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RESEARCH ARTICLE

IMAGES OF WOMEN IN ARSI OROMO AND WOLAITA PROVERBS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to analyze and compare proverbs that represent women in a typical way among the Arsi Oromo and the Wolaita people. The proverbs used for the study were 60 theme-relevant proverbs collected by focus group discussion, interviewing systematically selected elders and by analyzing documents from each area of the study. Qualitative research design was used to conduct this study. Women were negatively represented in the proverbs as powerless, sources of danger and problems. They were also represented positively as mothers and sometimes as good wives. Based on these findings, awareness creation trainings should be given to demotivate the use of proverbs having negative impact towards women. Arsi Oromo and Wolaita families have to encourage their children to use proverbs that reflect gender equality, and both societies should totally avoid the use of proverbs that reflect outdated negative perception of women in their society.

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INTRODUCTION

In Ethiopia, after the era of political change in 1991, efforts are being made to improve the legal and social status of women as evidenced by the articles in the new constitution. The government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has announced a new women's policy which aims at giving equal opportunity to Women to participate in all spheres of life. It has also opened a Women's Affairs Office (WAO) with branch offices in the regions. The office is given the responsibility of promoting women's issues and it is working to this end. But, due to the scarcity of well-planned research projects and publications, valuable data on the socio-economic situation of women are not adequate. This causes the problem to be more serious than other things. As a result it has become very problematic to change the lives of many women in our country as it is supposed to be. This research could be useful to fill the gap that the ministry of women's affairs is facing in Ethiopia. As one of the developing countries, Ethiopia is a poor country where majority of the people live in the countryside. The case of gender discrimination is very high here and even in most parts of the country it is considered as normal part of the tradition. For example, circumcision of girls, abduction and early marriage are being practiced even nowadays.

As a result of these, women suffer at delivery, and also they are exposed to fistula due to early marriage and other related problems. Though the society knows that such practices are not good for women, it is considered as culture and hence they have continued practicing them as "normal and deserving" to women. What makes the problem more serious is that the society has inculcated the idea of oppressing women in the mind of every generation using oral literature like proverbs to oppress women. In the case of Arsi Oromo women are assumed to be the property of men that men bought at the wedding ceremony. Hence they have the right to punish them and also treat them like their own property. The case is not different among the Wolaita people. This causes great suffering for their whole life, physically and psychologically. This study, therefore has tried to analyze the extent of the negative images of women among the Arsi Oromo's and the Wolaita people of Ethiopia.

Conceptual Review of Proverbs: Proverbs are considered the most common genre of folklore, found among all cultures of the world. They are simple and often short statements with deep meaning, guidelines for individual, family and village behaviors. Proverbs are not built from a vacuum, rather on repeated real life experiences and observations. Like any form of language, "proverbs are mirrors through which people look at themselves – a stage for experiencing themselves to others" (Malunga & Banda, 2004: 2). Similarly, Jackie Lee (2015) notes that proverbs are the mirror of culture in that they "can reflect the customs, traditions, values, opinions and beliefs of a particular society" (2015: 561).

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Indeed, by looking at peoples proverbs, we can understand how they think and look at the world, their culture, values, behaviors, aspirations, and preoccupation. A proverb is an adage, a saying in more or less fixed form marked by shortness, sense, and salt and distinguished by the popular acceptance of the truth expressed in it (Finnegan, 1970). Similarly, Okpewho (1992) suggests that, proverb is a piece of folk wisdom expressed with terseness and charm. Proverbs can further be defined as “short wise sayings which are often based on observable facts and heavily linked with the culture of the people” (Zakariyah, 2013: 22). Based on the above definitions, proverbs could be conceptualized as any wise saying that converts the central idea in a given context, objectively and truthfully. While much has been written on what a proverb is, it is more important to understand what a proverb does. According to the Yoruba of Nigeria, “Proverbs are the horses of speech” meaning that in the event where communication gets lost, proverbs are used to recover it (Schipper, 1991: 1). Schipper’s idea is succinctly apparent in the following Igbo proverb which says, “Proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten” (Oha, 1999: 87), meaning that proverb help to accelerate the smooth glide of words through the throat.

Theoretical Framework: This study is anchored on a combination of theoretical approaches including patriarchy, hegemonic masculinity, and feminism. Through the lens of these theories, the study tries to find out to what extent proverbs have been used among the Arsi Oromo’s and the Wolaita people to maintain the traditional depiction of women. The study therefore attempts to identify and analyze women’s representations as portrayed in Arsi Oromo and the Wolaita people proverbs. In a society where patriarchal practices and beliefs are prevalent, the relationship between men and women is based on gender inequality. Patriarchy, as defined by social scientists such as Weber (1947), is “a system of government in which men rule society through their position as head of households” (quoted in Walby, 1990: 19). However, the meaning of the term has advanced since Weber, especially in the writing by radical feminists, who developed the elements of the domination of women by men.

For example, Walby (1990) defines patriarchy as “a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women” (1990: 20). This particular culture privileges the exercise of men’s power over women. Commenting on the meaning of patriarchy and its effects on women, Mutunda (2015) observes: Patriarchy is a gender system in which men dominate women. The endorsed superior status of men is encouraged and sustained by social institutions that are considered unquestionable. In addition, this system of social stratification based on sex provides men with power and material advantages while depriving women of both those benefits. Deeply entrenched in the concept of patriarchy is the notion of hegemonic masculinity. According to Connell (2005), hegemonic masculinity is “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (2005:77). Hegemonic masculinity, when embodied by at least some men overtime and space, legitimates men's domination over women as a group. In essence, hegemonic masculinity, as Mutunda (2015) suggests, refers to that view of masculinity which has established dominance in society.

In addition, this form of masculinity is mostly supported by social institutions namely schools, religion, and law, just to cite a few. Furthermore, Mimi Schippers (2007:94) has defined hegemonic masculinity as “the qualities defined as manly that establish and legitimate a hierarchical and complementary relationship to femininity and that by doing so, guarantee the dominant position of men and the subordination of women in their society” As shown in the definitions above, hegemonic masculinity legitimates the domination of men over women. Feminists have also focused on this gender inequality which stresses women’s inferiority to men. Three feminist approaches namely the liberal, radical, and socialist, try to provide different explanations for the roots of gender inequality. Liberal feminism holds that “women and men are identical by their essential nature but women are deprived of the opportunities to realize their potentials on account of their gender” (Ndungo, 1998:47). Another liberal feminist, Betty Friedman (cited in Belfatmi, 2013: 16) explains gender inequality in terms of culture and social subordination. She maintains that “lack of equal rights in different fields including education is the root of women’s oppression.” In fact, the liberal feminists believe there is no such thing as male/female nature but human nature. They imagine a society inhabited by human beings who will be the same in their essential nature. When some feminists began to perceive the inequality between women and men, they used the term “radical” to signify their commitment to seek the origin of the root cause of this inequality. One such theorist is Shulamith Firestone (1970) who is believed to be the first radical feminist. Throughout her work titled the dialectic of sex (1970), Firestone stresses that the root cause of women’s subordination is their biology. She argues that women’s biology, which includes menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding, makes them to be dependent on men. This dependence inevitably produces unequal power relationships (Firestone, quoted in Belfatmi, 2013: 16).

Other radical feminists argue that patriarchy is the origin of inequality existing between males and females. They focus on patriarchal oppression in every sphere of women’s lives from the most private to the most public. They stress the need to revalue the creative and nurturing aspects of femininity which have been devalued and distorted in patriarchal society. For instance, in her *Sexual Politics*, Kate Millet (1970) maintains that patriarchy is perpetuated by the family, being the primary source of socialization which provides men with dominant disposition. She believes that patriarchy is the source of many social problems faced by women. She also argues that gender inequality is not related to social class but to male domination over women. In the same breath, Hartman (1997) argues that patriarchy creates the conditions for women to be systematically dominated, exploited and oppressed. The very difference between men and women, which allow men to exploit the situation to dominate women and rule the world, is the very difference that concern radical feminists on a political level. Radical feminism sees that men have benefited of inequality; women, on the other hand, carry out unpaid work in higher jobs positions. Consequently, “unlike liberal feminism which claims that gender inequality should be reformed, radical feminism believes that it should be totally eradicated” (Belfatmi, 2013:17). Radical feminism promotes womanhood rather than aspiring to integrate and assimilate into male-dominated social arena. It is focused upon sexual oppression as a manifestation of women’s oppression and social order.

Marxist and socialist feminism, nevertheless considers the entire system of capitalism as the root of women oppression. This theory highlights the provision of cheap labor to enhance capitalism. The theory finds significance in class relation in that one class is more advantaged than the other. Social feminists believe that the exploitative economic relations, where the worker is exploited by the dominant capitalist class, could serve as an understanding of gender relations. They further argue that women are second class citizen in patriarchal capitalism which demands for its survival on exploitation of working people and on the social exploitation of women (Humm, 1992). Social feminists hold that one way to get rid of gender inequality is the establishment of a communist society in which the production of wealth is commonly owned. They, therefore, relate gender inequality to economic differences.

METHODOLOGY

Design of the Study: Qualitative research design was used for the study. This is because it was believed to be suitable to interpret and explicate the existing gender related problems as revealed in the selected proverbs of the Arsi Oromo's and the Wolaita people.

Subjects of the Study: The major population of this study is the Arsi Oromo and the Wolaita people. The researcher collected a total of more than 80 proverbs reflecting women's negative representations in the proverbs. However, a sample of 60 proverbs was drawn from the 80 to the manageability and relevance of the study. Regarding the collection of the proverbs, two tools of data collection were used: document analysis and semi-structured interview for 10 selected elders. Then, the collected proverbs were filtered based on their thematic relevance for the study and the selected 15 proverbs were analyzed using qualitative method of data analysis.

Sampling Technique: For this study, the researcher used purposive sampling procedure to come up with 60 proverbs having thematic reflection of women's negative representations. The proverbs were collected through interviewing 10 elders who were systematically selected (using snowball sampling) from various communities of West Arsi areas (at Kereru and kersa) at Arsi Negele Wereda and the Wolaita people who lives around Sodo Zuria Woredas based on their deep knowledge of the people's culture and by document analysis.

