

Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies
Institute of Gender Studies

**Exploring Ethiopian Women Experience of
Discrimination and Coping Mechanisms: The Case of
Wayto Women in Bahir Dar Town, Northwestern
Ethiopia**

By

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**A Thesis Submitted to the Institute of Gender Studies in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of
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Addis Ababa

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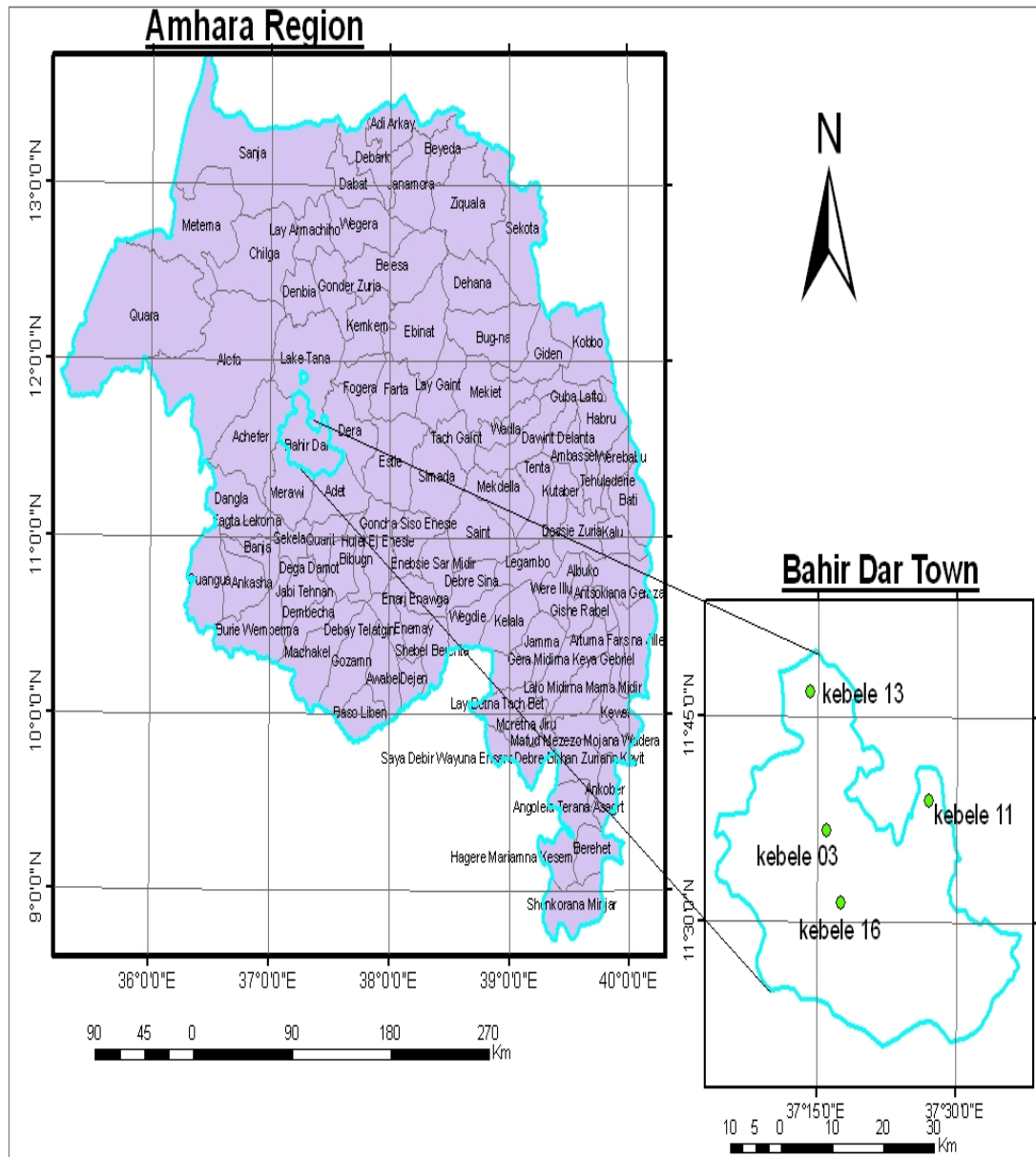
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Map of the Study Area



