land by the highlander peoples. The arrivals of highlanders increased from time to time especially after 1950s that followed the expansion of coffee production in to the area which also influenced the indigenous communities in different ways. It was also a continuous process of the arrival of the highlanders in the Majang land. During the *Derg* period, mainly the 1984 resettlement programme was accountable for the great dislocation of the indigenous community. After 1991, the high landers conquest of the Majang land has caused dislocation of many of indigenous ethnic groups from their ancestral land which caused shortage of resource. The vanishing of several species of wild animals such as antelope, warthog, buffalo and plants was also an indication of gradual decline of the old Majang traditional practice of hunting, gathering, and production of traditional medicine in Majang Nationality Zone.<sup>262</sup>

For instance, Highlanders migration caused high degree of deforestation of the Majang forestland. Majang forest and their neighboring area played a pivotal role in Majang life and identity. The influence of land acquisition by Highlanders in the zone's natural resources is also profound. The Highlanders, conquered the most productive areas, intruded deeply into the Majang forestland and exploited the forest more intensively than the indigenous people did. Even though the fact that the survival of the Majang is connected with the security of the forest, this extensive land exploitation has left most of the Majang area infertile. The forest and soil fertility has been depleted at an alarming rate. The Majang community criticized that the Highlanders had extensively cut trees to clear land for

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<sup>261</sup>Seyoum, p. 208.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid*, p.205.

agricultural activity.<sup>263</sup> After 1980s, shifting cultivators and hunter-gatherer of the Majang community with the regular forest land exploitation was altered fast and caused restrictions of movement and contact to forest resources. However, the increasing number of highlander population from time to time caused lack of access of the Majang to land and its resources which forced them to abandon their old traditional practices of shifting cultivation, apiculture, hunting and so on.<sup>264</sup>

### 3.1.3. CULTURAL PRACTICES AND ETHNIC INTERACTION

The Majang shared borders with various ethnic groups. The Majang were surrounded between Nilotic people such as the Anywaa and the Nuer to the west on the savanna of the Sudan.<sup>265</sup> Majang and Agnwa ethnic groups have their own beliefs, culture, values and norms. Obviously, both had their own socio-political and economic background. Due to their daily contact, they share one another's culture. These two people interacted through several ways; for instance, in the way of tradition, wedding ceremony, mourning ceremony, inhabiting mode, religion festival, and so on. The major ways of people's relations are characterized by trade, inter-marriage, and other economic interaction which enabled their closer collaboration. As some sources indicated that both the Majang and the Anywaa had the habit of living to gather particularly *Deragir* clan had also strong cultural ties, trade exchange ,inter-marriage, they settled in mixed and during bad times they support each other. These societies had still lived together and they also collaborate in diverse events.<sup>266</sup>

The Majang and the Anywa peoples had relationships and differences with each other and with their neighbors. Nowadays, these communities mostly live in Gambella Regional state. The region comprises of five local ethnic groups. Like that of the Majang people, the Anywaa are a Nilotic people who live in Gambella and established their sedentary farming activity. They engaged largely in fishing, hunting and gathering in the low land region.<sup>267</sup>

Since both ethnic groups in the same region, the Anywa divided the natural environment in to three classifications based on the types of vegetation cover .These were wok (woodland), bap (grassland), Lul (forest).In Lul parts of the region, the Majang and Anywaa lived together since they were the earliest residence of the forest area. The materials used by these people to hunt animals were spears, gun and trap. In addition to this honey collection practiced by placing beehives on the big trees. Both

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<sup>263</sup> Informants: Wajine, Tiyalem, Zerihun.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.* Wajine, Tiyalem, Zerihun.

<sup>265</sup> Ahmed, pp.28-33

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid*, p.31.

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid*, p.12.

the Majang and Anywaa who lived in Lul areas, their collaboration and contact were great. For instance, the Anywa of Lul knows several things from Majang. There was evidence which show that the Anywa learned how to live in the forest and forest life from Majang as well as the names of forest trees, slash and burn cultivation, bee keeping, mead brewing, yam eating and wild animal trapping.<sup>268</sup>

Hand craft knowledge was also a skill that societies produced different utensils which was essential for various purposes in their daily life. This craft working knowledge was associated to the life style of Majang and Anywa. Both Majang and Anywa communities used the products of different hand craft in their daily activities which was locally produced by or bartered through trade from the neighboring communities. Like other communities, these people had the tradition of doing variety of hand craft from locally accessible materials such as clay, wood, skin, iron, calabash work and others. These items were parts of people's culture and identity. For instance, calabash work for the Anywa has a symbolic representation and meaning. It was used to present meals and for other purposes. It was made up of beautiful designs and also decorated with colorful impressive beads. As the tradition of the people, the calabash used to present food and drink for officials will be decorated accordingly to their hierarchy. In Majang also calabash work was the skill that needs drying the calabash by putting it under tree and using it for different purposes like honey container, water jug and tobacco pipe are some of the materials made from calabash.<sup>269</sup>

The Majang started to obtain goods like spear (*biyya*), knives (*are*), beads (*Kedhefan*), axes (*kabbi*) and grounded tobacco (*taphe*) from the Anywa in exchange for their honey. This relationship was great among the Majang and the Anywa who existed in the northern region nearby Godere River. The Majang who settled in this area would voyage over the Anywaa land to Gambella carrying their honey to exchange for other commodities. Following the foundation of Gambella trade port, the Anywaa participated in ivory. By the time when they faced scarcity of ivory in their territory, the Anywaa acquired ivory from Majang area in 1920s. The Majang particularly; those who settled north of the Godere river had close relations with the Anywaa. This was because of the nearness of their land. The Majang around this area could communicate the Anywaa language and the vice-versa and socio-economic relations of the two ethnic groups was great.<sup>270</sup> Additionally, the relation between the Anywaa-Majang has also seen in the Majang land where gold panning found in the border lands of Anywaa-Majang in 1980s. The existence of several Anywa in the Majang settlement area has improved

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<sup>268</sup> *Ibid*, p.28

<sup>269</sup> Gambella mimeographed study, p.70.

<sup>270</sup> Informants: Biniam, Eyosiyas,

their day-to-day interactions. Their interaction was obviously observed that camps were established around the gold mining areas which have been used as trade exchange between the two people.<sup>271</sup>

Before 1974, traditional laws used to be applied among the Anywa being performed by the “Kowaro”( a traditional leader or the governor) or by the “Niya”(the king).Only the Kowaro and the Niya ruling system was practiced in Anywaa people before it was eliminated by the displacement caused during the Derg regime. But still it is practiced nowadays to some level. The burden of compensation that will be paid by one who commits a wrongdoing intentionally will be high, but a public confession and apology makes the matter calm.<sup>272</sup> There was also similar traditional law called “Nawaga” in Majang. Most of the conflicts among the Majang society arise from problems associated with land ownership. These clashes may result in death or loss and damaged of properties. If death happens in such matters the killer should hide for a certain period of time until the arbitrators interfere and decide compensation to be paid for the family of the dead and calming the situation. The traditional judge’s order no act of revenge to be done and pose suites for both parties to eat together.<sup>273</sup>

#### 3.1.4. RELIGIOUS PRACTICES OF MAJANG AND THEIR RELATION WITH OTHERS UP TO 1960S

The interaction of the Majang people was not restricted through economic and social aspects, but also they interact in the way of religion and religious ceremonies. People of Majang had practiced different kinds of traditional beliefs. Traditional religion played an important role in a given society to interconnect different ethnic groups and it also served as the main part of society’s socio-cultural and socio-economic life. Moreover, these religious practices and institutions perform several functions among the Majang and Agnwa communities. The traditional kings who owned double responsibilities and functions as religious and political leaders of the society played decisive role in social, economic, political life of the people in their areas. They also became ritual experts and they solve when disagreements happened among the society<sup>274</sup>. The Majang and Agnwa people had unique traditional faith. The top of the traditional faith was *Waqayo* in Majang and *Gwok* in Agnwa in which these traditional gods had special places among them. Communities are relay on gods for life even when they travel across the river and everything done by the words of god. By the time of natural calamities like

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<sup>271</sup> Seyoum, p.106.

<sup>272</sup> Gambella mimeographed study, 66.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*

drought, flood or wind that destroy harvest, and in case of illness, people slaughter a goat or sheep to god in order to recover the sick person<sup>275</sup>

The top of the traditional faith in Majang was *Waqayo* (sky god) and there are a number of spirits under it. *Waldéy* this was one of a spirit that was believed to be superior of all spirits. Its annual ceremony was celebrated every year under plant called *emuy*. The plant of *emuy* was planted in rounded mode and stone was placed around the plant (*emuy*). This area of reverence was known as *saloy* by the society. By the time of celebration of this spirit traditional drinks *tajan* or *ogol* would be ready. A sacrifice of goat or chicken would also be prepared. The holder of this spirit among the society was highly respected. Most of the time, *tapha* was responsible to possess this spirit and non-*tapa* was rarely the possessor of the spirit. In the shortage of rain or when the rain would be excessive, the Majang communities offered sacrifices and pray to this spirit. In the ancient times, almost all the Majang societies ready *saloy* at nearby their home. They would offer their regular sacrifice including the first drop of coffee (*Kari*) before it was drunk by them. They splashed the *Kari* on the earth so that the spirit would drink it.<sup>276</sup> *Ragaw* was a spirit, which was believed to be found at dirty areas. It was thought that, the spirit would prevent children from hazard while they were playing. When maize and sorghum became ripe for eating, some amount of them would be given to this spirit and the first drop of coffee was also poured for this spirit. *Jokan* was also a type of spirit in which the Majang community believed. These spirits were thought to be several in numbers in relation to others. The goal of these spirits was to protect children, property of the public and the surroundings.<sup>277</sup> *Cein* was another kind of spirit. It was believed that this spirit protect people from death and sudden accidents.

