

Sometimes farmers pay wages for work done within a specified time period. There are several of these types of arrangements, depending on the length of time worked. Morning wage work (7-11 a.m.) is locally referred to as daHwa. Wage work done in the late afternoon (3-6 p.m.) is called sarba. A full days work for wages is called yoomiya. Farmers hire laborers on a time basis when time constraints are critical to the successful completion of tasks. Labor is hired on a daily basis for planting after rains (nadaaya), and cutting sesame. Inside village laborers are usually hired by such arrangements because they are more readily available at times of peak labor demand. Farmers also feel more comfortable hiring laborers from their own villages in this manner because they believe kinsmen are more trustworthy than outsiders.

A third type of wage arrangement found in this area involves paying a negotiated lump-sum of money for completing a task. This arrangement is referred to as guwaal. For instance, farmers will sometimes hire labor to cut the millet in a field. A total price for the completed job is agreed upon before the work begins. Another task which is usually paid by a guwaal arrangement is the tapping of gum trees. Farmers often pay an agreed sum of money to tap all the gum arabic trees in their gum gardens. A third task which is done by this arrangement is land clearing. Farmers will negotiate a price for clearing a field of crop residue and the small bushes and trees. Outside labor is commonly hired by guwaal, but occasionally inside village labor is hired on this basis as well.

A fourth type of wage arrangement used by these farmers is to pay laborers for the quantity of threshed grain. The standard used for measuring output is a sack (shuwaal or reeka), and a specified rate is paid for each sack produced. For instance, laborers threshing groundnuts will be paid so much for each sack. Millet and sorghum threshing also are paid by the sack (reeka). Inside village labor is often hired by this arrangement, although we have found instances where outside labor was paid in this manner.

A fifth type of wage arrangement involves in-kind payment for work performed. Women are often paid in this manner for winnowing sesame, millet and sorghum. These women receive a small portion of the harvested crop for their services. This form of arrangement has a long established tradition in this area, and is practiced by most farmers.

Hiring-in labor is a common practice. Seventy-three percent of these farmers hired-in some labor to aid them in their farming operations (29 of 40).⁴² Comparing hiring practices across the three villages, El Geifil and El Kharta had equally high percentages of farmers hiring-in labor (80%), while Umm Ramad had somewhat less (60%).

These findings indicate that wage labor is a critical input in crop production in this region. Wage labor may have displaced communal work

⁴²Farmers had to pay out more than 5 L.S. before they were considered labor employers.