Source: Ethiopian mapping authority 2004

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADA	Amhara Development Association
BPAC	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSA	Central Statistics Authority
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
ETV	Ethiopian television
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GO	Governmental Organizations
HAPCO	HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Office
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune deficiency Syndrome
HTP	Harmful Traditional Practice
JECCDO	Jerusalem Children and Community Development Organization
MOH	Ministry of Health
MWAO	Ministry of Women's affairs Office
NCTPE	National Committee on Traditional Practice of Ethiopia
NGO	Non governmental Organizations
PFA	Platform for action
UN	United Nations

Glossary of Local Terms

- Agelgil*: a big container with top cover made from grass and used to put spinned cotton.
- Ankelba*: a skin made material used to carry babies on human back.
- Arjano*: animal that looks like crocodile
- Chatt*: is a kind of plant that its leaves are used as stimulant.
- Dagusa*: A kind of “Teff” that is not white
- Dibra*: the money that Wayto men contribute for wedding
- Derg*: Military administrative council that ruled Ethiopia from 1974-1991
- Enjera*: unleavened bread made from teff grain.
- Equib*: traditional saving association.
- Eddir*: traditional insurance system especially in the time of mourning
- Haram*: is Arabic word for forbidden
- Kebele*: the smallest unit in the administrative structure
- Mudia*: a small container with top cover made from grass and used to put materials like coinage, small mirror and comb.
- Milash*: invitation of the newly wed couples by bride’s family.
- Mosseb*: Enjera bin with a top cover
- Mahber/Sanebate*: religious association and feast of Orthodox Christians
- Sadaqah*: voluntary almsgiving, which is intended for the needy.
- Sebatra*: a flat material used to pull Enjera while baking
- Semania*: a traditional marriage contract between couples
- Shafrew*: long grass that grows under water
- Solat*: bow down for praying
- Talis*: newly grown and young papyrus plants which women use for sewing
- Tella*: local beer
- Wolewol*: a flat material used for sitting in the car or at home over a chair
- Wosfa*: a kind of needle that Wayto women use for sewing baskets
- Zone*: the second unit of the administrative structure next to region.
- Woreda*: the third unit of the administrative structure next to zone
- Warka*: a type of tree that its branches are wide and used as shed.

Abstract

Discrimination, as a social and economic phenomenon, has been the center of several research works. As an issue that touches the life of many people in different parts of the world in general and in Ethiopia in particular, it has been researched in different contexts and in different frame of references. But, there is no specific research on Wayto women's experience of discrimination and their ways of coping against it. Although there are some literatures reflecting on the community as a whole, this study is different in that it is about women's voice from their experience of discrimination and their coping mechanisms through feminist theoretical frame of reference and this is also the rationale behind conducting this research. The main objective of this study is to explore women's experience of discrimination and their coping mechanisms in Wayto community of Bahir Dar town. To achieve the main objectives of the study, qualitative method consisting of observation interviews and focus group discussions has been employed. The method of data analysis is interpretative one. The methods employed have helped the study to come up with its own findings concerning the source of Wayto women's discrimination, the forms of discriminations they have experienced as well as the coping mechanisms. In order to generate necessary information from different directions; two major groups of participants were incorporated in this study, i.e. members of the Wayto community and members of the Neighboring groups. Thus, a total of 17 Wayto women and 6 neighboring women have participated. Besides, five key informants from the Wayto community were included. It is explored that women in Wayto community are suffering from economic and social discrimination, religious discrimination, sex discrimination and also age discrimination. It is also found that women discriminate women in Wayto community. Women in their own community were involved in verbal or physical act of violent behavior, hostility and intimidation. Besides, Wayto women face discrimination from their neighboring women. Further more, Wayto women were sexually exploited by men from their neighbors through visiting unions where there is only sexual intercourse without any economic support which cause women having out of wedlock children and increase their economic burden. In addition to their fieldwork, women in Wayto community like that of the majority Ethiopian women were found responsible for domestic activities such as cooking, cleaning, fetching water and so forth. However, they were responsible for domestic activities in a condition where there is no enough space to undertake such activities as well as in a culture where saving for tomorrow is not known. Wayto Women bake Enjera every day, and this baking as well as cooking is done in an open fire and in inefficient stoves which brought physical damage. Hence, the intersection of different factors was found creating multiple forms of women's discrimination in Wayto community. Three types of coping mechanisms that Wayto women use to overcome their discrimination were also found. These are emotion based, action based and the combination of the two (emotion- action based).