These all traditional gods were abandoned in the Majang society because the spread of the Protestant Christianity among the Majang settlements since 1960s. One of the traditional beliefs commonly known before the introduction of Christianity among the Majangir was the belief in ghostly spirits. Currently the Majang societies existing in the study area are Protestants and hence, most of them do not believe in traditional religious practices except in limited places in Mengeshi districts in Majang zone. In these places, people existing in farmhouses near by a person influenced by spirit plant broad leaved high grass known as *särté* (*emuy*), and pour *kari* beneath the grass as a manifestation of a worship for

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<sup>275</sup> Ahmed, p,69,

<sup>276</sup> Informants: Yosef, Bianke, Beza.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*

the spirit. Part of the worship for the spirit was a ceremonial that includes giving *Kari*. The women put a stone under a tree, and often pour at the same spot, bow down and pray beneath the tree.<sup>278</sup>

Similar to the above spirits of Majang community, there were also spirits in Agnwa communities that served for different purposes. For instance, *Tate* was the name of spirit represented by a monkey. *Gnemulu* was the spirit of water whenever people pass through. *Beyu* was hot spring found outside Gambella. They throw something from their belonging to the water to satisfy the god who was believed in it. *Kuru* was the female spirit which is believed to exist in side water. She had power over fishing. People who caught fish ask her permission for fishing unless it was believed that she will bring flood. Generally, both societies' traditional faith practitioners perform rituals around tree, forests, ponds for the sake of peaceful life, success, health, blessing to their harvest, good fortune and the like.<sup>279</sup> The Majang and Agnwa people have also similar marriage arrangement like other traditional practices. Marriage arrangement among the Majang community is usually a matter of concern more for the husband (male) and the wife (female). The first criteria for marriage in Majang society is capacity of both the boy and the girl managing their life by themselves.<sup>280</sup> The Majang boy to get his future wife, the boy either directly contacted the girl or use mediator (*turtan*). If the boy was active in communication, he would go alone or with his friend and tell the girl about his interest to marry her. In this case if the girl refuses to accept the question, the boy would stop immediately the attempt. If the girl accepted the question of the boy, the boy immediately would start accompanying her when she would fetch water and collect fire wood. Even it was possible for the boy to go to her family's house and sit nearby their homestead about three to four meters away from the gate. In the case, the girl's family would understand the boy's interest and send the girl to give him *Kari* and tobacco<sup>281</sup>.

The boy did not accept the invitation, if it was brought to him by other family member rather than his fiancé. In order to earn money for the bride price, the Majang cross the Agnwa land to Gambella town to sell honey, which was also, facilitated the interaction of the two ethnic groups. The amount of bride price depends on the capacity of the bridegroom. In the former times, it usually ranged from two spears and two axes to ten spears and axes to the maximum. If the man was unable to pay the bride price, he was beaten by her family and at the end forcefully they snatched their daughter but the boy's family, relatives and even friends would contribute to cover the payment of the bride price. Subsequently, it

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<sup>278</sup> Worku, pp.357-358.

<sup>279</sup> Ahmed, p.68.

<sup>280</sup> Wossen, p.33.

<sup>281</sup> Informants: Wajine and Moges.

was assumed that, peace would prevail between the two families and the bridegroom had the right to take the girl any time and she was considered as his wife since that day.<sup>282</sup>

Like the Majang, Marriage arrangement of the Agnwa done through intermediaries or friend can convince a girl for his friend. In the Agnwa also the girl has a bead (dimuy) if she gives the bead to the person whom needs her it was a sign of her interest to become his wife but she would not give it to him unless he asked for it. At the beginning it was hidden to her family. Only the couple and the intermediaries know. If the man does not ask for the bead, the girl may forward the issue through her intermediary. A man would not take her bead unless his interest was respectable. The exchange of the bead was really the marriage act even though the parental negotiations have not yet achieved. Later her father knows she no longer has the bead or maybe she was pregnant and he asks who her husband? And she will tell the name of her husband. Her families catch the husband then bind his hand together and ask if she was his wife he agrees that it was so and they beat him slightly and enforced his father pay a cow for his release and they now tell him to gather for the bride price. They may even release him without a penalty but if he did not accept the marriage he will be badly beaten. If he delays his bride price promises he may be beaten again. Then in due course the two fathers and all the relatives meet to gather and the gifts, bead, spears and bracelets are offered. The bead (dimuy) is the most valued bride price.<sup>283</sup>

The funeral ceremony of the tapa'd of Majang and Kowaro of Anywa were not the same as with the ordinary people. In the Majang tradition the corpse would be wrapped by tangi (made of tree bark), and the Anywa by a skin is laid on the bottom of the grave and the corpse was laid on this at full length. If the dead person was rich a bull is slaughter and the fresh skin was put at the bottom of the grave and the meat being eaten by those who dig the grave and others. Finally the deceased was buried. When the tapa'd and the Kowaro died, the news of the death would be spread to the people and gathering from far places. During the funeral ceremony, unlike the grave for the ordinary people for stones would be planted on the grave. Two of the stones were placed towards the legs of the dead and the other two put towards the head of the dead. Then the corpse would be put on a stretcher made from wood and put on the stone. Finally, it was made to rest on it. Later the mouth of the grave was earthen and another stone (gidhéy) would be placed on the grave. But in the Agnwa, the family of the king gathered in the house and in order to keep the body of the king as it was, they have an oil and leaf of a tree to wash the body

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<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>283</sup> Ahmed, p.58.



so that it will be preserved. Before the body of the king leaves the house, they will erect the corpse with his glories cloth to show the people. Then the people will mourn by praise his good deeds.<sup>284</sup>

Like that of Majang and Agnwa, the people of Kafficho also practiced traditional religions before the introduction of Christianity and Islam. The chief deity of the Kaffa king was named *yäro*, the sky god whose significance slowly reduced after advent of the Christianity. The principal religious practices of the Kaffa concentrated on a traditional spirit called *eqo*. Before the spread of Christianity and Islam, this traditional spirit was commonly worshipped by each clan, which could worship more than one spirit. The person that holding the spirit is called *Alamo* which has been believed to have a special skill of healing sick persons using traditional medicine and forecast the future of an individual. The term *Alamo* concern to persons controlled by *eqo* -the basic spirits that live in trees, bushes and running water. Several clans had their own *Alamo*.<sup>285</sup> Alamos have responsibility of arbitrating conflicts among their respective groups. Most of the time, arguments occurred among families (between father and son) caused by land distribution and forest use right. Both parties believe that Alamos' decisions are fair and acceptable among them. In addition to the Alamo institution, there are traditional religious rituals that are generally believed to act as restrictions for all forms of conflicts in rural Kaffa. There was a practice of cursing criminals through planting needles in and around places of worship.<sup>286</sup> There were also other constraints that each *alamo* should stay respectful. For instance, an *alamo* is forced not to eat in any other man's house except that of another *alamo*. He was also not allowed to shake hands of an individual of the low crafts clans.. He must eat food ready by a special cook, or by one of his wives. He also has to eat and drink out of special utensils. Any violation of these laws will be encountered by the anger of the *eqo*, normally showing itself with decease. A man who helps and manages other wants of the *alamo* is known as *gäbärocho*. The Alamos has a unique cup, but before he drinks his own he pour out the cup for *eqo* on the floor as a sacrifice, *corro*.<sup>287</sup>

Like the Majang and Anywa people, there were materials produced by Kafficho people. These were circular boxes, combs, beds, mortars, ploughs, hoes, tool handles etc. Women made pillows, clothing, mats, baskets and bags from *ensät*, palm and other fibers. Pottery was also made by females of the Mäniyo and the Mänjo clan. There was also a certain degree of similarity in the nature and use of farming tools. The material which used to cut and clear forest known as *gäjäro*, *jame* and *gäjära*

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<sup>284</sup> Gambella mimeographed study, p 59.

<sup>285</sup> Worku, pp.147-148.

<sup>286</sup> Yihenew Zewde, p.169.