Data Analysis: For the analysis of the proverbs, the researcher used qualitative method of data analysis. Then, he presented the results and discussion in a systematic approach of transcribing the proverbs, translating them into English, and then analyzing and interpreting them within their relevant thematic category based on the theoretical framework of patriarchy, hegemonic masculinity, and feminism.

Negative representations of women in the Arsi Oromo proverbs

Harree fi dubartiin ulee jaallatti

A woman and a donkey like a rod

It is common to represent women with an animal in most proverbs. For example women are represented with a horse to show their strength in work.

Her in this proverb women are presented with a character of a donkey. First we have to understand what kind of meaning it gives when women are related with the behavior of a donkey. The society describes a donkey as a lazy, ignorant and disobedient to its owners. But a donkey is also a hard working animal that serves its owners in different services. But usually they are beaten while they resist giving service. So, why women are likened with a donkey and thought to be beaten while they serve their family and the community in everything they could. The reason is because the society has developed a negative attitude towards women even though they labor to help their family and the community as far as they can. In any case it will not be fair to punish women with a rod or stick like we do to our animals; in the time when the world is struggling to liberate their animals from any form of physical punishment.

Dubartiin xiqqoo hin qabdu

A woman is never little

There is also an Amharic equivalent to this Arsi Oromo proverb, it says: "Yesetna yemasero tenesh yelewem" it means: "there is no little girl and pot" when I collected proverbs among the Arsi Oromo's, I asked why they use this proverb, one of my interviewee who is very aged, told me the context why people started using this proverb. The man told me that an oral narrative how this proverb came into being. Once upon a time a woman went to her would be husband's family, where she was taken being betrothed before her actual marriage time reached, due to her immaturity she was forced to wait till she gets matured and be given for her husband officially. But the girl wanting to marry her future husband did something challenging her husband's family. In the middle of the night, she rose up and excreted a little amount and slept as nothing happen deliberately. When the family rose early in the morning the house was full of bad smell, then they started asking what happened in the family. Then the little girl started responding for them that it is very little that she excreted. But the family of her future husband responded to her that even though it is very small but it is still feces. Finally she surprisingly responded for them that even though she is very little but she is a woman and capable of doing anything expected from her. Most of the proverbs in the Arsi Oromo are connected with oral narratives for their origin whether it is truly related or not to make it more reliable and truthful. This gives the proverb more power and will have the influence to shape the societies attitude positively or negatively. For example this proverb is used to strengthen the early marriage practices in the Arsi Oromo and also in the Amhara society. But we know what bad consequences early marriage holds in any society. Some of the problems that are caused by early marriage are : early pregnancy which causes mostly death at birth, fistula due to early sexual experiences before the body of little girls get matured enough, dropping out of school because of the responsibility that women take at home like feeding her family and rearing children, etc.

Dubartiin dhertu male, bektun hinqabdu.

A woman could be tall, but she could not be knowledgeable.

Dhalaan fardaafi beerri ulfina hin beektu.

A female horse and a woman do not know respects

The above two proverbs are a direct insult against women. It is undeniable that there is no direct relationship between height and knowledge, because there are lots of people who are tall and are both intellectual as well as ignorant; as the same time there are short people who are intellectuals and also those who are ignorant. This shows that knowledge is not dependent on height in any case and it is illogical to think in this way. The other proverb is also the same in its insulting women like the first one. As usual it compares a woman character with a horse. Symbolizing a woman with an animal is a degrading issue of women's dignity as human being. The extent of rejecting female identity here goes even to the animal groups, in that a female horse is also rejected without any reason. But we know that there is no difference between male and female animals since they do not possess a human qualities or intellect. To put it in short there is no human being that hates glory or respect whether men or women because humanity is a moral being that has emotion that knows what is good and bad and also have social norms that has precious norms which are valuable to their own community. Generally the above two proverbs has nothing in them except a hatred for women and simply an insult originated from ignorance about women's value in the society. The proverbs can be disproved with other proverbs that show how much valuable women are in the society. Now we will see some of the proverbs that glorify the value of women in their society.

Dubartiin dhiira deessi malee dhiira hin geettuu

A female may bear a male, but she will not be equal with him. In this proverb the value of woman is measured because of her potential to bear a son, but not because of her being a female. Moreover this proverb puts woman in an inferior position when she is compared with men. This proverb is very dangerous because it demoralizes women mentally and tries to persuade them that they are not equal with men, hence, no need of competing with men. But nowadays we know that women do not only bear males, but led them as well when they get the opportunity to do so. Here we also should have to consider that it is not woman that bears a male or female individually, because both men and women are important for bearing a child.

Dubartiin deessuu malee beektuu hin qabdu: A woman may bear a child, but she is not knowledgeable. The above proverb is related with this one in that both of them gives value for women's bearing ability. Here it is good to see the context of how a traditional society thinks about gender differences and preferences. A babe boy is preferred in a traditional community, because they think that a female is not the member of her family. The male is thought to strengthen the family's line by inheriting what the family possesses. While the woman is considered as a go away child, because of marriage she is supposed to join another family. Due to this a woman is not considered as important as a man and will not be allowed to get inheritance in her own family and also in the place where she goes after marriage. This causes woman to lose economic advantages even though they are very important in household activities and in child rearing which is a very tiresome work in a traditional society. Moreover the proverb denies women's ability of acquiring knowledge, and gives recognition for their ability of bearing a child. There is nothing wrong with bearing a child; it is the gift of nature and great responsibility to sustain any society in this world. But because of the responsibility of women's child bearing, denying their ability to acquire

knowledge is unfair and injustice which shows that women need more treatment than men because of the burden they carry as a mother.

Isiinuu hori horii hin qadhaabbattu: She does not own a wealth (cattle) as she is a wealth (cattle) by herself. To understand the above proverb, it is good to see the contextual meaning of cattle in the Arsi Oromo culture. Cattle's are the symbol of prosperity. If somebody holds a number of cattle, whether well feed or not, he is respected and considered as secured in his community. Cattles are very important in their life in the Arsi Oromo life, for example, if they want to take a wife for their son, it is not thinkable without giving cattle's as gift for the families of the girl which is called "Geberras" in their language. They will get a wife if they have cattle's, due to this; the Arsi Oromo thinks marriage as an exchange of cattle's with a woman, which they call both of them as a wealth. Moreover the Arsi Oromo uses the phrase "who much do you sell your daughter?" to ask for marriage some body's daughter they liked. I have a personal experience in relation to this incident, once upon a time while my father who is not among the Arsi, but still from the other group of Oromo was requested how much he wants to sell his daughter (my younger sister). I remember what my father felt, he was very much disappointed, and was not happy by the questions forwarded for him the Arsi Oromo with whom we were living together. Now when we came to the meaning of the proverb, it means Women are equal to cattle's or wealth, but the main point is not only considering women as cattle (wealth), but also alienating all financial resources from them. Since cattle's are the base of the economy, if women do not have a share and even they themselves are considered as the wealth of men because of what they have paid at marriage. This proverb generally shows that women are totally dependent on men economically and also they themselves are considered as an economy of men.

Nadheeniif faradoon galgala baddi

A woman and a horse are helpless at old age

This proverb is somewhat related with the above proverb, because of the reason that makes women dependent or helpless at old age. Women are likened with a horse in this proverb. A horse is a very strong being, it is diligent while it works, and people benefits a lot from it especially in the countryside areas. It is a means of transportation, entertainment, war vehicle and a lot of things for their life. So is a women, she bears children, handles all the household activities, and sustains the family's life by serving them with her all strength. But what will happen finally is like the fate of the horse. A horse will be thrown away out of the house when it becomes aged and could help nothing for the family. The fate of the horse is to be eaten by Hyenas while it was alive because of its lacking strength at the end. The expression is used to show how a woman will be treated at the end, when she lacks strength. Even though she works hard at the time of her strength like the horse, she will be left alone and gets nothing because all things that she produced will be for her husband and male children.

Ibiddi dubertiin qabsiifte hin dhaamu

A fire lit by a woman shall not be extinguished

As it is known a fire is a very powerful thing, even if it is small it can destroy a forest once it is burnt. Here a woman is

represented as an agent of conflict that never ends. The fire is the symbol of destruction in the proverb listed above. Relating woman with fire is due to the assumption that woman are a catalyst for conflicts in the society. If a society accepts this assumption as a reality the result is woman's value will be degraded and they are considered as the source of evil in the society. Assumptions that are like this, is the cause of the negative attitudes that any society develops against women. In any case it will not be fair to relate women with the causes of conflict; while both men and women could be a cause of conflict in any society.

Ani maaf dubartii ta'e ko badduu hin hojjanne;

Ati maaf dhiiraa taate ka badduu anni hojjadhe naa hin obsine?

Why I became a woman, if I do not commit a mistake;

Why you became a man, if you do not tolerate me, while I commit a mistake?

This proverb put woman's destiny with a failure. Women's being is related with making mistakes that should be tolerated by men. Here, Women are not only doers of mistake, but they are also the source of it because of their being women. Men are free of the guilt of committing mistakes like women, because their being is better than women and are expected to handle mistakes originating from women. This may causes identity crisis, because women are expected to think as they are inferior to men by their nature. But it is not logical to think that making mistakes is based on gender rather than on once personal preferences whether for men or women. We can also deduce from this proverb that women have the ability to live with men, inspire of the fact that they are considered as lower than men. Because the implication of the proverb could be, if you think as a man that I am inferior than you are, so tolerate me and handle me with peace. If the meaning is perceived in this way, women may be the source of their own discrimination in the society because of their own preference of conflict resolution to bring peace between them and men their partners.

Beeraa fi ijoollee icitii itti hin himan.