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Ethiopia is a home for numerous ethnic groups of various cultural backgrounds. There are more than 80 different ethnic groups living in Ethiopia with their own languages, culture, customs and traditions. The country's principal ethnic groups include the Oromo (32.2%), the Amhara (30.1%), Tigre (6.2%), Sidama (3.5%), Gamo (1.5%), Shankella (6%), Somali (6.2%), Afar (1.7%), Walayta (2.3 %) and Gurage (2.5%). The remaining 19 % belongs to various other Ethiopian national groups (CSA, 2007). The so called other Ethiopian national groups represent the numerical minorities such as the Waytos, Bête Israelites and others.

Waytos are located in the Amhara National Regional State (ANRS) in and around Bahir Dar town. The areas they occupy are not convenient to live in because they are marshy lands. Such areas are also prone to malaria and other diseases which constantly restrict the Waytos population's growth (Solomon, 2006).

Waytos are one of the marginalized groups, mainly due to the fact that they had rarely been recognized as a member of the Ethiopian society. Instead, they were believed as “comers” and religious “polluters” (*Ibid*). In line with this, James Bruce, who stayed in Gondar from 1771 to 1777, also said that “Waytoians are radically different in their language and religion compared to any other [Ethiopian]” (Bruce, 1790, III: 401). He further said that religiously “they were pagan” and any physical contact with them was believed to cause religious pollution to both Christians and Muslims. Bruce was the first scholar to call them “Wayto” (Teklehaimanot, 1984).

However, many other travelers and writers also said many things about the community in question, though there is no consensus about their myths of origin yet. For instance, the

French traveler—Guillaume Lejean and the Ethiopian writer, Aleka Taye, assumed that Waytos were probably related to the “Watta”, a hunting group of the Oromo. While the Italian traveler, Piaggia, who was in Ethiopia between 1871 and 1875, called them “Asiatic Immigrants”. Similarly, Zelalem (1986) constructs some probable premises for their origin and assumes that “they are Israelites who lived in Egypt at some time”. Contrary to this; Tekelehaimanot in his 1984 research concludes that Waytos are likely a branch of the Agaw people.

Waytos origin and identity is a controversial issue and whether they are related to Oromo, Israelites, Asians or Agaw, there is still wide room for further investigations. However, for the sake of this thesis, the researcher used some of the assumptions given by the above scholars as background information about the community under study.

To begin with Aleka Taye’s assumption, the writer argues that the name of the community in question was initially “Watta”, which entered to Ethiopia at about 2360 B.C. explaining the advent of the Waytos, Aleka Taye attributes the great famine that occurred in Egypt and Sudan around 3400 B.C compelled Waytos to migrate towards Ethiopia in search for food. After reaching Ethiopia, “some of them lived around Lake Tana while the remaining went to Keffa”. According to him, the Waytos that went to Keffa is still known by their father’s name Watta (who is believed to have been the father of the Watta hunters among the Oromo), while those around Lake Tana changed from Watta to the present name—“Wayto” (cited in Solomon, 2006 & Zelalem, 1986).

On the other hand, Zelalem (1986) believes that the Waytos’ craft such as the use of papyrus to make boats and their habit of eating tender roots of papyrus relate them with Egyptians. This is because, as he stated, be it boat making with papyrus or using it for preparing writing material was first discovered in Egypt. In line with this, Zelalem further asserts that:

The roots of the papyrus were dried and used for fuel; its stalks were used for thatching and for making light rafts. In times of scarcity, its tender shoots supplied food. Thus, the papyrus serves of greater

importance to Egyptian life and this is true for the current Wayto who are highly dependent upon papyrus (pp:32).

Generally, it can be said that irrespective of their origin, Wayto community are one of the discriminated groups. They have the lowest social, economic and political status in their region and have no land at all. The study carried out by Solomon in 2006 shows that from the total 419 Wayto households in Bahir Dar town, only 16 households have certified legal urban land, while the rest 403 households are not in a position to possess. Moreover, according to Solomon (2006), there is high illiteracy in the community and from the total Wayto population of Bahir Dar town (1562) in 2006, 13% males and 25% females were illiterates. In a nutshell, it can be safely concluded that Waytos are uneducated, unemployed and largely poor community in Bahir Dar town.

1.2 Rationale for the Study

There have been few studies concerning women in Ethiopia, but many observers have commented on the hardships that Ethiopian women experience throughout their lives. Women have suffered from socio-cultural and economic discriminations and have had fewer opportunities than men for personal growth, education, and employment. Although women comprise more than half of the population in Ethiopia; they are under the control and influence of men. However, most of the women are unaware of their conditions. Unaware that they are oppressed by their own men. Adding insult to injury, they had and still have fewer opportunities to express themselves to others. Scholars in the past were not as such interested to conduct studies either on women or on the activities they carry out. Consequently, there had been only few studies regarding women as a subject. Under these few studies too, women were seen as dependents of men, and their proper places were put according to the dependency rations (Alem, 2007). From this, it is possible to understand that men researchers used to perceive women as basically irrelevant to any important socio-economic process (unless it was on issues of child care or family planning which is obviously the concern of women).