<sup>287</sup> Worku, p.287.

among the Kafficho, the Majangir and the Oromo respectively, were an agricultural tools used in cutting brushwood, stems and cutting tree. It was working in same ways in other farming activities in the areas and mainly among the Majang who practice slash and burn cultivation. Another farming instrument, the digging stick usually known as *gässo* is used in digging holes for coffee seedlings. A digging stick made completely in wood, *horda*, was still in use among the Majang.<sup>288</sup>

At the time of collecting harvest, farmers use different objects made from different raw materials. Among these objects and baskets: *kofo* of the Kafficho and *kante* of the Majangir made from tree climbing plants and *tä'e* of Oromo woven from reeds of bamboo. The Majang use two kinds of trays in the time collecting yield: *gäbätöy* and *Pire* made of wood and a tree climbing plant known as *pjoy* respectively. Nevertheless, it was good to note that the making of baskets i.e. *kofo*, *kante* and *tä'e* of the Kafficho, the Majangir and the Oromo and wooden trays (*gäbätöy*) of the Majangir were produced by males whereas the trays like *gämo* of the Kafficho, *pire* of the Majangir, and *gundo* of the Oromo are of woman labor.<sup>289</sup> Cultural tools used in the preparing and consumption of coffee made from wood and clay in different communities. For instance, in Majang community, *kebet-karionk* and *kebet-sid'anonk* were used by Majang in the preparation and *mätägoy*, cup made of clay for consumption of *Kari*. Like that of the Majang, the Kafficho used coffee cup made of bamboo (*tinjano*), and calabash (*qulu*) by Oromo before the introduction of modern china's cup. Similar to the Kafficho and the Majangir, the Oromo have traditionally been related to the farming and consumption of coffee. Most of the time, coffee was not only an item of trade, but it was very much associated to the daily life of the societies as its consumption was significant in strengthening relations among neighbors; it is also one of the most vital plants often used in religious ceremonies and social events.<sup>290</sup>

Cooperative works '*dado*' and '*Dabo*' were important group activities that link different societies. Participants involved in activities such as collecting corn and sorghum or in time of house building. After the participants completed the work they served drink and other edible items, chiefly boiled or roasted cereals. The preparation and the consumption of the drink is also a mutual practice in time of holidays, birth and when elderly people meet for arbitration. The same is true after funeral ceremonies when mourners from a village and distant places present themselves in the house of the family of a deceased person where they are served with *Kari* and food.<sup>291</sup>

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<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.* p.288.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.* p.336.

<sup>291</sup> Informants: Wajine, Biniam.

Like the Majang and Kafficho, coffee was an essential cultural and spiritual element in the lives of the Oromo. It was a principal drink that strengthens relations between neighbors. In particular, sharing coffee aids the link of friendship among women living in the same vicinity. Since women prepare coffee at home and the preparation and the consumption of the drink was regular between neighbors, women and men sharing the same coffee in a neighborhood get the chance to discourse different matters. Coffee drinking also attends such communal practices as post-funeral presence in the house of a dead person and collective farming activities (*dado*) and during such special events as conflict resolution.<sup>292</sup>

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<sup>292</sup> Worku, p.358.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SOCIO-CULTURAL PRACTICES AND TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS

#### 4.1. CLAN ORGANIZATION AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

The Majang societies were organized into clans. In the Majang people relationship of the clan was through patrilineal line. But kinship relation was determined both through father and mother. It was said that, the Majang had more than 70 clans. Even though the several numbers of their clans, the Majang clans had no political, administrative and council of elders. The only leaders were the *tapa* whose role was serving as ritual experts. The *tapa* existed in all Majang land. The role of the powerful *tapa'd* was limited to traditional ritual practices such as: keeping security and order, eliminating evil spirits, providing of ritual protection from trouble, curing illness, ending arguments among their followers. Among the Majang almost all *tapha* came from Melaneer clan.<sup>293</sup>

The social group of the Majang was based on *komoyir* (clans). But their settlement was not along clan line. In the social organization, the *tapa* was established at the top of its community. The residence areas of the societies were around their *tapa*. Every Majang village had their own *tapa* and there was no strong/powerful *tapa'd* who would organize and control the other *tapa* in the Majang land. Even though there were powerful *tapa* based on their followers and the spiritual services they gave to their community; there was no powerful *tapa* who could serve the whole territory of the Majang people.<sup>294</sup>

In the 1960s, there were about fifty *tapa'd* in the Majang area together with the minor ones. Every Majang had to visit his respective *taphadh* during the time of harvesting honey, to offer *ogol* and *tajan* in the yearly spiritual ceremony held by the *tapa'd*. Everyone should also consult and obtained permission from the *tapa'd* to reside in the area around him (the *tapa'd*) for building of house, for hunting animals and to get blessing during sickness of a family member. Every Majang was responsible to their *tapa'd* based on their own village. The Majang lacked strong political organization which would organize and administer these *tapa'd* into one administrative unit. Every settlements of the Majang with their *tapa'd*, practiced their own independent life. A *tapa'd* would be esteemed and feared based on ownership of his ritual exercise that he rendered to his community not based on his capability of administration.<sup>295</sup>

The Majang socio-economic and political organization can be considered as egalitarianism. There was also clan based organization of the Majang. The Majang local leaders were come from each clan and

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<sup>293</sup> Abebe, p.65.

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>295</sup> Informant: Wajine, Moges.

the *tapa* had practiced absolute political and religious power. Arbitrating disagreements was the main occupation of the *tapa*, which was greatly respected and feared among the Majang as they were refrained from committing violence skirmish near the *tapa* residence or around his territory.<sup>296</sup>

Traditional legal system has varied values including preventing criminal acts. Among the Majang, whenever conflicts happened among individuals or groups, they would plea to the *tapa*'d. The traditional leader used different traditional mechanisms to resolve the conflicts after serious investigation of the basic cause. The investigation of the causes would be happened near the residence of the *tapa*'d or the shade of tree. If there were killing (murderer) among the Majang community, the murderer immediately went to the home of *tapa*'d to save his life by telling his mistakes and confess. Those families who lost their beloved relative by the murderer also did not want revenge the murderer after he went to the arbitrator or *tapa*'d. Therefore, the powerful *tapa*'d negotiated and settled the problem of both the victim and murderer agreed and made peace in front of the traditional leaders (*tapa*'d). The traditional leader, *tapa*'d have been respected by the community and did not go to work and hunting. All the work was done by the local communities. Most of the *tapa* was from the Mealanir clan and had great position since earlier times.<sup>297</sup>

If a Majang man committed a crime near the *tapa* residence /territory, he would have suffered serious punishments and believed to face bad fortune like sickness, injury and most terribly, death, according to their tradition and belief. Succession to the *tapa* position was based on blood ties to the deceased *tapa* and all successors must perform their duties fairly and kindly to stay in power. The *tapa* and all the Majang believed and feared the sprit called *jok*. Ritual ceremonies were performed by the *tapa* in respect for *jok* and for the blessing of the people.<sup>298</sup>

Each Majang village has its' own *tapa*'d and there was no strong/powerful *tapa*'d who would organize and control the other *tapa* in the Majang land. In addition to this, everyone in the Majang village had to visit his respective *tapa* when he collected honey, to provide *ogol* and *tajan* in the annual spiritual ceremony held by the *tapa*'dh. An individual should also consult and get permission from the *tapa*'dh for settlement in his territory, for construction of homes, for hunting and to get blessing during illness of a family member.<sup>299</sup> The Majang lacked strong political organization which would organize and administer this *tapa* into one administrative unit. Each village of the Majang with its *tapa*'d exercised

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<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.* Fikre and Wajine.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>299</sup> Informants: Biniam, Eyosiyas, Tigist, Mariam Kone.

its own independent life. A *tapa'd* would be respected and feared based on possession of his ritual exercise that he rendered to his community not based on his ability of administration.<sup>300</sup>

## 4.2. Religious practice

Religion is a faith in super natural force and it can influence the socio-economic activities of the society. It is categorized as traditional or worldwide. In this part, attention is given on the traditional belief of the Majang people the Majang zone. Traditional religion or belief includes people's belief in various types of objects. Since earliest time people began to reverence objects nearby them. In the same way, this faith led to the beginning of the traditional belief among the Majang societies. This indicates that earlier than the advent of protestant Christianity to their territory, the Majang people had been practicing traditional religion.<sup>301</sup>

Traditional belief experienced in Majang has its own structure and instruction. The Majang communities who practice traditional belief respect the significance of their faith and used as a means of curing to the sick, blessing to their harvest, security of their cattle and good prosperity when they put their sells on the market. They obey all religious orders given from their priests. "Goroye" was the name of the god with the faithful traditional belief worshiped. They belief "Goroye" as a healer and savior, thus there were natural elements considered as blessed or "saloy" where in he revealed himself to his subjects, such as rocks. They grow interweaving bush to safeguard such areas and assign somebody who could implement religious service nearby the prevented holy place. The person will then function as a predictive preacher who can forecast the fortune of the faithful by watching at the remains of the sacrifices. In earlier times, there were Majang leaders who performed religious and political functions.<sup>302</sup>

The Majang people had their own cultural faith earlier than the introduction of protestant Christianity. *Waqoyo* (God) was at the top (the highest) of the traditional faith and it was the common name of traditional spirit. There were different spirits called by different names under *waqoyo*. A person, who the spirit rested on him, has the authority over the society to control and possessed everything including female, which is beautiful and attractive to that person. Some of the spirits believed in by the Majang are the following.<sup>303</sup>

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<sup>300</sup> Omod Miru Ojot, p.114.