A secret should not be told to women and children
12 Dhiira Amaaraa fi dubartii Oromoo garaa isaanii osoo hin argin biraa bane.' Jedhe

Xaaliyaaniin

We could not get the heart of the Amhara men and the Oromo women.' said the

Italians"

I deliberately presented the two proverbs above; because they contradict with each other and proves that thinking woman as talkative to the point of exposing secret is wrong. Children may expose secret due to lack of maturity, but well developed women knows what is good and bad and it will not be sound to assume that women are like children who do not know what is to be told and kept as a secret. Of course some women may expose secret like men also do, but there could not be any difference between the two sexes in the matter because of their identity.

The second proverb even gives more value in keeping secrets for women than men. The historically based proverb's context disproves the assumption that women are not to be trusted like men because of their gender differences from men. This also shows that thinking a proverb as a general truth as a definition needs to be redefined because of the wrong assumptions some proverbs might hold like the one we discussed here.

Mootummaan dubartii bishaan ol yaafti: The government of women makes water flow upward First let me start from the literal meaning of the proverb. It seems logical to think that water flows downward which are natural and unquestionable in any traditional society. But nowadays it is known that water can go upward using pressure application through a water pipe. So, thinking currently like the traditional society shows lack of knowledge and ignorance. The second point is when we come to the implication of the proverb; that women try things that are impossible; as a result they are not fitting for leadership position. This assumption is also totally wrong, because our world is changed because of those who tried to make possible those things that seem impossible. If humanity has not tried to fly like a bird, we would not have seen a plane nowadays. If humanity has not attempted to discover new planets we could not have seen well developed space discoveries that seems impossible at the beginning. I can count lots of things here that seemed impossible, but proved to be possible because humanity has changed them into possibility. If women are like the above proverb, I believe that they would have changed the world better than it is now, if they have got the proper place they deserve in any society, because they are change agents that attempts the impossible one.

Dubartiin hamamuu yoo beekte dhiiraan haadhumatu: Whatever a woman knows, it is a man that concludes. Before analyzing this proverb, let me present a proverb which is exactly similar with it in Amharic: "Men set betawq bewend yaleq". The similarity of the proverbs may be because of the socio cultural relationships between the two people in the country. According to this proverb even though a woman has got knowledge about anything she is expected to be under men's control, due to the expectation that she is less reliable than men. This makes women to be passive and men to be active in decision making. The matter is not weather men or women decide finally, because if women decides finally men are looser and if men decides as they do women are looser, in both cases it is unfair; but the crucial point is women are expected to accept any kind of decision which may affect their life while men make a final remark on women's conditions 15 Dubartiin segel mana hin ijaartu dheban nama hin awwaltu. Nine women cannot build a house, a hundred cannot bury a corpse. First let me elaborate the cultural meaning of this proverb, because without this context it is very hard to understand what it means. In the countryside areas it is men who build a house with the community turn by turn. The same is true in burial sermon; men are expected to bury a corpse. Therefore the reason men build a house and bury a corpse is because of job preference of the society; but not women's inability to build a house or bury a corpse. As we know, nowadays women build a house which is better than the traditional one, even better houses than men do if they get the capital. And also burying somebody can be performed by professionals if the income is available. This shows that the idea is purely traditional and the job classification is not based on ability but on the preference of men and their impositions on women the type of job they wanted.

It is also possible to infer that there is no logical relationship between the types of job women or men do. This shows that our cultural attitude towards job classification is biased and needs appropriate modification by changing the society's attitude towards them.

Positive representations of women in the Arsi Oromo proverbs

Now, first I will try to analyze nine proverbs that deal about women as mothers because they have the same qualities or themes. While collecting the data among the Arsi Oromo's I could not find any proverb that negatively represent women as mothers; but step mothers were represented negatively with an exception. Here are the nine proverbs dealing with mothers:

- Haati nama deessi; abbaan wadala harreeti.
- A mother is a child bearer; but a father is a male donkey.
- Haadha ilaalii intala fuudhi.
- Evaluate the mother and marry her daughter.
- Michu haadha ormaarra badduu hadhaa ofi wayya
- A bad mother is better than a good step mother
- Haati ofii kafana ofiiti.
- A mother is one's own dress.
- Hadhaa duutee manna haadha maraate wayya
- A mad mother is better than the dead one
- Haatiif bishan baddu hin qabani
- There is no evil mother and water
- Namnii haadha qabu nama waaqa qabu
- Having a mother is having God's love
- Abbaan gindo'o; haati gingilcha'a.
- A father is rigid like a flat winnowing basket (impermissible), and a mother is flexible or tolerant like a sieve
- Namni afur gola tokko galu: abbaa murtii, shiftaa, hattuu fi maraattuu; kana hundaa kanhorattu haadha.

Four types of men dwell in a house: a lawyer, a bandit, a thief and a crazy; but a

Mother handles them all

All of the above proverbs magnify the quality of a mother to a higher level, to the extent of perfection. Women as a mother are respected and honored as a special being. In the proverbs listed mothers are presented with a better identity than fathers. For example proverb number one appreciates women's capacity of bearing a child, but it also says that a father does nothing but is like a male donkey that does not take the responsibility like bearing children and feeding them. Proverb number eight also appreciates the character of a mother as a flexible being symbolizing her with a sieve to show her kindness when compared with men, those who are presented as rigid or firm in their stand or character. This does not mean of course that all men are rigid and all women are soft, but the majority of women may be flexible when compared with men. We cannot also conclude that flexibility is more important than firmness, because those characters are important based on circumstances that we face. For instance if women are always soft and flexible, this might cause them to accept the challenges they face from the society as something not that much harmful. If they are firm in their stand against any form of discrimination they can change them.

So any character could not be totally important and irrelevant but the situation matters, flexibility is good for peaceful coexistence and for conflict resolution, firmness is also important in terms of legal issues to protect human rights and to punish those who are illegal; may be to those who are against women's right. Let us see the other proverbs about motherhood to understand how much value has been given for them for being a mother. Proverb number two is about marriage advice. According to Arsi Oromo, if one wants to marry a girl he has to know her mother's character very well, because a mother is considered to be a teacher for her daughter. If the mother is hard worker, the daughter is expected to be the same, if she is lazy, and then the same result is expected to happen. So, a mother is basic in her daughter's life, she can shape it in the way she is. From this proverb it is possible to see that women are crucial in a society's development, because if women are illiterate they will not be productive at any point, as a mother women can shape or teacher her children at home those things that are very important in life. This shows that giving more attention for teaching today's women tomorrow's mothers is very crucial to change their life and our country in general.

Proverb number three compares a bad mother with a good step mother, and gives more value to the bad mother to show how much a mother is very important to her children. Proverb number four also likens a mother with a cloth which covers once nakedness. Proverb number five also expresses the importance of a mother by preferring her existence even being mad is better than the dead one. When we come to number six, it puts that there is no bad mother like water. Here motherhood is given the highest quality that disproves other proverbs assumption of putting women as evil, because all mothers are women. Hence if we love mothers we are expected to give the respect all women deserves as potential mothers and as part of the community that needs our support because of what they have suffered in the past. Proverb number seven is somehow different because it says that having a mother is having God or God's love. This proverb gives women a divine character which is beyond humanity. That means if we have a mother we lack nothing, because a mother is like God. Finally proverb number nine shows a mother's ability of handling or managing a family where different behavior is manifested that are good and bad which do not go together like: a thief, a bandit, a crazy and a lawyer. In short in the above proverbs motherhood is respected in all directions. This positive attitude towards women as a mother could be used as a weapon to fight against any form of discrimination against women.

Dubartiin faaya dhiiraati

A woman is a jewelry of a man

This is a very powerful metaphorical expression. To analyze the meaning, first let me define what jewelry is; according to Concise Oxford Dictionary (2001) a jewel means: a precious stone, especially a single crystal or a cut and polished piece of a lustrous or translucent mineral. And jewelry means: personal ornament, such as necklaces, rings, or bracelets that are made from or contain jewels and precious metal. This express clearly shows that women are the best things men should keep always in the front part to be seen by others always. We do not keep jewelry in a secret place but put them in our hands, necks and other visible areas so that others look at them and appreciate how much attractive and beautiful they are.

If any one considers women as his glory or jewelry, he could not by any means reject them or tries to dominate them as his adversaries, rather he will show that he is proud of them and shows his confidence about women as he does for his jewelry.

Dubartiin gaachana dhiiraati.

A woman is a shield of a man

This proverb also like the above one appreciates the value of women for the existence of men. Here the metaphor is a shield, so it is better first to define what a shield is from the Concise Oxford Dictionary (2001). A shield means: a broad piece of armor held by straps or a handle on one side, used for protection against blows or missiles. Or it means sporting trophy consisting of an engraved metal plate mounted on a piece of wood. It is also means a person or a thing providing protection from a danger; risk, etc. Based on the above meaning of a shield we can easily understand that women are very important for men's existence and security. If women are this much important for the society, it is fair if men treat them positively by giving them what they deserve as a reward.

Niitiin utubaa manaati

A wife is a pillar of a house

Like the above two proverbs, this one also expresses the importance of a woman with a metaphor of a pillar. In the same way to be exact on the meaning of the above proverb let me use the concise oxford dictionary (2001). A pillar is: a tall vertical structure, which is usually of a stone, used as a support for a building or as an ornament or monument. Or it means a person or a thing providing reliable support for his or her community. It is also good to define what a pillar is in the Arsi Oromo context. When they build a hut or a house they usually uses a big central wood that holds the house as a cornerstone, if that wood is taken from the house everything will collapse immediately because everything is dependent on it. Now we can observe how much crucial a woman is in a family or a house. If she is like a pillar it means nothing could stand by itself without her support. This proverb even gives more value for a woman than a man; her women are presented as independent but men as dependent upon them.

Nyaannii soogidda malee,manni dubartii malee hin barredu: A house without a woman is like a stew without salt. This proverb supports what we have seen in the above proverb; here a house without a woman is likened with a stew without salt. If a stew is without salt we know that is not a stew totally because it tastes nothing. So is a family, if it we took out women from it then it will be meaningless. This shows how much important or invaluable a woman is for the family in particular and for the community in general.