Even in cases, where researchers had been women, they themselves did not study issues concerning women, partly because they were trained by male mentors. As a result, there exists limited quantity of research on women and their concerns. For this reason, women

have been denied from knowing their real life instead they have been bounded to see the world through the eyes of male.

The case is also true for women in Wayto community. There are no deep investigations carried out on this community as a whole except Tekelehaimanot's and Zelalem's masterworks done many years ago from historical and anthropological perspectives respectively and these studies were conducted from men's perspectives. Even today, where more information about women has become available, we find little about Wayto women's experiences and points of view.

However, thinking that the course of social events has been directed solely by men's activities is a distortion of history by itself. Hence, women must rank very high among the neglected themes of Ethiopian studies. Because the more we know about them, the more we identify the barriers they face and the more we formulate ways to reach them. Therefore, it is in-light of the above problems that the study was conducted to give more explanation on the discrimination experienced by Wayto women from feminist perspective.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Ethiopia is one of the developing countries with a population size of 74 million and a growing rate of 2.6% per year. Out of the total population, women constitute an equal half of the population (CSA, 2007). Being one of the developing countries, its people are exposed to all kinds of problems such as poverty, war, disease and illiteracy. In almost all aspects, women are found to be in a worst situation. They suffer from cultural practices, such as forced, arranged or early marriages, FGM, abduction, polygamy and trafficking for sexual purpose (NCTHP, 2005).

Discrimination against women is not area specific and could be found in any corner of the country and this is demonstrated in most cultures of Ethiopia which reflect the secondary status of women. The Hammer society of southern Ethiopia could be cited as an example in this respect.

When the wife made coffee, she will first serve into her husband's gourd bowl, which she keeps by her side while serving coffee to the guests coming home. Once her husband's coffee has cooled enough, she offers

the bowl to him with her right hand, lowering her head and body in a submissive pose. Her husband does not look at her directly. The wife does not drink coffee before the husband begins to drink. Rather she feed her infant (Lydall cited in Widlock & Tadesse, 2005:152).

Similarly, in Gurage zone unless a woman performs cleansing rituals after child birth, menstruation, or sexual intercourse, she is considered to be inherently immoral and a constant source of contamination of a man. In the same vein, Kefa men also consider women as weak, sharp-tongue, lazy, and highly dangerous, if she fails to practice the cleansing rituals. This is partly because it is thought that they would infect men during their menstrual period and partly because of the avid sexual desires which rob men of their strength (MWAO, 1998).

Men in ANRS, on the other hand, not only depreciate women's activities but also belittle their character as unpredictable and untrustworthy. Generally, most women are the neglected part of the society in Ethiopia. They have limited access to job opportunities and skills and are exploited through the sexual division of labor (Ibid).

On the other hand, there have been some changes for women in urban areas in that education, health care, and employment opportunities were made available. However, only few women with higher education managed to get professional employment opportunities, while the majority holds low-paying jobs. That is to say, about 40% of employed women in urban areas work in the service sector mainly in hotels, restaurants and bars (Haregewoin *et al.*, 2004).

While men and women have equal rights, in reality, they don't exercise these rights on equal footings. For instance, in ANRS the researcher know that women may have access to land through inheritance based on their kinship or based on state law as citizen, whereas it is taken for granted that men can have control to it anytime. That being the case, when a woman wants to sell her land, she has to do it either through her husband, son or brother. This is also true from the buyer or guarantor's end. Such a practice clearly reveals how women are not enjoying their equal status with men. Women also have fewer employment opportunities than men do. As a result they become the principal victims of poverty. In

2002, According to Haregewoin *et al.* (2004), it was estimated that 45% of the Ethiopian population live in poverty, and the majority of whom were women. Because of the poverty, thousands of women have traveled to the Middle East as industrial, domestic workers and nannies and it becomes media's customary report that these women are abused and even killed.