<sup>301</sup> Ahmed, p.67.

<sup>302</sup> Gambella mimeographed study, pp.141-142.

<sup>303</sup> Gashaw, p.14.

*Waldéy* this was one of a spirit that was believed to be superior of all sprits. Its annual ceremony was celebrated every year under plant called *emuy*. The plant of *emuy* was planted in rounded mode and stone was placed around the plant (*emuy*). This area of reverence was known as *saloy* by the society. By the time of celebration of this spirit traditional drinks *tajan* or *ogol* would be ready. A sacrifice of goat or chicken would also be prepared. The holder of this spirit among the society was highly respected. Most of the time, *tapha* was responsible to possess this spirit and non-*tapa* was rarely the possessor of the spirit. In the shortage of rain or when the rain would be excessive, the Majang communities offered sacrifices and pray to this spirit. In the ancient times, almost all the Majang societies ready *saloy* at nearby their home. They would offer their regular sacrifice including the first drop of coffee (*Kari*) before it was drunk by them. They splashed the *Kari* on the earth so that the spirit would drink it.<sup>304</sup>

*Ragaw* was a spirit, which was believed to be found at dirty areas. It was thought that, the spirit would prevent children from hazard while they were playing. When maize and sorghum became ripe for eating, some amount of them would be given to this spirit and the first drop of coffee was also poured for this spirit. *Jokan* was also a type of spirit in which the Majang community believed. These spirits were thought to be several in numbers in relation to others. The goal of these sprits was to protect children, property of the public and the surroundings. *Cein* was another kind of spirit. It was believed that this spirit protect people from death and sudden accidents. These all traditional gods were abandoned in the Majang society because the spread of the Protestant Christianity among the Majang settlements since 1960s.<sup>305</sup> One of the traditional beliefs commonly known before the introduction of Christianity among the Majangir was the belief in ghostly spirits. Currently the Majang societies existing in the study area are Protestants and hence, most of them do not believe in traditional religious practices except in limited places in Mengeshi districts in Majang zone. In these places, people existing in farmhouses near by a person influenced by spirit plant broad leaved high grass known as *särté* (*emuy*), and pour *kari* beneath the grass as a manifestation of a worship for the spirit. Part of the worship for the spirit is a ceremonial that includes giving *Kari*. The women put a stone under a tree, and often pour at the same spot, bow down and pray beneath the tree.<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>304</sup> Informants: Yosef, Bianke, Beza.

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.* Yosef, Bianke, Beza

<sup>306</sup> Worku, pp.357-358.

### 4.3. INDIGENOUS MARRIAGE

Marriage is a process by which the official relationship of husband and wife is established. Thus it is used as legal combination between man and woman and governed by mutual relationship among them.<sup>307</sup> Each society began with household and family recognized with the loving partnership and common willingness of pairs of dissimilar genders. The Marital of pairs was the most significant part of persons and social life. Furthermore, marriage has a meaning in the society, for example, an individual who gets married is taking up as an actual change, promise and respect of the pairs in the main body of the community. The role of individual after marriage will be great. In their private life pairs share one other life in their social life; their social position will be accepted as significant to their community.<sup>308</sup> It was the agreement arranged by male and female in various ways in a given community and has to be between people from different clans or people from other ethnic groups.<sup>309</sup> Marriage differs from one area to other area even in the similar territory since several cultural, economic, and spiritual factors.<sup>310</sup> Marriage arrangement among the Majang community is usually a matter of concern more for the husband (male) and the wife (female). The first criteria for marriage in Majang society was capacity of both the boy and the girl managing their life by themselves.<sup>311</sup>

The adulthood and growth of boys and girls for marriage was identified by certain performances. For instance, the maturity of male is manifested by starting to go to jungle by his own will and attempt to prepare bee hives, hunting and catching fish. The girl also performs household activity such as preparing “*kari*”, crushing maize; prepare porridge, wearing beads around her waist and hands. The above mentioned activities were some of the manifestation of maturity for marriage. In addition to this, the girl’s parents would make for her a hut (*Godé*) for watching crops from Wild animals that destroy it. Copulation before marriage was not allowed.<sup>312</sup>

There are different types of traditional marriage among the Majang communities. The first way was the oldest way of arranging marriage was *bobon* with the consent of the girl. When a girl becomes of the age of marriage (14 years for female), her parents would make for her plot of land for maize and plot of land for sorghum with a small hut (*godé*) in the field. A *pañi* (mortar made of a hollowed log) was buried just in front of her hut. This was to let her test physical strength and capability for work. In

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<sup>307</sup> Wossen, p .33.

<sup>308</sup> Ahmed, p.56.

<sup>309</sup> Getachew, “Wawan the traditional.....”, p.7.

<sup>310</sup> Ahmed, p .56.

<sup>311</sup> Wossen, p.33.

<sup>312</sup> Informants: Kedimael, Efrem, Yosef and Tito.



addition, this practice tends to show Majang men's desire for a wife's labor and it also seems that a woman's labor and interest for work was the main attraction for men to marry her.<sup>313</sup> As mentioned above, a man who found such a woman to his choice would visit her. If it was her will, she would have an appointment with the man to meet accompanied by their respective friends. During the day of appointment friends would sit on two rows: the males on one row and the females on another.<sup>314</sup>

The female *tagon* or *pétti* (wife) would give to the male *tagon* or *atin* (husband) a *tom* (traditional musical instrument) to play. She then starts smoking *tapé* (tobacco) and invites her future husband to join her in smoking tobacco. She also gives him a *taši* (traditional cloth made from leaves). In return; he gives her *tängi* (a traditional garment made of tree bark), ointments, and beads. They also served with *kijo*, *shakoy*, and smoke *tape* (tobacco); and drink *Kari* (a hot drink) which is distributed by the host.<sup>315</sup> On the next appointment the girl would stay ready and immediately the wife takers would take her away. When the girl's parents and relatives hearing the news, they would follow the wife-taker in near distance. After identifying where the boy and the girl hide, they would get back to their home, where *gutan* (elders) were waiting with the necessary items and amount of *kagn* (bride price). After discussion and agreement, necessary payment was given to the girl's parent. According to the tradition of the communities spears, axe, bracelet and beads were important and value able parts of the bride price. In this way, the marriage becomes legitimate.<sup>316</sup>

The other way of in which marriage comes in to being was as a result of pregnancy before wedding ceremony without the recognition of the families of both the boy and the girl. The girl's parents would irritate her to let them know the man to whom the baby belongs. Having known the man, her parents wait for a peaceful delivery of the baby. However, quite aware of the seriousness of the matter, the boy would send *gutan* (elders) to discuss on the size of *kaññ* (bride price) to be paid. The largest amount of *kaññ* is paid for this type of marriage. Once this is settled the wife along with her baby would be taken to her husband's house.<sup>317</sup>

**Obod (abduction)** this type of marriage concluded forcefully without the will of the girl. The wife taker (the husband) waits for the girl and one day he finds her somewhere else would forcefully take her without her will usually by beating. After he took the girl, he would keep her somewhere safe. Immediately Conflicts happen between her families but the situation resolved by clan leaders. After

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<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.* Wajine, Fikre, Tigist.

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>316</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*

matters are settled, the girl (the wife) is taken to her parent's house. However, with payment of *kaññ*, the man (husband) would take back his wife.<sup>318</sup>

*Kaññ* (bride-price) is socially significant in the Majang community. Through kagn payment marriage became socially accepted by the community. It was common in different ethnic groups but the amount and types of bride price varied according to the tradition of the society. In Majang community negotiation and decision making power on *kaññ* (bride-price) was a matter of concern for men alone. Mothers have no say in their daughters' *kaññ* payment. Even if with the absence of a father, it was the brother who would negotiate over the payment of kagn; but with the absence of the two (father and brother), it was mostly the uncle or any other male relative who demand and receive the kagn (bride-price).<sup>319</sup>

The amount of *kaññ* was always depending on the type of marriage and socio-economic status of the girl's parents. In the former times the items of kagn were *kabbi* (axe) and *biya* (spear) which were valuable among the community. Gradually money became important *kaññ* (bride-price). This was because the introduction of coffee in to the area *kaññ* has begun to be paid in terms of cash (money). This has sometimes restricted men from getting married until they can have beehives or coffee or kagn by their own or through their parents. Nowadays, the amount of kagn payment ranges from 10,000 -15,000 Et Birr. Before 1970s it was very easy to find gift for bride wealth from the forest and honey selling. But recently due to deforestation and land acquisition it is very difficult to obtain such huge amount of money by selling honey and other products. Failure in paying for the bride wealth has also a severe consequence. In Majang tradition, the elders punish the bride-groom in a very brutal way of beating. Some of the Majang even lost their body such as eyes, heart due to the ruthless beating culture. Unlike the other societies, the payment of *kaññ* is not always completed instantly. It is usually completed over two or three phases.<sup>320</sup> There was also a tradition of repayments of bride price if divorce occurred. In the Majang culture it was not the wife but the husband who lives the house after divorce. There was no situation under which a divorced woman was forced to return back to her parents' residence. Hence there was no repayment of kagn by parents to ex-husband. But if she was remarried another husband (the second or new), the husband has the obligation to repay the kagn to the ex-husband (to the former husband). If he refuse or even delays the repayment of the kagn, the ex-

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<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.* Mariam Kone, Tito and Yosef.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.* Moges Dikakan, Fikre and Arshid.