Malli mala dubartii; humni humna bishaanii siif haa ta'u: Wisdom like a woman, power like water, let it be unto you. This proverb shows the blessing given to a man, if some proverbs that insults and consider women as ignorant were right, the Arsi Oromo's should not bless men with this blessing. But the matter is they know how much important woman is in the society, how much significant their knowledge is and the like. According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary (2001) wisdom means: the quality of being wise, the body of knowledge and experience that develops within a specified

society or period. And power means: the ability to do something or act in a particular way. It is the capacity to influence the behavior of others; their emotions, or the course of events. It can be also a right or authority given or delegated to a person or body; Political authority or control. As well as it can be Physical strength or force. From both definitions it is easy to consider how much important wisdom and power is. Moreover the power of is known especially nowadays. Water has power both for construction and destruction. For example, Tsunami which is a long high sea wave caused by an earthquake or other disturbance, ibid (2001) was caused by water waves and has destroyed lots of people and their property recently. Also we use water for generating electricity to move big industries and for our daily purposes'. But we can do nothing without wisdom and knowledge. This shows it is very important to involve women in their countries and their own issues.

Daddaftee na dhungatteef dhirsa naaf hin taatu: Early kissing could not assure your being my husband. This proverb is very important as HIV is destroying the productive force of most developing countries like Ethiopia. As we know the main reason for HIV is unsafe sex, and the main solution is abstinence from it. This proverb teaches couples not to rush in to sex because it doesn't guarantee the married life as some considers it. Not only this but also the proverb disproves that women are not emotional like men in sexual matters, so giving more attention to control their sexual feelings is very important to save the generation from the wide spread of HIV and unwanted pregnancy. The proverb shows that how much a woman cares for her future married life and hence wise in keeping herself clean from sexual problems.

Mootiin dhagaa maal? Soogidda; mootiin namaa eenyu? Dubartii

The king of stones is a common salt; the king of human being is a woman. This proverb compares woman with a salt like the first one, but adds king's quality for women over humanity. Let me first define both salt and king from the Concise Oxford Dictionary (2001). Salt which is also called common salt is a substance which gives seawater its characteristic taste and is used for seasoning or preserving food. It represents a person of great goodness and strength of character, with the biblical allusion to Matt 5:13. Let me use the same dictionary and define the word king. King means: the male ruler of an independent state, especially one who inherits the position by right of birth. Or it is a person or thing regarded as the finest or most important in its sphere or group. Here we can see that both salt and king are very important in the life of any society. Women are presented her as the king of humanity, but when we see the definition of traditional kingship women do not have the birth right even to be a king because only men are assumed to inherit a throne. So according to this proverb women are the king of kings because the proverb has made them the king of all men. While collecting my data among the Arsi Oromo, I raised a question why women are not given the right of leadership in the so called democratic Geda system. The man told me that women have their own democratic system by which they ask their rights when they faced problem in the society. The system is called the "Sinquee institution" which I have defined under the discussion of the Geda system. Then I asked him do they have power to rule like the traditional system. The man gave me two reasons for the collapse of women's right to defend and administer their own

cases under the male dominated Geda system. The first reason was the collapse of the Geda system due to the invasion of King Menlik of Showa and the raise of dictators among the Oromo leadership which is against the Geda system of administration. And the second reason was the conversion of the Arsi Oromo from their traditional religion Waqeffeta in to Islam which strongly teaches the submission of women unto the domination of men. The above two reasons has worsened the condition of women to the extent it is now seen among the Arsi Oromo's.

The result of attitudinal test among the Arsi Oromo's on Gender issues:

While collecting the proverbs I have also gathered information about the society's attitude towards the proverbs that are negative and positive. Most of the women do not support the Proverbs that negatively represents them. When I tried to know why they oppose the Proverbs, they told me that they are getting different trainings by the government to bring attitudinal change and also they now how much they have suffered in the past, and even some of them compares the former life as a life of slavery and now they are almost free from it. But some of the women do not support the idea of equality among men and women and they do not want their husbands to help them in their household activities which they consider their own business. Likewise most men in the rural areas do not support the equality of women with men, but due to their fear of the government's policy they are not willing to express their opinion about the issues directly, but indirectly they sometimes shows their disagreement towards the issues. Most of the men who oppose the equality of women with men are aged and illiterate. Those men who are educated are positive towards the issues of women's equality with men.

The majority of my interviewee in the Arsi Oromo do not accept that their culture by itself being the cause of women's domination by men. They believe that the inclusion of their region into King Menilk's control and the conversion of the people from traditional religion in to Islam have caused the problem of women's subordination and domination by men. I believe that if the teachings that support women's negative representations were discouraged by religious and cultural leaders through teaching the community it is easy to change the society very easily, in addition to the attempt the government is making to bring change. I say this because most of the people in our country live in the countryside and they are illiterate, and they originate most of their knowledge from their religion and culture. In the Arsi Oromo's culture as we have seen there are lots of good things about women, encouraging those positive ideas about them, and discouraging the negative things said about women could change the society's way of thinking and finally would bring the equality of women and men for the society. I have also observed that almost all the negative proverbs about women do not have any ground of truth; rather they are usually an insult about womanhood which originates from a wrong perception about them. Moreover the proverbs contradict with each other, some proverbs consider women as ignorant, but at the same time other proverb advises youngsters to be wise like women. Some proverb consider a woman as an animal deserving to be beaten with a stick or rod, but at the same time another proverb put women as the king of humanity. This contradiction among the proverbs, disqualify the definition of proverbs by most scholar as a general truth, because a truth does not contradict with itself. Hence it is mandatory to change the negative attitude the society developed due to these biased proverbs towards women

by teaching the community as much as possible. I was also able to recognize critical issues about women by living among the community at least for six months where I have collected the data; most women do not have extra business except house hold activities. As a result of this, most women, after finishing their household activities they are accustomed with wasting their time by drinking coffee moving from one house to the other. They back bite with each other, quarrel with irrelevant issues and also help each other in times of hardship. Due to this if the government wants to be effective in implementing its policies towards gender related issues, the government should have to invest on women by helping them with finance so that women could begin their own businesses that would help them change their life radically.

Negative representations of women in the Wolaita proverbs: Under this section proverbs that are collected from Wolaita are analyzed and interpreted.

1 Wereyriya wechen qonashay qachse A talkative woman is like a whirlwind

A talkative woman is like a whirlwind: Here a simile is used to compare a talkative woman with a whirlwind. In traditional society women are expected to keep silent while men are talking about different issues. If a man is talkative he is usually called a player who knows jokes. But women do not have the right of speaking freely because of cultural pressure on her. According to the Oxford Concise (2001) dictionary a whirlwind is a column of air moving rapidly round and round in a cylindrical shape which symbolizes a very energetic person or process in a very rapid and unexpected way. Suffer serious consequences as a result of one's actions. Her we can understand from the meaning of the whirlwind that it is powerful, active and destructive as a result it is feared and can cause a great damage on humanity. This shows that in a traditional society women are considered to be active, powerful and also destructive if not controlled by men. Due to this old assumption women are expected to be passive while men are expected to active even in issues of communication because their active participation is considered to be destructive at the end like a whirlwind.

2. Gelao welqa baqilo welqa A girl is as strong as a horse

A girl is as strong as a horse: Here a women's strength is compared with a horse's strength. Symbolizing women with animals is very common in proverbs. As we have seen earlier women have been symbolized by donkey in the Arsi Oromo's proverbs. Usually women are represented with those animals that are exploited extensively for human services. A horse is used in a traditional society for different purposes; it is a fast means of transportation for goods and human being, effective during conflict, for sport purposes, for marriage sermonizes and other services. But unfortunately at old age the horse will be thrown out for the Hyenas to be eaten. Even though the horse is very important for different purposes it does not receive what it deserves at the end of the day. This is what happens in a traditional society on women. Even though they work hard like horse they earn nothing at the end of the day. In short the assumption of symbolizing a girl with a horse is to exploit her strength before she went to her husband's home in the future because she is considered as a go away child belonging to another family.

3. Awaapiyaa machchiya axinaa mogguwaappe diggawusu A wife who is promiscuous prevents the corpse of her husband from being buried

A wife loved by her husband is voluptuous: First let me define the word voluptuous from the Oxford Concise Dictionary (2005) to understand the contextual meaning of the proverb: the word voluptuous is related to or characterized by luxury or sensual pleasure of a woman who curvaceous and sexually attractive. It means Pleasure centered life style or self-indulgent life style of a woman. Love is the most important element in any society; a family is established usually based on love relationships between couples, and this give the way to the establishment of family which is the base of any society. People may resist hatred, but it is unlikely to assume that love leads women to be voluptuous; which is a very negative representation that is not based on sound argument. This negative assumption distorts the image of women and makes men not to love their wife least they could be self-indulgent and makes them miserable.

4. Maccassay uttossan mattay mukkenna

No grass grows where women plotted

5. Talehena machassay essuwa

Women and devil are the same: Plot is a plan made in secret by a group of people to do something illegal or harmful (ibid.2001). The proverb shows that if women cooperate they can do anything which is very harmful or destructive to the extent of unbalancing natural phenomenon. If this is true why women everywhere in the world tolerated the challenge they face by their own society. If they are evil to this extent why do they face all the discrimination and do nothing even to challenge the system that made them suppressed in the world as a whole and in wolaita in this context. Unless this is mere hatred against women, it does not sound dependable for accepting it as reality.

6. Mechaya ledeypala yeless Bearing woman is bearing evil.

7. Patabeo giyowodey macha naey It is not what I expected but I have got a baby girl

8. Leyqeyo mecheya atume neaa yelewesu A despised wife delivers a baby boy (1)

A despised wife bears a babe boy: Proverb number six says: "Bearing woman is bearing evil", because a fertile woman is liked and bearing male is appreciated in a traditional society like Wolaita. Male are preferred to female due to the assumption that women are a go away child that joins the family of her husband that will not benefit her own family in the future. Male are assumed to be more important for strengthening the line of the family because he brings a wife to his own family and inherits the wealth of the family. Due to the above reasons women are not liked. More over if a family gets a baby girl at bearing a child they will not be happy and they consider it as a bad luck which brings evil in the house. If a woman bears a baby girl continuously her marriage will face hardships including divorce. While collecting this data I have got information that a man divorced his wife because she could not bear a baby boy at a place called Bitena in Wolaita in 2013. While collecting this data one of my interviewee told me what she faced because of bearing baby girls at the begging of her

early marriage life. At the end of the day when she bears a baby boy one of her relative came home and by congratulating her, he said do you know why I did not come while you bear the four baby girls? She said to him I do not know. Then he told her that it is now that she brought the right human being into this world. And also she told me that she heard from her father that in some areas in Wolaita there are times when a baby girl was buried alive because of her sex. All of the things I have mentioned above have been happening against women due to the society's traditional attitude towards women. This is the result that makes bearing a baby girl to be considered like bearing evil which is clearly biased and very discriminatory that could be a danger for the existence of humanity.