Similarly, wife beating and marital rape are also pervasive social problems in Ethiopia. The 1995 Constitution of Ethiopia defines the age of consent as 18 for both females and males. Nevertheless, early childhood marriage is common in rural areas of the country. Although it is illegal under the penal code, abduction as a form of marriage is still widely practiced in Oromia and the SNNP regions. In the Afar region, on the other hand, young girls continue to get married too much older men. Adding insult to injury, the majority of these girls also undertake some form of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), which is widely condemned by international health experts as damaging to both physical and psychological health. In the ANRS, there is high prevalence of gender based violence such as FGM and early marriages (NCTHP, 2005).

Women in Wayto community at Bahir Dar town are no exception. They confront many of the aforementioned problems aside to suffering from other troubles for being member of marginalized community.

Regarding there discrimination, Waytos as a whole are considered as outsiders and rejected by their neighbors. Moreover; they are the most impoverished groups in the study area and their impoverishment is attributed to their alienation from the social and economic activities of the larger society in the study area. There is prejudicial and biased attitude by neighbors towards the community which is related to Waytos previous eating habit of meat which is believed to be impure. Therefore; this research focuses on the specific discrimination and coping mechanisms of women in Wayto community.

1.4 Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to explore women's experience of discrimination and their coping mechanisms in Wayto community. More specifically, the study has attempted to:

1. Explore Wayto women's experience of discrimination in the family, socially, and economically.
2. Identify the forms of women's discrimination in the community; and
3. Investigate CBO and/or NGO practices and experiences in solving women's discrimination in the community.

1.5 Research Questions

The major research question that the study attempted to find answer was Do Wayto women feel Discriminated and how do they cope with their day to day experiences? The following specific questions were also addressed in this Thesis.

1. Is there women's discrimination in Wayto Community?
2. What are the forms of discrimination that Wayto women experienced?
3. Are there some CBOs and or NGO solutions used to address Wayto women's issues?

1.6 Significance of the Study

By exploring the problem not only from Wayto women's perspective, but also from their neighbors' women point of view, the research will help in creating a comprehensive knowledge about the subject of the study.

Besides, at this time, efforts are being made to empower women in all spheres of life (social, cultural, economic, political and so forth) and achieve gender equality in Ethiopia. Thus, this research will hopefully give an insight to all interested individuals, organizations, and the general public about the experience of Wayto women's discrimination for possible interventions to liberate them.

Women's discrimination in marginalized communities is the least researched subject in Ethiopia. Familiarity and level of consciousness of the larger society about the existence of such kind of multiple forms of women's discrimination is far below what it should be. This gap remains to be studied further and optimistically, this research will also help in showing this gap and serve as a spring board for future investigations on the same area.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study is conducted on women in Wayto community of Bahir Dar town, Amhara National Regional State. It may not represent the experience of Wayto women outside the town.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

I have noticed some limitations in the course of conducting the current study, particularly on the analysis part I couldn't obtain the views and opinions of some key informants outside the community such as Kebele administrators, religious leaders and NGO representatives. I felt that it would have been better if I have interviewed these individuals and incorporated their views and opinions in the analysis of sources of Wayto women's discrimination.

1.9 Operational Definitions of Terms used

- a) **Economic discrimination:** Denying women the right to have equal access to economic opportunities such as in employment, in market transactions and etc.
- b) **Coping Mechanisms:** a means by which women use to avoid economic, social, and psychological problems and reduce discrimination. It encompasses women's active engagement in activities aimed at generating their confidence in their own capabilities, enhancing their self esteem and improving their status
- c) **Discrimination:** excluding/restricting members of one group from opportunities based solely on Category
- d) **Extended family:** a family consisting of grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, and sometimes close friends
- e) **FGM:** the cutting of female sexual organ (genitalia)
- f) **Marginalization:** Confined to a lower social standing

- g) **Matrilocal:** a residence in which newly married couples live with or near the bride's family
- h) **Neighbors:** a number of persons living near one another or in a particular locality
- I) **Nuclear family:** a family consisting of mother, father and children
- J) **Patriarchy:** is a relationship of power between men and women as well as between women and women
- K) **Patrilocal:** a residence in which newly married couples live with or near the groom's family
- L) **Stereotype:** a commonly held public belief about specific social groups which are not based on objective truth
- M) **Visiting unions:** unmarried couples, sharing sexual relationship but not common residence

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Women's Discrimination

Today, discrimination against women has become a matter of rising concern and there is a movement and revolution to defend and promote issues involving women. Feminism which covers all issues degrading and depriving women of their due in society vis-à-vis male members is one of these movements. However, in an attempt to explain women's discrimination; several feminists have put forward a range of findings and logics that show sources as well as forms of women's discrimination.