<sup>320</sup> Informants: Moges, Fikre, Arshid

husband has the right to retake his former by force.<sup>321</sup> In Majang tradition a man could marry more than one wife if he would be responsible satisfying basic needs. Polygamy, yet in small scale, still practiced among the Majangir.<sup>322</sup> There has been similarity and difference in types of marriage among the peoples of Majang, Shako, the Nilo-Saharan Anuak and Nuer. In the case of marriage agreement almost the three ethnic groups had similarity with the Majang. Even the marriage agreement was similar; there was difference in payment of bride price in all ethnic groups. For instance, the Shako paid seven heads of cattle as bride price. The Anuak paid in cash and the Nuer paid the bride price with thirty heads of cattle (cows).<sup>323</sup>

But after 1974, the Majang people abandoned the above type of marriage and adopted different kinds of marriage like forceful abduction (*Obodh*). A marriage arrangement followed by premarital conception (today this type of marriage is widely practiced in the community) adopted probably from settler communities in their area as to them. There were also marriage tradition and polygamy among the Majang before the introduction Christianity in their local area. After the 1970s, the impact of the Protestant Christianity and modern teachings considered these practices as harmful traditional practices that should be restrained. They, thus, gradually abandoned them.<sup>324</sup>

#### **4.4. BURIAL CEREMONY UP TO 1960's**

Burial ceremony in the former times among the Majang societies had its distinctive features. It was separated in to two: burial for an ordinary person and burial for the *taphadh* (ritual expert). In the former times, when somebody passed away in the Majang society, funeral ceremony of the deceased would be taken place in front of the home of the dead. There were no permanent burial places. The cause why their burial was restricted nearby their home was for the reason that the number of residents in a given settlement area was small. In order to withstand the lack of manpower to transport the corpse to the remote area and excavating the grave, they buried the deceased near to the home.<sup>325</sup>

In the Majang community if the death of a person was assured, his/her hands and legs of the deceased person would be curved and tied together. In order to bend simply the limbs of the deceased person, when he/she died the Majang started to massage the hands and legs of a person while he was in throes of death. Otherwise, the limbs of corpse would be broken and tied and made the corpse into the size of

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<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.* Mariam, Tito and Yosef

<sup>323</sup> Abebe, p.70.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>325</sup> Demeke, p .29.

a child. Then, the corpse would be wrapped by *tangi* and put into a stretcher made of sticks called *yäyi* and would be made ready for burial. The tomb would be dug in a circle shape and finally the corpse would be made to sit and buried.<sup>326</sup>

It was also communal for the Majangir to be present at burials of relatives even if those in remotest areas. *Kari* which was common traditional drink among the community prepared for the people presented the funeral. Even today, the Majangir have sustained this custom of attending burials of a dead from their own settlement areas. Up on the death of a relative or a former neighbor living in distant lands, people travel to attend funerals and express their sadness.<sup>327</sup> Funeral of the dead was accompanied by a mourning-ceremony in which women shed tears by falling on the ground, and men wounding their forehead with spear and sharp materials as an expression of their sorrow. They had a custom of sharing the grief with family of the deceased.<sup>328</sup> In the previous time there were two types of funeral ceremony in the Majang society (burial for ordinary person and burial for the *tapa'dh*/ritual experts).

#### 4.4.1. Burial for an Ordinary People

Before 1960s, when the passing away of somebody was certain, the deceased hands and legs would be bending and tied together. Then, the dead body would be covered by *tängi* and placed into a stretcher made of rods called *yäyi* and would be made ready for funeral. The grave would be excavated in a round shape and lastly the dead body would be made to sit and buried.<sup>329</sup> Female mourners cried out throwing themselves on the ground repeatedly. Male mourners would cut deep their foreheads and heads with spears or sharp knives. This was to express their deep sorrow. After this, those who attend funeral would stay at least for three months on sorrow. Peoples from neighboring and distant places would present and express their condolence to the family of the dead. All possessions including crops like maize, sorghum and honey of the dead would be eaten by the mourners and others who went to attend the sorrow.<sup>330</sup>

A type of plant named *emuy* was also planted encircling the tomb. After a year, the place nearby the burial ground would be cleared and the family of the deceased would leave the residence. It was

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<sup>326</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>327</sup> Informants: Wajine, Yosef, Bianke and Yamerga.

<sup>328</sup> Gashaw Shuma, p. 22.

<sup>329</sup> Informants: Wajine, Yosef, Bianke, Yamerga.

<sup>330</sup> Gashaw, p.22.

supposed that, departure of the village where their dear relative passed away and buried would relieve them from remembering the deceased.<sup>331</sup>

#### 4.4.2. Burial Ceremony for the *Tapa*'d

In the case of burial digging and burial ground, it was connected with that of the ordinary Majang. If the dead *tapa* was influential among his society, the news of his death would not be told to the public instantly. This was to alleviate the psychological worry of his admirers. The facts of the death would be making known gradually. During the funeral ceremony, there was no crying as for other ordinary Majang. At the end of the burial ceremony, an elder would stand and give blessings. This type of burial ceremony for *tapa* would take place where there was no cave (*kaka*).<sup>332</sup> In a place where there was a cave, the funeral ceremony would be made inside the cave. In some places in the absence of caves; the burial of the *tapa* took place in the openings of trees (*gombari*). They would put the dead body there. On the occasion of the funeral ceremony of influential *tapa*, goat or hen would be slaughtered and left with the corpse at the cave. If not this was made, they believed that “either the children of the deceased would be cursed or die; the spirit of the dead *tapa* would come as a tiger (*domon*) and destroy their property and the land would be cursed. After the death of their *tapa*, the Majang community in one village would also abandon their settlement and move to the place where there was another *tapa* to get protection. After the 1970s, these kinds of burial ceremony were totally abandoned among the Majang community.<sup>333</sup>

### 4.5. TRADITIONAL CLOTHES AND DRESSING STYLE

Before the 1970s, clothes were not known by the Majang people. During that time it was difficult to them to get garments and they had not skill of making clothes. A small number of Majang rarely wear clothes. But majority of the Majang community wear the leaves of *emuy* plant to cover their body especially below their waist. In addition to the *emuy* they also prepared traditional garment from the bark of tree called *tangi*. The bark of the tree was carefully prepared, scratched and washed to make it ready for use. It was very important night clothes and served as blanket and bed sheet. The Majang societies were mainly depended on nature. Overall, they survived in harmony with environment. They applied their indigenous knowledge in using their natural resources for source of food, clothes and also used the forest as a hiding place to defend themselves from external raiders.<sup>334</sup> The tradition of wearing

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<sup>331</sup> Informants: Wajine, Yosef and Biniam.

<sup>332</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>334</sup> *Ibid.* Biniam, Eyosiyas, Efrem.

garment in the Majang society was altered after 1974. It was in the Derg period that many changes obviously seen among the Majang. They obtained free gifts of garments such as blankets and farming tools since they were mainly relied on harvesting different crops and varieties of root crops and hunting wild life before and after 1974.<sup>335</sup> Gradually, with the expansion and establishment of local markets, the Majang people got the opportunity to access of different markets to buy clothes. Especially, after 1980s and 1990s most of the communities had changed their dressing styles and very recently they wear fashionable clothes mostly those who live in urban and surrounding areas and it was also amazing change of dressing style among the community.<sup>336</sup>

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<sup>335</sup> Abebe, p.77.

<sup>336</sup> Informants: Biniam, Kedimael, Juhar.

## CONCLUSION

The discussion of this study is briefly shows the history of socio-economic development of the Majang people since the area occupied by the forces of Emperor Menelik II at the end of the nineteenth century. The area where the Majang people currently live was occupied by them early in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Their settlement was towards the north direction from the Gurafärda (today's Bench Maji Zone) areas up to Godere River and some peripheral areas of Anuak lands (present day Gambella). The Majang were segregated people from the economic, social and political administration. Their settlement was limited to inaccessible pocket areas. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the forces of Emperor Menelik led by *DäjazmaĈ* (later *Ras*) Tässäma Nadäw occupied and incorporated Illubabor.

In 1890s the forces of *Ras* Tässäma occupied Yäkki and its surroundings; the area where the Majang populations largely settled. This occupation brought the Majang population in to the modern Ethiopian empire formed by Emperor Menelik II. With this conquest, settlers (other ethnic groups) from the north and other places came and settled in the Majang land. Through time, some influences began to be felt on the life of the Majang caused by land alienation, raidings for slaves; both by the soldiers and the neighbors of the Majang people.