9. Machlayene paraey shesheba meyse

A woman, like a horse, eats everything provided for her

10. Macha asaa sayeqa essa

A woman and a dead man are the same.

11. yoo anchiya hata choma mitawess

A contentious woman swallows water by chewing.

12. Makela machya masqela weha yeqawes

A stubborn wife dies at meskel

All the above proverbs dishonor the glory of women. Proverb number eight presents women as horse that consumes everything given for them. Proverb number nine reduces women to the nonliving things that do not have any part in this world. Proverb number ten also depicts women as an evil that can do things that seems impossible. Proverb number eleven also gives insignificant value for women by preferring the celebration of meskel than the mourning for once own wife. This shows that women do not get the respect they deserve among their own community because of their gender or identity.

13. Machana anene san tatarun gutiba

There is no little girl and little pot: The idea the above proverb communicates is the attitude of the society for approving early marriage of girls. Early marriage causes different problems for a society. First girls will drop out of schools because of the early marriage and its consequences. Then when they bear children they will face different health complications like fistula and death. So in order to solve problems related to early marriage it is good to change the attitude of the society by helping them to overcome the negative impact of the proverbs that encourage early marriage in the rural areas by showing and teaching its consequences to the society and the country at large.

14. Mecha asaa ameneyogey charkuwa kuchiyoga Trusting a woman is holding a cloud

Trusting woman is holding a cloud: A cloud cannot be hold by hand; comparing a woman with this assumption degrades her worth by reducing her to be entrusted with anything. If a woman is not trusted life will be very challenging not only for women but for their life partners' men. For example a husband accepts his children by trusting his wife, since they do not

come out from his body like they do from their mothers. A father should believe his wife that the babies that she delivers belong to him. If he does not trust everything will end there, especially in traditional society where people cannot check their children by genetic identification. Therefore lack of trust on women can cause societal problem not only by affecting women but also destroying men's life.

15. Hariyawunne maccaasawu dullay koshshees. Females and donkeys deserve ill-treatment through kicking

A stick is necessary for woman and donkey: This proverb shows the wrong assumption that physical punishment is right for women and treating them like a donkey is something acceptable and ethical. This reduces women's integrity and dishonors her right as a human being. This perception of the society against women makes them to be hated and perceived negatively. This attitude may be the cause of beating women by their husbands in marriage while conflict happens at home. I personally have seen the challenge of the proverbs not only on men but also on women. Once while conducting this research I went to the market and when I tried to buy things from a woman, I saw that she was not happy about my being there and blamed me to my face by saying you are a womanish who do things not fitting for a man. Even though it was shocking for the time being, it was a good lesson for me to understand the magnitude of the problem even among women let alone men. I have also heard women saying it is important beating women, if not there will be no difference at home. Generally it can be concluded that not only men but also women are part of the problem that causes gender biases' and as a result attitudinal transformation is a must for both sexes in order to bring radical change in our society.

16 Kaliya gelen beyereya yekewesu
The elder cries when her younger sister is married

17 ni yo tumagine machasa yeya kesse

A woman weeps when she is apologized.

18 eshe qopene so homche ya qopewesu

A sister thinks in a way her brother could not understand: The proverb: "The elder cries when her youngster is married" is to show that a woman is envious even to her own sister. What is expected is enjoyment when the member of our family marries, but here a woman is presented as a very selfish and unhappy at the success of her own sister's ceremony. This reduces the character of women as inferior to men who are implicitly considered here as innocent and good thinkers unlike women. This misunderstanding is caused due to lack of understanding on the nature of women. When something happen men and women might react differently. Men may shout and women might Cry. This is due to natural differences of reacting to the same stimuli in different ways. This does not make one inferior and the other superior. This can be proved by the proverb in Wolaita: "A sister thinks in a way her brother could not understand". This shows the way of thinking is also different among men and women. A woman may Cry to express her enjoyment and a man could do it differently. What matters is what kind of emotional experiences we display but not how we did it.

19. kereteya keten arseya geshawusu

The white girl will serve what the black has prepared: This proverb shows even though our country has not been colonized, the impact of the short lasted Italian colonialism has its mark on the society. Here a black woman is under double oppression like other countries for being women and also a black woman. If women are not respected in a black society like ours; we proof that racism is not a matter of areas but of mental problem.

20. Qeteretenaro eken yerey bayes Marrying the uncircumcised pollutes the clan

Marring the uncircumcised pollutes the race: We know that circumcision is a very dangerous practice that harms women in many ways. It can cause death at delivery due to the scar they developed at mutilation because of their bodies lacking elasticity at delivery. They also might be exposed for HIV and other diseases infection because of using unsafe materials in the house. Nowadays it is known that women's circumcision has not any value for them rather it causes danger even for their existence. So why people practice it in the rural areas and even in some towns is due to their wrong assumption about it. One of my interviewee in Wolaita told me that she circumcised her child at the absence of her husband because he thought it will harm our babies. Even though she was informed that it has danger but she believed the traditional knowledge of the society that strongly believes if a woman is not circumcised she will not be satisfied during sexual intercourse, she will break house hold materials etc.

21. Meshereya anetukushen beteney gete bereseysse A man unties his belt without the consent of his wife

A man unties his belt without the consent of his wife. This proverb shows that women are raped even with their own husbands and thought as it is correct by the society. Sex should be done with an agreement between two partners, if not it is a crime to the one who is not willing including marriage. But in this proverb we see that the right of women is not given value as far as the man fixes his own need; that is why the proverb says that the man unties his belt without his wife consent. This shows that considering women as a means of sexual pleasure for a man or as a sex object is an age old traditional attitude that needs radical change through teaching the nature of women and their interest.

22. Melay meleleyneshen suntey melelo
Hold up the ugly woman by a good name

Hold up the ugly woman by a good name. There is the same proverb in Amharic with this one. This may be due to the occupation of the areas during King Kawo Tona of Wolaita by his conqueror Minilik I from northern Ethiopia. The cultural exchange may also show the similarity of the problem on gender issues all over the country. The proverb shows the attention given for a women's beauty. If a woman is not beautiful then she is considered as not being lucky. She is not preferred for marriage, not appreciated, her character which is worthy than fading beauty is not given due value. I think it would be better if the proverb was like this: hold up the ugly with a good character.

23. Hayqedo nea ayeya tenea qorey nauu were gewesu
A mother, whose son died, says the neck of her babe is two arms long

A mother whose son has died, says the neck of her babe is two arms long

24. Hepeshegen ne deuse yeten qesgewesu mesheria

While her husband sneezed, his wife said to him that his belching smells bad. The above two proverbs presented women as a lair that extremely exaggerate things. The proverb: "A mother, whose son has died, says the neck of her babe is two arms long" can also be positively understood if we know the character of a mother. When we see the second proverb: "While her husband sneezed, his wife said to him that his belching smells bad" more than the first proverb this one is greater in its exaggeration which devalues the honor of woman. A woman is not ignorant to this extent not to differentiate a belch from sneezing. So from the above proverbs we can clearly see that there are wrong assumptions about women that cause the society to thought negative things about them.

25 Mechiya wardoga alay wares

He who is finished by his wife will be killed at the battle. It is very hard to accept that a woman finishes her husband at home. But if she does, it means a woman is not as she is considered as insignificant. What we know at home that finishes things is fire. But as we know a fire is important also for different purposes. What matters is how properly we use the fire. Likewise if a woman is powerful to the extent of finishing her husband at home like a fire, it will be advisable to use it positively to get the best out of her. I believe that if a woman has the power to destroy, she also has the power to build her husband to grow together with a mutual benefit. For me what matters is how the husband handles his wife and as a result what she gives back to him. While conducting this research I have observed that those women who are good at their marriage are those whose husband keeps their interest and understands what they do and help them to be what they want. In a marriage where there is misunderstanding between husband and wife they do not respect each other and I have also observed this in some homes while they giving me information. They do not agree at the points they provide me. And also they accuse one another for every problem they do have in front of me. They do not respect each other; they oppose every idea the other present for me etc. In any case whether to grow together or to have a good family, marriage will not be at peace as a life contract without understanding each other as responsible for one another.

Positive representations of women in the Wolaita people's proverbs

1. Ayenene haten eat bawa

There is no evil water and mother

No evil water and mother. A mother is appreciated in most of the proverbs of traditional societies. Water is very important for all living creatures. Life without water is unthinkable. Since a mother is everything to her family especially for a country like ours where most of the people live in the countryside. A mother is a teacher for her children at home to shape their character according to the society's standards of living or culture. She is also the health keeper of her family; she washes her children, their clothes, prepares their food

safely. A mother also treats her children emotionally as a psychiatrist. Therefore a mother is like water for her family due to her critical importance. As there is no life without water in this world, there is also no family without a mother. If a mother is this much important in a traditional society, we can use this to teach about how much important woman is to our society. Since today's girls are tomorrows' mothers the society has to accept all women as they accept the value of mothers. I also have tried to check which one the society loves more from a father and a mother. Most of my respondents preferred a mother than a father. And their major reason is they believed that a mother understands her children better than a father. But those who preferred their fathers defended that a father's love is hidden but in practice he disciplines his children to shape them for the future. But I believe that both are equally important. When a father punishes his child to shape his character, a mother also would encourage the child not to lose hope because of his punishment. If a father works on the Child's character, a mother also treats the emotion of the child. This makes their role complementary to each other.