Discrimination against women takes many forms such as discrimination based on age , discrimination based on sex and gender , discrimination based on race, color and national origin and discrimination based on physical and mental disability. Many social practices seen as "normal" from a religious or cultural point of view (which may have deep historical roots) leave women out of the economic mainstream. These social practices may have profound economic consequences because they do not allow society to take advantage of the talent inherent in women. Discrimination against women has a myriad of other important consequences, including psychological, sociological, and religious (Berta, 2004). Besides these, other problems that still afflict women are patriarchal oppression, violence, gender discrimination, lack of opportunities, extreme poverty, etc. Therefore, discrimination against women may have different meanings in different contexts but for the sake of this thesis it is defined as treating women differently through prejudice: unfair treatment, usually because of prejudice about age, religion, or gender and excluding or restricting them from opportunities that are available to others.

Coming to Ethiopia, women experience discrimination based on various factors. In the workplace, women not only get low paying but also insecure and unskilled jobs, and their obvious possibility of having equal intellectual capacity is ignored. In the same vein, on

home context, women have to face another shift of housework with little help from their husbands or boyfriends. Worst still, women have to deal with violence such as rape, beating or emotional abuse. Ethiopian women also lack the power to make decision in every aspect of their lives, including having safer relations with men counterparts. In the same fashion, men ignore how their actions affect women as a class. Meaza in her article *“Measuring the Status of Women: A Comparative Overview and the Case of Ethiopia”* indicates that in 2007, 8 % of women in Ethiopia had been married by abduction and only 15% women make decision on their own health care. Generally, Ethiopian women suffer from injustice and discrimination be it within the family, employment, education or access to professional training etc.

2.2 Role and Status of Women in Ethiopia

2.2.1 Role of Women in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, each form of labor is exclusively masculine or feminine; meaning, there is gender division of labor between men and women. However, looking at the question of who does what at home or outside, we find women doing multiple tasks/roles. There are also different perceptions of women’s and men’s role by the society. That is to say, the man is seen as head of the household and chief bread winner, while the woman is seen as nurturer and care giver. Besides, some tasks are allocated predominantly or exclusively to women and others to men. Forbes description shows the case more vividly “No man in Ethiopia being even on the verge of starvation could be induced to grind grain into flour between the mill stones employed by his mother or wife. The woman prepares all forms of foods and drinks” (cited in Crummery, 1981:35).

The role of women is defined not only by economic and social expectations, but also by the demands of the family. They are expected to feed and nurture their family members including their husbands. They also play a great role in serving as a socialization process (Counihan, 1999; Curtin & Heldke 1992; cited in Elias, 2008). Despite the fact that the role women play vary from place to place and based on socio-economic factors, they fill the multiple roles of both producers and consumers. Hence, it is possible to see the role of women in three categories or “Women’s triple roles” as stated by Indra (2005).

Productive role

According to Indra (2005), productive role of women is broadly defined as a task or activity, which generates an income, and thus has an exchange value, either actual or potential. Although productive role is one area in which both men and women work, they do so unequally. For example, women may pick up the work that men will not do, and this is most visible in cases where both men and women work for wages (wage in this context is defined as the monthly payments in cash or kind made to permanent or temporary or seasonal employees in connection with work done for the organization).

In any way, women's activities are mostly undertaken in what is known as the informal sector (economic activities not recorded by the state). Related to this, Tiruwork and Hanna (2007) in their article "*Gender Mainstreaming and the National Action Plan on Gender Equality*" indicate that Ethiopian women are poor often lacking productive assets. They further state that women's employment in industries and civil service is lower than men. It is also obvious that women lack exposures to the business world, and also their chances for employment is low compared to male applicants. For this and many other reasons, women are largely involved in the informal sector, representing more than 60% of the total population.

Nevertheless, the ancient history of human civilization has revealed that women were the first agriculturalists, who discovered the means of planting crops in the homestead. This traditional responsibility has remained so for generations, and women still undertake various agricultural activities in many agrarian countries. In light of this fact, several literatures have begun to explain the dominant role of women in the sector; for example, Getaneh (2004) has found out that in Dorze of the Gamo highland communities, men dominate weaving, while women dominate farm activities. Similarly, Melesse (1994) has found out that in Agro-pastoralist societies like Tsemako, women are the dominant actors in agriculture, whilst men are preoccupied with herding of cattle (cited in Anteneh, 2008:21).