During the Italian occupation, the Majang had experienced some changes in their life; slave trade was abolished; the marginalization of the Majang by other settler communities was stopped and they got acceptance. Despite these, there were no significant changes in the Majang land during the Italian occupation with regard to socio-economic facilities. After the restoration of imperial rule, coffee became an important cash crop in Yäkki district. Therefore, the flow of population to the area and land grabbing in the area highly increased. The Majang communities began to experience changes in their life after the 1960s; the introduction of Protestant Christianity by Harvey Hoekstra. The agricultural system of the Majang was obsolete; no hoes, no oxen are used up to 1974. The only system was slashing and burn technique with shifting cultivation. Hence, the production of the Majang population was not even hand to mouth. In order to overcome the shortage of food, the Majang communities depended on hunting and gathering of food in the forest and river banks.

The Majang community was divided into different clans. Their marriage relation was arranged among different clans. The Majang marriage system of the past was limited in number of participants. This marriage culture should be protected and preserved by the community for the young and coming generation. But nowadays, this marriage culture was abandoned by them and by most of the young generation of the Majang. This cultural asset, other indigenous knowledge and practices were eroded

due to the influence of settler communities and Christianity. The Majang claim that, today's culture of marriage was alien to them and it was a culture adopted from others. The burial ceremony of the past and the extravagance followed the death of individuals; the practices of crying by mourners were harmful traditional practices which should be abandoned. They were totally abandoned among the Majang with the influence of Protestant Christianity after the 1970s.

The life of the Majang population experienced major changes under the Därg regime. As opposed to other parts of Ethiopia, which resisted villagization programme, the Majang fully accepted it. The Därg collected the Majang communities into villages near clinics, schools and other socio-economic facilities. With this, the Därg government supported the Majang community by distributing clothes and by handing out grain once or twice in a year. Under the Därg regime, the Majang had been encouraged to send their children to school, increased productivity through cultivation. The Majang were particularly given machet (*Jamai*), hoes, axe (*kabbi*), salt (*moy*) and above all else the Därg cadres taught them to abandon harmful traditional practices. This villagization programme brought the Majang community to permanent settlement. It was also during this time that, the name Majang was adopted as the only preferable name for the community. Because they were called by different names in the past by their neighbors. For this memorable contribution of the Därg, many Majang people speak out the positive sides of the Därg regime openly. The thesis has its own contribution in the study of the social, economic and cultural history of the Majang people. It helps as a reference for other researchers both on the people of the Majang and other peoples in the region. Therefore this thesis has tried to open the necessary ground for further study of the Majang society.



## GLOSSARY

### List of Amharic Terms

*Awraja*---- sub- province above woreda.

*Balabat*-----Hereditary owner of rest land.

*Därg*-----a Geez word in its origin meaning committee.

*Fitawurari*---- a military title meaning commander of the vanguard of a traditional Ethiopian armed force.

*Lij*-----child, Honorific title reserved for sons of royal family or nobility.

*Ras*-----literary “head” one of the Powerful non-imperial commanders of an army.

*Täqlay Gezat*----Administrative unit above *Awraja* (*Kefelähägär*)

*Zone*----- an administrative unit below the region and above the *woreda* level.

### List of terms for Majang Language

*Angé*-----Elephant.

*Aré*-----knife.

*Atin*----- matured boy for marriage.

*Baburé*----- Babure or Anshoté in some places of the Majang village to refer cassava.

*Badey*-----one of the varieties of yam in Majang community.

*Bambé*-----sweet potato.

*Bangi*-----rainy season; a time of shortage of food among the Majang community.

*Cookili*-----chickens.

*Dané*-----hive

*Danir*-----the name used by the Majang to call their neighbor; the Shakko people.

*Dapé*-----a kind of traditional strap used to capture wild animals by the community.

*Domon*-----leopard

*Emuy*----- in the past the Majang used to plant this plant on grave yards; to prepare worship Places and its leaves to cover their organs.

*Atädh*-----honey.

*Galier*----- (*Habesha* )the name used by the Majang to call light colored people mainly the Oromo, the Amhara, Tigre, Gurage etc.

*Gamadh*-----pool labor/association.

*Gedhi*-----cleared/prepared field for cultivation.

*.Gidhéy*-----stone

*Godé*-----a hut

*Gomoy*-----a kind of traditional trap used to be made as a flat stage loaded with stones and other materials to capture wild animals.

*.Gutaré*-----elders.

*Jamai*-----machete or sometimes called *Gäjära*.

*Jungle*-----forest land, hive site.

*Kabbi*-----an axe.

*Kadhikan*-----sugarcane.

*Kangi*-----a kind of traditional trap used by the Majang communities either to capture the necks or legs of animals.

*Kanté*-----a kind of baskets used for transporting goods, grains, clays etc.

*Kari*-----a hot drink made from the leaves (not beans) of coffee with addition of other things, such as chilly or hot pepper, garlic, herbs and salt.

*Kawé*-----rifle.

*Kawn*----- Yam.

*Kedhefan*-----beads.

*Kijo*-----soft and circle bread made from fresh maize, rapped by leaves of maize and boiled usually made up to the harvesting of maize.

*.Komoyir*-----clans.

*Kongé*-----a kind of basket used for collecting honey.

*.Makälé*-----maize.

*Moyä*-----coffee.

*Ñidhiñ*-----sorghum.

*Obodh*-----abduction.

*Ogol*----- a traditional alcoholic drink used by the community.

*Palé*-----racked flat stage made under the roof for storing grains.

*Pañi*-----mortar used for grinding grains.

*Paré*-----a kind of big tray made from likitti used for drying and winnowing grains.

*Pétit*-----matured girl for marriage.

*Phrier*-----the name used by the Majang to call the Anuak.

*Purik*----- (ragadh) to clear fields for cultivation by chopping undergrowth.

*Saloy*-----a place of worship for traditional belief; where ritual practices were made.

*Šakoy*-----a kind of taro.

*Šapatan*-----porridge

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## LISTS OF INFORMANTS

No	Name	Age	Place of interview	Date of interview	Remark
1	Abel Dawshin( <i>Ato</i> )	59	Mengesh	14/04/2021	He is a peasant and had a good memory of traditional religion and expansion of Christianity.
2	Adieto W/ Senbet ( <i>Ato</i> )	86	Metti	21/04/2021	He is an old man and has a good memory.
3	Aron Mak ( <i>Ato</i> )	63	Mengesh	14/04/2021	He is a farmer and he is also a good informant and told me about hunting system and importance of different types of root crops.
4	Arshid Dirayin( <i>Ato</i> )	48	Metti	25/07/2021	He is civil servant in Majang zone. He told me about the interaction of Majang people with other ethnic groups.
5	Abel Debarshin( <i>Ato</i> )	68	Tingi	14/04/2021	He is a farmer and has a good memory of the past culture of the community.
6	Ayinalem Legesse( <i>Ato</i> )	54	Metti 01	16/07/2021	He is a civil servant and work in Godere Woreda education Bureau. He told me about the expansion of education in the area.



7	Adisu Tiruneh( <i>Ato</i> )	57	Semuy	19/04/2021	He is a guard of municipal office. He told me about burial ceremony and traditional marriage.
8	Beza Tadios( <i>W/ro</i> )	48	Metti 01	16/07/2021	She is a good informant on the traditional food preparation and burial ceremony.
9	Bianke Tobel( <i>W/ro</i> )	47	Metti 01	16/07/2021	She has a good memory on the indigenous marriage of the Majang community.
10	Biniam Sisekir( <i>Ato</i> )	58	Godere Mission	14/04/2021	He is civil servant. He told me about traditional religion, expansion of Christianity and modern education.
11	Cheneke Sanan( <i>Ato</i> )	59	Dope	14/04/2021	He has a good memory on the types of indigenous marriage in the community.
12	Dawit Goyin( <i>Ato</i> )	61	Gonch	22/04/2021	He is a farmer and told me about preparation of bee hive and hunting activity in the society.
13	Dereje Muse	76	Metti	18/07/2021	He told me about the past culture of the community.
14	Efrem G/Yesus( <i>Ato</i> )	66	Semuy	19/04/2021	He is a peasant and has a good memory the contribution of the Derg to the Majang people to improve their livelihood.

15	Ejigael Rika( <i>Ato</i> )	65	Semuy	19/04/2021	He is a peasant and has a good memory of the past economic activity.
16	Milkiyas Abera( <i>Ato</i> )	57	Mengesh	14/04/2021	He has a good memory of the past and told me about the introduction of Christianity and expansion of modern education
17	Esayas Kone( <i>Ato</i> )	69	Godere Mission	14/04/2021	He is a farmer and has a good knowledge of the past culture.
18	Eyosiyas Sergaw( <i>Ato</i> )	55	Godere Mission	14/04/2021	He is a civil servant. He told me about the introduction of Christianity, modern education to the area and villagization.
19	Fikre Tefera( <i>Ato</i> )	69	Metti	18/07/2021	He is respected man and civil servant in the area. He told me about the interaction of the Majang people with other ethnic groups and burial ceremony.
20	GelatiyaTito( <i>Ato</i> )	51	Fejeji	14/04/2021	He has a good memory of the past culture of traditional marriage.
21	Gezahagn Tamiru( <i>Ato</i> )	52	Godere Mission	14/04/2021	He is a civil servant and work in Godere Woreda education Bureau. He told me about the expansion of education in the area.