2. Nat kuneden ayeya degemeyogakeyna hayeqen nat degamokone

Children do not suffer badly when their mother dies, but she feels worse when they fall down

Children do not suffer badly when their mother dies, but she feels worse than this when they fall down. This proverb shows the depth of a mother's love towards her children. It does not mean that children do not feel at all at the death of their mother, but it means that the extent of a mother's love exceeds even to the point when they fall greater than what they sense at her death. If this is true the society must show respect for all women who are our sisters, wives etc... And also our potential mothers in the future.

3. Ne eyo zereyeda ayeya bewesha rewesu

Advising her daughter not to do so, a mother will be impregnated. Even though this proverb seems a negative attitude towards women, but it is not. It shows the extent of a mother's love towards her child. A mother does not advise something bad to her own daughter because she does not want her suffer in life. But she might make a mistake as a human being. This is not something odd, because as all humans do mistakes a mother is not a different. What is special is how a mother cares for her daughter more than herself. This is a selfless love which cares for others more than her. Since a mother scarifies herself to others she deserves to be respected more and taken as a model for the society to develop the way of living and thinking to change and transform our country radically.

4. Meche pene miza pene aweshe ne keles ya bebaw

Nothing satisfies human need like a woman and cow. In the above proverb women and caws are considered the best things that satisfy human needs. Why the Wolaita people compares women and cows. The reason is because most of the society is agriculturalist that lives in the rural areas. A caw gives milk for the family, bears caws as a finance source for them, and finally when they stop bearing their meat is used by the society. So it is everything for them. They cannot plough the land if there is no caw that gives the oxen. In short if there is no caw there is no milk, food to be eaten and finances to be generated.

Likewise a woman is everything for a family, she is the food maker, sanitation keeper of her house and children, teacher of the children and a life partner for her husband. Therefore if a woman is very important to this extent, then she deserves respect and honor from the society.

5. Ne meche ya sheya den tenqewsu

A woman that makes you prosper smells like a restroom. As we know diligence is the source of prosperity. This proverb clearly shows that women are the agent of the prosperity of men in a traditional society.

If a woman loves luxury she could not be a hard worker because she spent her time beautifying herself, but if she works hard she can change the life of her family at the expense of scarifying her life. Her problem is not the hard work the woman do, but the benefit is for her husband not for herself. Women should have to develop their hard work skill which is very important for the development of her family and the country in general, but conditions also must be created in order to help women benefit from their own labor that makes them smell like a rest room. This is fare and they deserve to be rewarded because they have done more than what is expected from them.

6. Yeleya mechoney doleya gedeyaney yedope

A woman who is like a fertile land should not be abandoned

Do not leave a fertile woman and land. In Wolaita the fertility of women and land is very important. As an agrarian society if the land they plough is not fertile the production they get will be insignificant. But if they get a fertile land they will get a good production. As a result no farmer leaves a fertile land at any expense. Likewise children are considered as a means of achieving prosperity and honor. To achieve this need a fertile woman is very important to have as many children as much as possible. But nowadays things are changed and having many children might be having many problems. Teaching and feeding children is not easy. So comparing women and a fertile land may not be compatible nowadays because many children may cause problem for the family and also on the aggregate nationally because of population increase as a whole. More over the society also should have to respect those women who might not be fertile like the expectations of the society because fertility is not only the issues of women but also men.

7. Lebameya leayeyo atesewesu

A wise woman makes her mother her servant

8. Qeres qemeyes eyess wanetees

For the diligent it darkness, for the lazy it dawns

9. Dandayedey kewa geless

A long-suffering woman marries a king

10. Eshe qopene so homechaya qo pewesu

A sister thinks in a way her brother could not understand

All the above proverbs appreciate the virtues that a women display in their life. The first proverb admires a woman having a wisdom to the extent she make her mother her servant. The second proverb describes a diligent woman using her time comparing her with the lazy one who sleeps continuously till it downs, but the diligent working hard she does not know when it gets dark because of focusing on her work. The third proverb

shows the virtue of endurance by showing if a woman waits long what kind of opportunity she gets. Usually in a traditional society like Wolaita women are expected to marry early not to wait for long for fear that they may not find a husband in matured ages. This proverb opposes the trend and shows the better way: the more they waited the better they enjoy life. Proverbs like this one helps to fight early marriage using the traditional oral literature itself. The fourth proverb also presents that a woman's understanding or insight as being different from her brothers that could not be understood by him think that men and women are different in thinking and understanding things. But this does not mean women are superior or men are inferior rather it shows that they are different but important one for the other. Without women men cannot exist, and also without men women cannot exist. The benefit of one is the benefit of the other. The challenge women faced should be thought as they are also the problems of men.

The result of attitudinal test among the Wolaita people's on

Gender issues: The proverbs I have collected from Wolaita are almost negative about women. I find it even very hard to get proverbs that represent women positively. The culture of the society has been very oppressive towards women to the extent of burying their female children alive in the ancient times of their history. But the attitude test that I have used to check the society's attitude is very different from the cultural implication of wolaita proverbs. Most of the people both men and women do not support inequality between men and women. But most of the people that do not support inequality are religious people from protestant churches. I have also learned that missionaries has preached the gospel and greatly challenged the traditional system of Wolaita people. Because of the impact of Christianity most of the people do not support the cultural biases in the proverbs.

Even though most of the people do not support the cultural biases of the proverbs, the cultural impact of the proverbs can be clearly still seen among the Wolaita people. While collecting the data I have observed in wolaita that some men do not consider and respect women as the equals of men. The other thing that I have seen which is very encouraging is that the nongovernmental and governmental organizations give training on Gender issues in Wolaita continuously which has brought positive change on the society towards their thinking on gender issues. Women are involved in business, religious matters, and politics and on also other things which I have not seen in other areas rather than in Woliata people. In wolaita women enjoy life like men. They eat alone in the hotels, drink alcohol if they want and nobody forbids them doing things they wanted. This is not accustomed in other areas of the country with some exceptions in the regional cities and the capital city Addis Ababa. But in the case of wolaita women from the countryside areas come into the town and do those things that seem not allowed for women in other areas of the country.

A comparative analysis on the result of the study on

Gender issues: Here the results of the study on the proverbs collected from the two areas are summarized together with the people's attitude towards the implications of the proverbs. Finally the results from the two areas are compared with each other. Based on the comparison solutions are provided on the next chapter to bring a radical solution to the problems raised in this research. There are different causes in the two areas for the cause of gender biased attitude. In the case of Arsi Oromo

the society's tradition is better than their religious teaching on gender issues. Women have better rights before the society is converted into Islam. The "Siniqe institution" was one of the systems that helped the Arsi Oromo women to keep their right against any form of discrimination that comes from the society. But latter on due to the conversion of the society in to Islam they were forced to be ruled according to Islamic religious laws and they lost their rights totally and become the property of men. That is why the Arsi Oromo considers marrying a woman is buying her with money and while he asks her parents he says: "how much do you sell her for me?" But this does not mean that the culture is totally free from any form of biases and Islam is totally oppressive towards women. But when the extent is compared they do have a better right during their cultural leadership under the Geda system. Therefore the religious leaders must help women get compensations for what has happened in their life and the government also should have to work on this area in order to solve gender related problems in Arsi Oromo at the grass root level. When we see the situations among the Wolaita people, the case is the opposite. Here the culture is very suppressive for women. It is also very rare to find proverbs that speak positive things about women unlike the Arsi Oromo where there are lots of proverbs that exalts women above men. But because of their conversion into Christianity they have benefited and exercised better rights than their traditions. They are not forced for early marriage, they went school and as a result they enjoy involving in the political leadership and other businesses as men do in their areas. Moreover they also are involved in the religious system including preaching; as a result they can decide on their own issues by challenging their partners' men equally. This does not mean that because of the religion they accepted they have not faced challenges. For example still both men and women believes in fertility and they bear lots of children and they suffer shortage of resources in the areas and people migrate to other areas for survival. Fertility is purely a traditional concept which is supported by religion. But the bible clearly states that if one could not administer what he or she owns it is wrong to have many or few children. The Bible says:

".....And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

Genesis 1:28

Most people seems that they read the words that says be fruitful, multiply and replenish but not the last words that commands to subdue or control the earth. Because of misunderstanding biblical ideas people might be disadvantageous on many issues. For example most women in Wolaita believe that they have the responsibility of raring many children as much as possible, and as a result even taking lots of training on birth control, they still think that it is important to have many children. Because of this attitude they waste their time and energy having many children that they cannot even feed properly. In order to be effective in this aspect the government and the nongovernmental organizations in Wolaita must work together with the religious men who have controlled the society's way of life. As we have seen in the above paragraphs, the problem in Wolaita is not that much a problem in Arsi and the problem in Arsi is not that much a problem in Woliata. So taking measures that are typical to the

problems in the areas will be more effective in order change the situation of women in our country. Bases on the results of the study there are two major issues raised in relation two gender issues: culture and religion. I will treat these two important elements in the next section as a means of challenge and opportunity to solve Gender related problems.

Domestic ways of solving Gender related problems: Under this section ideas related with Gender issues in relation to religion and culture are discussed. I have used a method which is borrowed from an Amharic proverb. The proverb says: "A thorn by thorn" "Eshohen be Eshoh" I used this expression as a method to solve the problem of gender issues because of the following reasons: first of all we have to use local ways to solve our own problem because other borrowed systems might not be applicable in our country. The other is using the problem to solve a problem which is like using antibody which is a weakened form of the disease in order to challenge or overcome the problem. The other reason is the problem for one area can be a solution for the other as the case is seen on chapter seven. Since the problem on gender issues are basically originates from culture or religion as this study indicated. The solution can be also brought using the problem itself.