It is stated by CSA of Ethiopia that historically agriculture is the main stay of the Ethiopian economy, serving as a source of food, employment, foreign exchange and raw material for

industries. It accounts the lion share of the country's GDP and absorbs the largest labor force. About 85% of the total population in Ethiopia live in rural area and largely depend on the agricultural sector in one way or another. It is estimated that women constitute 47.7% out of the total rural population. Ethiopian rural women, like their counter parts in many developing countries, are engaged in dual roles i.e. inside home and outside. Rural Ethiopian women are the first to get up in the early morning in order to clean the house, prepare meal for their husbands and children, and leave for fields. Describing how women work in the field, Levine stated that "all the peasant women in Ethiopia work a lot as hard as that of a slave in agriculture" (Ibid).

Women contribute substantially to the family budget through income generating activities. In farming communities, for instance, in addition to working on their husbands' farm as mentioned above, women usually have their own piece of land on which they grow vegetables for feeding the family. Here, women sell the extra produced items and spend the money they earn on household goods such as salt, sugar, oil etc.

Likewise, in urban centers also women are engaged in petty trading such as making and selling *Enjera*, Bread, *Tella* etc. Various studies conducted in Addis Ababa show that women sell various products which include vegetables, fruits, *Enjera*, bread, charcoal, firewood, traditional drinks, second hand clothes and shoes, handicrafts and goods such as sugar and salt (Haregewoin et al., 2004). From this, it can be understood that women are playing significant productive role in the country.

Reproductive Role

The reproductive role, as stated by Indra (2005), comprises the child bearing/rearing responsibilities and other domestic tasks undertaken by women such as preparing food, cleaning the house, fetching water, gathering firewood, milking and maintaining shelter. Reproductive roles are very necessary for livelihood but as Indra (2005) stated, they are regularly considered to be the 'exclusive responsibility' of women, and thus men don't have a clearly defined reproductive role.

Women in Ethiopia are exclusively responsible for domestic work like cooking and looking after the children. In farming communities, women in addition to their field work with men,

as stated in their productive role above, they nurse the small children they take with them in the field. They also collect fuel woods, and if necessary, potable water on their way back home. After all these, they cook the evening meal, care for the children and tend to the animals. Unlike women, when men finish work, be it from the farm or factory and return home, they consider that they are tired and hence, they would like to rest whether this takes the form of sleeping, drinking with other men or watching television. The fact that women take care of such activities create burden on them, while giving the necessary condition for men to be involved in creative activities that are self-enhancing, more relaxing and materially rewarding. In line with this, a woman was quoted in Berger & Daphne (1991:15) telling how hard it was to be a full partner in the field and still have sole responsibility for the house when she says “this is what was so hard, you know. You’d both be out working together, and he’d come in and sit down, and I would have to hustle a meal together, you know. And that is typical”. Correspondingly, the old English couplet as cited in UN Book” *Women Challenges to the Year 2000* (1991:7) describe the case as” For men’s work ends at setting sun, yet women’s work is never done”.

In a nutshell, it can be said that reproductive roles make women subordinate because in the first place they are unpaid; second it restricts women’s movements which further creates low self esteem, over commitment to family responsibilities and dependency on family members.

Community Role

According to Indra (2005), community role includes the type of activities required to hold social and cultural events. In Ethiopian context, according to many literatures, participating in activities such as *Eddir*, *Equib*, *Debo*, Wedding, Funeral as well as religious feasts fall under this category and Ethiopian women have been involved in almost all activities in their community.

Traditionally, according to Alem (2007), Ethiopian women have used their skills as mothers, wives, homemakers, producers and agents of culture and customs to influence their society in many ways. For instance, during the period of struggle to free Ethiopia from foreign invasion, women played a great role in initiating the public, preparing food, treating

the wounded and directly participating in the fighting. As Alem indicated in her book “**ጽኑዎቹ የኢትዮጵያ ሴቶች**” “women have also great role in peace-keeping. For example, girls in Arsi-Oromo society use the thin stick known as “Shenke”, which is given during their marriage to solve conflicts between individuals. When a girl with the stick sees some thing nasty on a woman or conflict among individuals, she puts the stick amidst of the quarrels, as a result of which both parties would put down their stick and get into harmony.

Similarly, when girls in Sidama society recognize that there would be conflict between ethnic groups, they tie their girdle together, seize its edge and stand at the road. In doing so, they would manage to prevent any conflict from happening, since men would return home leaving the conflict (Ibid). In Amhara and Tigray communities, on the other hand, girls are used to bring powerful families together to increase their property. To this end, Chapman (2004) said that “Girls provide both lineage and property, and therefore power and social status”. Furthermore, as indicated in Panos Ethiopia (2005), women make up at least half the voting population and there are noticeable achievements in the participation of women, particularly in the parliament. In 2000 Ethiopian election, the number of women in parliament was 49, while for men it was 612; but in 2005 election the number of women increased to 138 while there were 504 men.