22	Getisemsni Timotiwos( <i>Ato</i> )	53	Semuy	19/04/2021	He is a religious leader and he told me about the introduction of Christianity.
23	Janur Jikony( <i>Ato</i> )	66	Gelesha	26/04/2021	He is a famous village leader who told me about the relation of Majang community with other ethnic groups.
24	Kebede Burjo( <i>Ato</i> )	71	Godere Mission	14/04/2021	He has a good knowledge of the past culture of economic activity and hunting system of the community.
25	Kedha Gelawit( <i>W/ro</i> )	49	Metti	16/07/2021	She is a good informant and told me about traditional marriage and burial ceremony.
26	Kedimael Erkana( <i>Ato</i> )	56	Godere Mission	14/04/2021	He has a good memory of the past culture the Majang.
27	Kibrnahom Erana ( <i>Ato</i> )	64	Semuy	19/04/2021	He is a farmer and told me about economic activity of the past.
28	Lencho Wodajo ( <i>Ato</i> )	63	Metti 01	26/04/2021	He is respected man in the area and has a good memory about the Majang during imperial and Derg regime.
29	Mariam Kone( <i>W/ro</i> )	53	Godere Mission	14/04/2021	She has a good memory of the past culture of marriage and burial ceremony.
30	Mariam Lukas	55	Semuy	19/04/2021	She has a memory of the past and told me the importance of

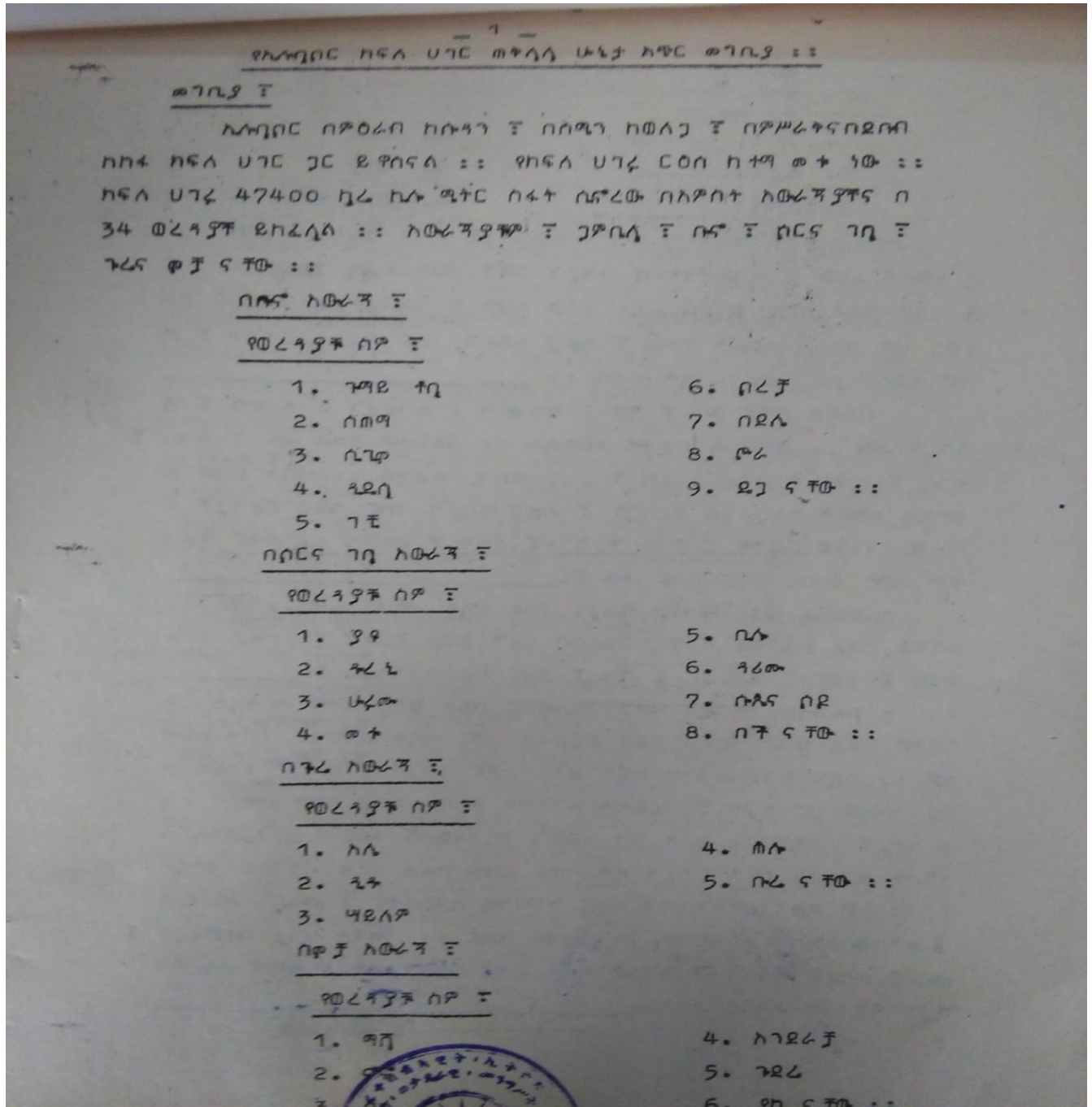
	(W/ro)				pottery in livelihood.
31	Moges Dikakan(Ato)	57	Metti 02	04/08/2021	He is a civil servant and he has a good memory of the past culture of the Majang community.
32	Nebiyat Girma (Ato)	49	Goshine	22/04/2021	He is a good oral informant about the past economic activity.
33	Negussie Gemta (Ato)	68	Gochi	06/05/2021	He is a farmer and told me about the past culture.
34	Rome Kon (Ato)	67	Dope	14/04/2021	He is a peasant and a good informant on the farming activity of the past.
35	Simon Negussie (Ato)	48	Gonch	06/05/2021	He is a civil servant and told me about traditional marriage in the community.
36	Tadele Berhanu(Ato)	51	Godere Mission	14/04/2021	He is a civil servant and told me economic development of area.
37	Tegenes Wondimu (W/ro)	48	Metti	06/05/2021	She has a good memory of the past culture of marriage and burial ceremony.
38	Tiyalem Benjen (Ato)	61	Goshine	22/04/2021	He is a famous village leader and has a memory of the past economic condition of the past since imperial period.
39	Tigist Bekele (W/ro)	65	Goshine	22/04/2021	She is a good informant and told me about pottery work and its income in the past.

40	Tinbit Goyin (W/ro)	52	Gonchi	06/05/2021	She has a good memory of the past traditional marriage.
41	Wajine Taro(Ato)	53	Meti 01	18/07/2021	He is a civil servant. He was member of the House Representative in the former time and now he is also consultant of Majang zone House of Speaker. He has a good knowledge about interaction of Majang people with other ethnic groups and economic activity of the past.
42	Yimam Temenjet (Ato)	57	Gonchi	06/05/2021	He has a good memory of the past culture and economic activity.
43	Zerihu Nebiyat (Ato)	52	Semuy	19/04/2021	He is a farmer and has a good memory of interaction of Majang with other highlanders.
44	Yakob Gimki (Ato)	55	Meti	06/05/2021	He has a good memory of the past culture and economic activity of the Majang community.
45	Yamerga Pashet(Ato)	68	Gonch	06/05/2021	He is a peasant and had a good memory of the past and told me about burial ceremony.
46	Yosef Degu(Ato)	57	Meti	06/05/2021	He has a good memory of the past culture of the community.

47	Yosef Yotam (Ato)	53	Metti	16/07/2021	He is a civil servant and he told me about indigenous marriage and burial ceremony of the Majang in the past.
48	Yosef Tebakos(Ato)	56	Gonch	06/05/2021	He has a good memory of the past and told me about the indigenous marriage of the community.
49	Timotiwos Gnamun(Ato)	68	Godere Mission	14/04/2021	He is a farmer and has a good memory of the past culture and administrative system of the area during the imperial and Derg era.
50	Tito Denbegnin(Ato)	49	Gonch	06/05/2021	He is a good informant and told me about indigenous marriage of the community.
51	Zekiwos Totin(Ato)	68	Godere Mission	14/04 2021	He has a good memory of the past culture economic activity of the society.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix-A



A letter which indicate former Provinces and districts under Illubabor Kefelähägar including Godäré district (now Majang Zone).