Using Culture to solve Gender related problems: First let me define what culture means in short. According to the Oxford Concise Dictionary (2005) Culture is the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively as refined understanding or appreciation of this. It is also the customs, institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people, or group. Proverbs are the manifestations of the arts of the society. As we have seen in the analyses section there are proverbs that represent women both negatively as well as positively. This will help us to teach the society to change their attitude by using the proverbs themselves. In the case of this study the Arsi Oromo Proverbs are good for using the cultural method to solve gender related problems. Because there are lots of proverbs in the Arsi Oromo, that support the equality of women with men. Even there are lots of proverbs that magnify women greater than men. Let us see some of the proverbs that could help us bring equality between men and women:

Women as the King of Humanity

Mootiin dhagaa maal? Soogidda; mootiin namaa eenyu? Dubartii. The king of stones is a common salt; the king of human being is a woman. This proverb compares woman with a salt, and makes her the king of humanity. Both salt and king are very important in the life of any society. Women are presented her as the king of humanity, but when we see the definition of traditional kingship women do not have the birth right even to be a king because only men are assumed to inherit a throne. So according to this proverb women are the king of kings because the proverb has made them the king of all men. The society accepted in their proverb the kingship of humanity over human being it will be easy to teach them about gender equality.

Women as the prudent one

Daddaftee na dhungatteef dhirsa naaf hin taatu.

Early kissing could not assure your being my husband

This proverb is very important as HIV is destroying the productive force of most developing countries like Ethiopia. As we know the main reason for HIV is unsafe sex, and the main solution is abstinence from it. This proverb teaches couples not to rush in to sex because it doesn't guarantee the married life as some considers it. Not only this but also the proverb disproves that women are not emotional like men in sexual matters, so giving more attention to control their sexual feelings is very important to save the generation from the wide spread of HIV and unwanted pregnancy. The proverb shows that how much a woman cares for her future married life and hence wise in keeping herself clean from sexual problems. This proverb can be used to teach the society the insight of women towards protecting themselves and others from sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancy.

Women as the precious one

Dubartiin faaya dhiiraati

A woman is jewelry of a man

This is a very powerful metaphorical expression. This expression clearly shows that women are the best things men should keep always in the front part to be seen by others always. We do not keep jewelry in a secret place but put them in our hands, necks and other visible areas so that others look at them and appreciate how much attractive and beautiful they are. If any one considers women as his glory or jewelry, he could not by any means reject them or tries to dominate them as his adversaries, rather he will show that he is proud of them and shows his confidence about women as he does for his jewelry. Therefore teaching the society how much precious women are is very important using the cultural expressions in the proverbs.

Women as the Shield of men

Dubartiin gaachana dhiiraati

A woman is a shield of a man

This proverb also like the above one appreciates the value of women for the existence of men. A shield is a means a person or a thing providing protection from a danger; risk, etc. Based on the above meaning of a shield we can easily understand that women are very important for men's existence and security. If women are this much important for the society, it is fair if men treat them positively by giving them what they deserve as a reward. By teaching the society how much important women are for men we can easily convince the value they have for our existence.

Women as the pillar of a house

Niitiin utubaa manaati

A wife is a pillar of a house

A pillar means a person or a thing providing reliable support for his or her community. It is also good to define what a pillar is in the Arsi Oromo context. When they build a hut or a house they usually uses a big central wood that holds the house as a cornerstone, if that wood is taken from the house everything will collapse immediately because everything is dependent on it. Now we can observe how much crucial a woman is in a family or a house. If she is like a pillar it means nothing could

stand by itself without her support. This proverb even gives more value for a woman than a man; here women are presented as independent but men as dependent upon them. If this idea is used to change the negative attitude of the society against women, it is a powerful means to challenge traditional thinking or philosophy on Gender issues.

Women like a salt

Nyaannii soogidda malee, manni dubartii malee hin barreedu
A house without a woman is like a stew without salt. This proverb supports what we have seen in the above proverbs; here a house without a Woman is likened with a stew without salt. If a stew is without salt we know that it tastes nothing. So is a family, if it we took out women from it then it will be meaningless. This shows how much important or invaluable a woman is for the family in particular and for the community in general. If any society accepts women's value like this I do not think problems related with gender issues will be that much strong. This proverb clearly shows that biased attitude created by proverbs can be solved by proverbs that deal about women positively.

Women as the wisest one

Malli mala dubartii; humni humna bishaanii siif haa ta'u

Wisdom like a woman, power like water, let it be unto you
This proverb shows the blessing given to a man, if some proverbs that insults and consider women as ignorant were right, the Arsi Oromo's should not bless men with this blessing. But the matter is they know how much important woman is in the society, how much significant their knowledge is and the like. Water has power both for construction and destruction. For example, Tsunami which is a long high sea wave caused by an earthquake or other disturbance, was caused by water waves and has destroyed lots of people and their property recently. Also we use water for generating electricity to move big industries and for our daily purposes'. But we can do nothing without wisdom and knowledge. This shows it is very important to involve women in their and the countries issues. I think no society hates wisdom, hence if women are wise to this extent, and men recognized it and their importance, there could be no reason to reject and abuse them deliberately. Women as mothers are appreciated almost in all the proverbs of Arsi Oromo. Hence teaching that all women are potential mothers that deserve respect and honor is very important. To protect women's discrimination by the society it will be wise using the culture itself by challenging the negative thinking and encouraging the positive and constructive once. Even though this study focused on proverbs, other oral literature could be also used in order to change or challenge traditional society's attitude towards gender related problems.

Using Religion as a method to solve Gender related problems: When we see the case of Arsi Oromo, the culture is better for women than the case of Wolaita. On the other hand religious case has been found out to be the opposite. The Arsi Oromo women's right deteriorated when the society is converted into Islam. They lost the relative right they have in the Geda system due to the collapse of the "Siiniqee institution" that protected Women's right and gave them the right to challenge men by traditional laws. Whereas, in the case of Wolaita their conversion in to Christianity from their traditional way of life has helped them to bring a better right

for women in order to enjoy a better freedom than their culture. Now we will see the basic teachings of the missionaries that brought positive changes towards Gender issues in the Wolaita society. Since there are a lot of denominational differences among the Christians of the world I preferred to use the Bible which all of them uses as their reference to oppress or to give freedom for women. As I have tried to show how positively a culture can be used to solve Gender related problems in the culture based approach, in this section I have also tried to show how the religion based approach or method can be used to solve the problem of women. Now let me show how we can use the Bible in order to solve Gender biased problems in our society. Let me start from the beginning of the Bible to show how men and women are represented in the book of Genesis.

The name Adam was first used in the Book of Genesis to refer to both man and woman.

“Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.”
Genesis 5:2

“...And Adam said, this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”

Genesis 2:23

According to the above two verses from the Bible we can clearly understand that a woman was first taken out of the male man and is made of the same material that the male man was made. I used the term the male man because both of them were called Adam: the male man and the female man. The description also makes the male man as the first mother for woman; because she was made of his bone and flesh. According to the above description woman means the one who is taken out of a man. In short we can understand that man and woman are not different in nature and naming before their God according to the Bible. Therefore it is possible to teach the equality of men and woman in the society based on the above verses.

Man and Woman were created to be rulers together but not to rule one another

“...And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”

Genesis 1:28

According to this verse, man and woman were created to be fruitful, multiply, replenish the earth, and to subdue the earth and also to have dominion over every creature on the earth together. God blessed both of them and gave them the power together to rule. This shows that it is not Biblical to avoid women from administering or governing over the earth. And also it is clear that God did not order man or woman to rule one another but to rule together over other created things. This shows explicitly that it is not Biblical suppressing woman or dominating them because of their difference from men. This also shows that some traditional Christian religious ideologies

that based their doctrine on the Bible need to reconsider their Gender related Teachings and thinking according to the Bible.

The role Women played in the Old Testament: Lots of women have shown great success story in the Old Testament. Here I have presented some of them only under this section. In the Bible God used men and women for his purpose. Let us see some of them under this section.

Prophetess Miriam: This woman is the elder sister of the great Old Testament Prophet Moses.

She was a most remarkable woman. She saved the life of her brother Moses by helping him grow by his own mother after he was left on the river. Through her action plan to pharaoh's daughter, she managed solving the problem her family faced and saved her brother from the challenges that he might face at Egypt.

“.....Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?”

None Jewish women are those women who do not belong to the nation called Israel. So under this section we will see women from other nations that played a great role in the Bible like the Jewish women. Some of them are:

Lydia: According to Mahoney (1993) this woman was the first European convert into Christianity. She was a merchant woman, wealthy having many houses even for her guests. She also taught to have converted many kings in European nations by some historians.

“And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.”

Acts 16:14

“And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.”
Acts 16:15

Priscilla: She is a woman who explained the way of the Lord Jesus Christ to the powerful preacher named Apollos.

“And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.”
Acts 18: 24

“This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spoke and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.”
Acts 18: 25

“And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.”
Acts 18: 26

“...For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.”
Acts 18: 28

Priscilla is an amazing woman. She has trained the most effective African man who was born in Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the scriptures. This sows the man may be the one who brought Christianity into Africa by being helped by a woman. But it is amazing that most modern churches do not allow women even to speak in some churches.

Philip's Four Daughters: "And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy."

Acts 21:8

Philip did not know that women were not allowed to pray and prophecy, as the modern day church teaches. But he knows that God has promised in his word to pour out his Spirit upon all humanity for his purpose. This includes women as the Bible shows. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God; I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams" Acts 2:17
The above verse clearly shows that women like men were gifted with the gifts of God without any discrimination.

Phoebe: She was deaconess at the church called Cenchræa. She was the helper of many. According to Mahoney (1993) the historian Eusebius says she oversaw two churches and traveled extensively in ministry. "...I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchræa: that you receive her in the lord as becomes saints, and that you assist her in whatsoever business she has need of you: for she hath been a helper of many and of me also."

Rom 16:2

Junia: According to Mahoney (1993) Junia is a feminine name in Greek. She was called an Apostle. This is the highest authority in the New Testament. This shows that one of the 22 Apostles mentioned in the New Testament was a woman. This also means that there is no authority in the Bible that women have not been involved in. From this we can conclude that women can be involved in all forms of religious activities according to the Bible. "Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me."

Rom 16:7

Euodia and Syntyche: The above two women were spiritual leaders at Philippi. Paul the Apostle called them my fellow laborers because they were doing the same work that was done by him.