ሶሻሊዥም ስርዓት ለማስፈጸም የሚያስፈልጉ ስራዎች ለማግኘት ወረዳ የእርሻና የሕዝብ ግብረር ሥ/  
አባቶች ተወካዮች የተረጎ ፈጽሞ ፡፡

የሶሻሊዥም ስርዓት ለማስፈጸም የሚያስፈልጉ ስራዎች ለማግኘት ወረዳ የእርሻና የሕዝብ ግብረር ሥ/ አባቶች ተወካዮች የተረጎ ፈጽሞ ፡፡

የባለሙያ ስራ ለማግኘት የሚያስፈልጉ ስራዎች ለማግኘት ወረዳ የእርሻና የሕዝብ ግብረር ሥ/ አባቶች ተወካዮች የተረጎ ፈጽሞ ፡፡

ዘላቂ ስራዎች ለማግኘት የሚያስፈልጉ ስራዎች ለማግኘት ወረዳ የእርሻና የሕዝብ ግብረር ሥ/ አባቶች ተወካዮች የተረጎ ፈጽሞ ፡፡

የሕግ ስራዎች ለማግኘት የሚያስፈልጉ ስራዎች ለማግኘት ወረዳ የእርሻና የሕዝብ ግብረር ሥ/ አባቶች ተወካዮች የተረጎ ፈጽሞ ፡፡

የጥራት ስራዎች ለማግኘት የሚያስፈልጉ ስራዎች ለማግኘት ወረዳ የእርሻና የሕዝብ ግብረር ሥ/ አባቶች ተወካዮች የተረጎ ፈጽሞ ፡፡

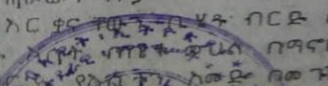
የጥራት ስራዎች ለማግኘት የሚያስፈልጉ ስራዎች ለማግኘት ወረዳ የእርሻና የሕዝብ ግብረር ሥ/ አባቶች ተወካዮች የተረጎ ፈጽሞ ፡፡

የጥራት ስራዎች ለማግኘት የሚያስፈልጉ ስራዎች ለማግኘት ወረዳ የእርሻና የሕዝብ ግብረር ሥ/ አባቶች ተወካዮች የተረጎ ፈጽሞ ፡፡

የጥራት ስራዎች ለማግኘት የሚያስፈልጉ ስራዎች ለማግኘት ወረዳ የእርሻና የሕዝብ ግብረር ሥ/ አባቶች ተወካዮች የተረጎ ፈጽሞ ፡፡

የጥራት ስራዎች ለማግኘት የሚያስፈልጉ ስራዎች ለማግኘት ወረዳ የእርሻና የሕዝብ ግብረር ሥ/ አባቶች ተወካዮች የተረጎ ፈጽሞ ፡፡

የጥራት ስራዎች ለማግኘት የሚያስፈልጉ ስራዎች ለማግኘት ወረዳ የእርሻና የሕዝብ ግብረር ሥ/ አባቶች ተወካዮች የተረጎ ፈጽሞ ፡፡







ቁጥር 1384/ጠ3/3/1

ነሰ 3 ቀን 75 ዓ/ም

ለዎቻ ከውረዳ ከስተዳደር ጽ/ቤት

ማሻገር፡፡

ዘላገገ በሚመለከት መረጃዎች ስለመስጠት ስምሌ 22/75 በቁጥር 2946/መ.5/75 የተጻፈ ደርሶል፡፡

5.1- የዘላገገ ከከባቢ ከውረዳው ዎቻ፣ ወረዳው ዩኒ፣

5.2- ዘላገገ በቦታና በክረምት ወራትም ሆነ በሚኖሩበት ከከባቢ ተሰጠሰበው የሚገኙ መገደቦች ብቻ እንዲከፈሉ አይደለም፣

5.3- በየቦታው ጽዕኔዎች መዘገጥ ብሔረሰቦች በየቦታው ገበረ ማህበራት ተደራጅተው ስለሚገኙ የተለየ ተጠሪ ያላቸውም፣ ተጠሪ ነታቸው ለከከባቢው ገበረ ማህበር ሊቀመንበር ብቻ ነው፣

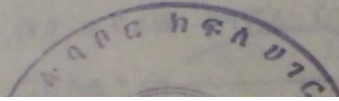
5.4- እንተርናሽናል የወሰነ መስመሩን ለመሻገር ወደጉረቤት የሚሄዱ ስለሌሉ ዝርዝር ሁኔታውን ከመገለጽ አልፏል፣

5.5- ብዙ ከብቶች ስለሌላቸው በሰፈሩበት ከከባቢ ብቻ እንደ ማገኛውም ገበረ ያላቸውን ከብት የሚጠቀሙበት በወረዳው ሆኖ እንደ ገለጸገ፣ በወረዳችን የሚገኙት ዘላገገ መሰል የመዘገጥ ብሔረሰቦች ባሁኑ ወቅት በደረሰበት ቀበሌ ገበረ ማህበር ሥር በመስጠት በማህበር ተደራጅተው ኑሮአቸውን በማሻገሩ ላይ መገኘታቸውን አናረጋግጣለን፡፡

የአሠገላክ ተልዕኮ ይባካል

ፊርማ አበበ አርጃጃ

የወረዳ ከስተዳደር



ግን ለሆኑ የተገባው የወገዞቹ ሙሉ ገንዘብ ውህ ከገደ ኩረ ይገኛቸዋል ።  
 በዚህ ፡ በገንዘብ ግንዛቤ አሰጣጥ ሁኔታ ከሌላው ለወጥ ያለ ማለት ይኖርባቸዋል ።  
 በጋምቤላ ኢታገንና ቺካታ ወረዳዎችን በሚያገናኘው መስመር ጋራጋገቲና ድገጋይ ማገ-  
 ፕት ከባድ ነው ። በአበበ በኩል ጋራጋገቲ አልቆ አልቆ ይታያል ። ለበጋው መ-  
 ገንዘብ ስገዳውም ከክረምት ጭምር የአበበ መስመር በሚገባ ቤተሰብና ቤተሰብ ለ  
 ያሰጡ ወችላል ። በኢታገንና በቺካታ መስመር ያለው የባሮ ውህ ሲሞላ ስለሚተኛ  
 በት በሌላው ገንዘብ ማትር ያህል ከፍታ ባለው መገንዘብ ባሠራ ከገደልብ ሊያስከድ ይች-  
 ላል ። ለማናቸውም በሁለቱም መስመር በመሰጠት ተቀይሮ በጥርጊያ ደረጃ ተስተካ  
 በሎ ለሠራ / ለ7 ወራት ያህል ያለማቋረጥና ያለችገር ወረዳዎችን ለማገናኘት ይቻ-  
 ገናኛ ። ገር አስቸኳይ መፍትሔ ከሌላ ገንዘብ በስተቀር ጋምቤላ በልማት በኩል ወደ ኋላ  
 አገደዱ ች አገደዎትኛር ማወቅ ያስፈልጋል ።

3. ጋምቤላ ሕዝቦች የኑር ሁኔታ ፡፡

ጋምቤላ በጥገታዊ የጋር ያሽ ሥርዓተ ማኅበር ደረጃ በተለያዩ የዕድገ-  
 ት ዕርገን ላይ ለመደቡ የሚችሉ 4. ዋና ዋና ብሔረ ሰቦችና ቀጥራቸው ገና በርገ-  
 ጥ ያልወጡ ሌሎች ጥቃቅን ብሔረሰቦች የሚኖሩበት አውራጃ ናት ። ዋናዎቹ ብሔረ-  
 ሰቦች ለኢትዮጵያ ወበገ ውስጥ ባሉት የሕዝብ ብዛት መሠረት በቅደም ተከተል ለመ-  
 ደቡ ፡ ኢገባክ / ባካባባው የደጋ ሕዝብ አጠራር " የምበ" / ኑቁር / በደጋው ሕዝ-  
 ብ አጠራር "አባጋር" / ማቫገጊር / በደጋው ሕዝብ አጠራር " ማሰገጉ" እና ከዋ-  
 ናቸው ።

1. አገላለጽ አብዛኛቸው በኢትዮጵያ ውስጥ ሲሆኑ በሱዳንም ይገኛሉ ።  
 የመኖሪያ ቤቱ አካባቢ በባር በአሌር ፣ በጊሎና በሸቦ ወገዞች ዳርቻ ነው ። ኑቁር  
 ች ገን አብዛኛቸው በሱዳን ውስጥ ናቸው ። በኢትዮጵያ በቺካታና ከአበበ ወረዳዎች  
 ውስጥ ይኖራሉ ። ከዋዎች በኢትዮጵያም ከሱዳንም በሌሎች ብሔረሰቦች መካከል ተሰ-  
 ባጥረው ይኖራሉ ። በኢትዮጵያ በባሜን ምዕራብ ጋምቤላና በወለጋ ውስጥ ይገኛሉ ።  
 ማቫገጊር ሙሉ በሙሉ በኢትዮጵያ ውስጥ ሆነው በጋምቤላ ምሥራቅ ይኖራሉ ።

ከዚህ በፊት የጋምቤላ ሕዝቦች በጋምቤላ ዘላን ናቸው ተብሎ ይታወቅ  
 ነበር ። ለፊውዳሉ መገንጠትም የዘላን ነበር ይባላል ። ይህ ገን ትክክል  
 አለመሆኑን አሁን ተረጋግጧል ። አገላለጽ በጋምቤላ ዋና ወገዞች ዳርቻ ቋሚ መኖሪያ  
 መገደር ሠርተው በርቫና ገንዘብ ማቆሚያ የሚተክሉ ሲሆን ፣ ኑቁር ለገባ በርቫ  
 ና በከፍተኛ ርቢ የሚተዳደሩ ናቸው ። ኑቁር ለገባ ጊዜ ከብተቻቸውን ይዘው በባር





## **DECLARATION**

I under signed declare that this Thesis is my work and that all source materials used in this Thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Signature\_\_\_\_\_

Date of submission\_\_\_\_\_