"Help those women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow laborers, whose names are in the book of life."

Phil 4:3

The Elect Lady: She was respected senior pastor at a church in her own home. She was charged with the responsibility of controlling teachings at her church. If she was not the pastor of the church she would not be given the responsibility of controlling teachings at the home church. This shows she was a teacher that can identify false doctrine from the truth. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed"

1 Jn1:10

In the above sections we have seen how the Bible described Jewish and none Jewish women and how God used them for his purposes. And also we have seen that it is not Biblical to oppress women not to be leaders in the churches. Now let us see some of the problematic verses in the Bible that are used against women in many christen denominations.

Woman was made to be a suitable helper for a man: The word helper is perceived as inferior by many teachers of the Bible. The Bible states that a woman is a suitable helpmate for a man. To understand better this word let us see what the Bible says about woman as a helper of man. First we have to understand that a woman was not made only for man after Adam was created, because God created both of them at the same time. But they were manifested or formed into the physical world turn by turn. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

Gen 1:27

Here man refers to both the male and female man according to Genesis 5:2 which says that: "Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created."

Genesis 5:2

But after their creation in the spiritual realm we see that it is only the male man that was seen physically being made of the dust of the ground. And later God takes the woman out of that man, and the Bible called this process forming man from the dust of the ground and the woman out of the man. This means the male and female man were created twice. First they were created at the same time in the spiritual world and second they were formed into the physical world. The Bible also shows that there is no sex difference in the spiritual world because the male and female man will be like the Angels. This may be the cause that made the creator to form man and woman into physical entities so that they could have sex differences for the purpose of multiplication to sustain their generations. "But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage" Luke 20:35

If we have seen to this extent the creation story of a man and a woman, let us come back again to the point that why woman are called a helper of man and what does it mean. Eve the first woman was called the helper of the first man called Adam.

"And the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him." Gen 2:18 Here the woman is not meant to be a servant or a slave for the male man Adam but his life partner or companion that live together with him to accomplish the purpose God gave them when he created them to rule and govern the earth together. They are also called one flesh after they physically united through sex. This shows that they are not different in the eyes of their creator if they are one body. If they are one, how they could not be different from one another.

"...Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Gen 2:24. The above verse shows that if one hurts his wife then he

is hurting his own body because they are one body. This means it is not Biblical to oppress woman in any form since they are our own body. Nobody hurts his own body unless he is mentally sick. "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourishes it, even as the Lord loved the church; for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Eph 5: 28-30. The above verses from the book of Ephesus also confirms what is written on Genesis by stating that since a wife is one body with her husband, he has to nourish and cherish her as his own body. And also it clearly shows that hating a wife is like disgust for once own body which nobody does at normal conditions. If this is the case then it could not be Biblical by any means to hate woman and oppress then using Bible as weapon against them.

Here the above description shows that a helper does not mean that the one who is below the other to be undermined and mistreated. According to Oxford Concise Dictionary (2005) to help means: to make something easier for someone to do something. It is also means to improve a situation to benefit or assist someone to move in a specified direction. Therefore the woman for the man is the one who makes things easier when he does something. And also she is the one who improve a situation for the man to benefit or assist him to move things forward for the success of things that the man does. This shows that the woman as a helper is very important in making things easy for the man. In all the information's given above the word that more clearly describes the context of a helper in the Bible is when it is used even for describing God himself. When the creator is described by the word helper it does not make him inferior rather the one who is very available to help those who need his help. So is a wife for her husband.

"I will ask the father, and he will give you another helper..... the Spirit of Truth." John 16:14
Here the Spirit of Truth is the Holy Spirit: one of the Triune God in the God Head of the Christian faith. If being a helper for humanity does not make God inferior, so it will not also make a woman to be inferior because she is a helper for a man.

Woman was commanded in the Bible to be submissive to her husband: Women have been commanded in the Bible to submit to their husbands in the Bible. And many preachers focus on this topic. But the problem is they do not consider other verses that teach men also to submit to their wives. I believe that if women's submission helps them to improve their relationship it is good if they submit. But the submission the Bible teaches is not by force but by love; because, husbands have been ordered to love their wives as Christ loved the church by giving his life to her on the cross. This shows the extent of love expected from a husband is unto giving his life to death for the sake of his wife. If a husband loves his wife to this extent, it will not be surprising if his wife submitted to him. But if men expect their wives to submit for them without loving them to the extent of dying for them, they are expecting to reap what they have not sown. This is wrong and unbiblical, and also unfair if we think logically.

"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God"
Eph 5:21

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord."
Eph 5:22

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it"

Eph 5:25

The above verses make the idea of submission very clear. First all believers are expected to submit to one another, this commandment also works for husbands and wives to submit one for the other. But the emphasis given is different. Men are expected to love their wives to the point of dying for them like Christ died for the church. Women are expected to submit for their husbands to respond for their love which is up to death. Which one is easier dying or submitting? For me it is better to submit like a woman and live rather than loving like a husband to the pint of death. Anyways the point is clear that everyone in marriage is expected to take his part according to the Bible in order to make his or her life peaceful and fruitful.

Woman as the 'Wife' of Jesus Christ

"...Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Gen 2:24

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come and his wife hath made herself ready." Rev 19:7

Here a lamb refers to Jesus Christ according to the book of John.

"The next day John sees Jesus coming unto him, and said, Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world." John 1:29

"And he says unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he says unto me, these are the true sayings of God."

Rev 19:9

"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church" Eph 5:31-32

When the Bible begins the woman was taken out of the man. But at the end of the Bible the man was inside a woman called the church. The church is regarded as the body of Christ which is the aggregate believers in one body being symbolized by a woman. At the beginning God made a woman and man and they were married in the paradise physically. And also at the end men and women together being symbolized by a single woman who is called a church will be married by Jesus Christ to be one body with him in heaven. This marriage is not like the first one because it is spiritual and the wedding is also done in heaven. This shows how much God respects woman to the point of considering her as a symbol of his 'wife' which is called the church. The beginning and the end of the Bible also shows that how much God gives value for both men and women and their institution which is called marriage. In short the Bible is a spiritual book that begins by a wedding on earth between Eve and Adam and ends with a wedding in the Heaven by a spiritual wedding between Jesus Christ and the

Church which is symbolized by a woman that represents the followers of Jesus Christ both men and women.

Summery and Recommendation

Under this section the main points on the findings of this research has been summarized. And also based on the findings some important recommendations have been given to all the concerned bodies in order to change the situation of women in our country in general and in Wolita and Arsi Oromo in particular.

Summary

In this research different Gender issues related with the representations of women in the oral proverbs of Woliata and Arsi Oromo has been studied. Moreover the society's current attitude towards the representation of women in a typical ways in the oral proverbs has been tested or checked. Based on this study the major problems identified are culture and religion. Culture was the major problem in the case of Wolita and religion is found to be the main source of women's misrepresentations in the case of Arsi Oromo. This shows that the problem in Arsi is the solution in Wolaita, and the solution in Wolaita is the problem in the Arsi Oromo, and also the solution in Arsi is the problem in Wolaita. This indicates us that knowing the exact problem in a specific area will help us to reach at the right solution and to use our resources properly. When we see the culture in the Arsi Oromo it was relatively good to the situation of women. Women have exercised a better right during the 'Geda' system in which women exercised their freedom better than now in the 'Siiniqee' institution. Due to the conversion of the Arsi Oromo in to Islam women are forced even to lose the relative right they had enjoyed in the past. Because of this they are forced to be under the total control of their husbands.

Unlike the culture of the Arsi Oromo's, Wolaita's culture was very harsh towards women. Women were considered as the equals of the devil in the traditions of Wolaita, and they were only respected in the case of motherhood and wives are appreciated because of their benefit for their husbands. When Wolita is converted in to Christianity, however women have benefited a lot from the religion. Even though the religion has not totally changed the society's attitude towards women, they have relatively enjoyed freedom better then they get from their culture. Even nowadays they get lots of trainings from different NGO'S and also they have benefited from the policies of the government on Gender issues because of their readiness to use the opportunities given for them.

SNNPR's churches in cooperation with the government of Ethiopia have started giving different trainings on Gender issues, harmful traditional practices and on others topics that are very important to change the lives of women in particular and the situation of our country in general. I think the Government of Ethiopia should have to expand the training that was started in SNNPR which created relationship between churches and the government in order to solve Gender related problems. The churches in SNNPR including Wolaita are also using the opportunity in order to solve women's problem in their churches and the region as a whole by teaching women and creating awareness on the society.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study it will be good if the following measures are taken and implemented by all the concerned bodies in our country in general and in the study areas in particular. Some of the recommendations are:

- The Government of Ethiopia must focus on the cultures and the religions of different areas in our country to be effective in the implementations of Gender related policies.
- Gender related education must be given starting from early childhood in every school in the country in order to build up the minds of the generation on the equality of men and women to solve the problem at the grass root level.
- Expanding training on Gender issues all over the country is also very important. But this one is very difficult and needs the involvement of religious leaders, because matured people are not usually willing to change their thinking. As a result they need traditional means to convince them about the problem the cultural and religious thinking brings on women.
- Using the culture and religion of the society to solve Gender related problems is very effective in a traditional country like Ethiopia where the majority of the people lives in the countryside and believes in their religions and culture more than science and modern way of life.
- The Governments Medias like ETV's, regional FM's are not giving enough time for Gender issues. Rather they give more time for the governments' propaganda and other less relevant issues like Europeans football while women are dying because of gender related problems in the country. Therefore the Medias should be used properly to the advantage of women in the country to change the society's attitude towards them.
- At the family level things also should be changed in order to solve the problems women face in the country by developing systems like the health extension package which health professionals go house to house and solve problems of health in the countryside areas.
- To bring attitudinal transformation on Gender issues in our country the government institutions, religious institutions, academic institutions, culture and ministry of women's affair must work together.
- At the level of higher education in our country giving common courses on Gender issues and conducting research extensively on the representations of women in the oral and written literature is very important to change and improve the situation of women radically. In order to achieve this, the government and the society should have to put great investment on issues related with women.

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