Meaza (2008) also said that women’s collective activities in directly addressing issues such as violence against women; women’s political participation; the removal of discriminatory laws and condemning harmful traditional practices like female genital mutilation, abduction and early marriage; providing training programs and experience sharing forums, assisting women to develop their leadership skills and participate in the democratization process is a manifestation of women’s community role.

2. 2.2 Status of Women in Ethiopia

The status of women in Ethiopia is a complex matter involving the interrelated factors making up the whole of women’s lives. According to Amsalu (1996), the status of women is often described in terms of the level of women’s income, employment, education, health, fertility and the roles played within the family and community compared with

those of men. It also involves how these roles are perceived or valued by the society. Furthermore, women's status indicates power, autonomy, prestige and ideological dimension.

Many review literatures in Ethiopia, including Hargewoin, Original, Rahel and Yigremew (2004); and Habtamu, Hirut, Yesuf and Konjet (2004) depict that Ethiopian women have low status than men in every aspect. This is also true from religious point of view. For instance, in the Bible wives are ordered to be obedient "Wives submit yourself unto your own husbands, as unto the lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church" (Ephesians, 5:25; cited in Chapman, 2004:37).

That being so, the attitude of the society towards women in Ethiopia is so worst that it degrades their humanity. There is analogy that goes "mules and women will betray you". Generally, there is a tendency to see women as weak (both mentally and physically), helpless, submissive, obedient and respectful of their husbands. In view of this, Amdeberhan in his article "*Gender Equality Status of Ethiopia in the Global Context*" says that although women are half of the population of Ethiopia, they live in a male dominated world (Patriarchal system), where gender power relations are clearly in favor of men (2007).

In Ethiopia, a woman is expected to marry soon after puberty (the appearance of secondary sex characteristics such as menstruation and pubic hair). She is expected to be provided for her companion, as there has been a belief that the only source of women's economic security is to find a spouse. Although education is a means for entering highly-paid jobs in the formal sector, it is considered more important for boys than girls. It is thought that "boys" education is an investment, while for girls it is undesirable as it would spoil them. In general, the man being the bread winner is perceived to be the financial supporter, with all other members defined as 'dependents'. This is the case in both rural and urban contexts; women are only counted as heads when it becomes impossible to list the oldest male present, be it the grandfather or grandson.

Women, as care givers, commit themselves to family affairs; if they do not uphold these standards, they will probably be categorized as deviants; a bad mother or an irresponsible

daughter. In line with this, Amdeberhan (2005) asserts that “men are the oppressors of women and society is also an oppressive patriarchy or oppresses women”. Similarly Kate Millett, a radical feminist in her book “*Sexual Politics*” also argue that in all known societies, relationship between the sexes have been based on power and this power takes the form of male domination over women in all areas of life. Thus, at all times, at the apex of the hierarchy are men who are the unmoved movers (cited in Bryson 2003).

In Ethiopia, women’s position is still inferior to that of men in that women are not free even to make decisions be it for themselves or for the family. They are socialized to respect and honor the specific religious and cultural roles assigned to them as supreme requirements. There are gender taboos reinforced by culture, religion, custom and tradition, which somehow justify the subordination of women and the violence perpetrated against them. For example, in Amhara and Tigrayan psyche, there is a well known taboo that describes a divorced woman as “Fett”, which has negative and serious implication on her.

There are also other abusive and degrading proverbs that display the inferior status of women. These include: “a woman’s country, her husband; her livelihood, her good manner. Women to the kitchen and men to the court” to tell women confine themselves in the domestic sphere than the public one. Women are not only restricted and degraded by abusive proverbs and taboos but also they lack access to and control of resources. In general, Women in Ethiopia suffer from poverty, violence and inequality.

Though it is difficult to generalize about women’s status as they are not homogeneous group, it is possible to outline the general shape of their living conditions; Ethiopian women share the work load. According to Habtamu *et al.* (2004); Alasebu (1988); Amsalu (1996); Irene &Joan (1988) findings, women in Ethiopia wherever they live, they are bound together by the common fact of their tremendous work burden. Women not only perform physically heavier work, but also work longer hours than men. They work an average of 13-18 hours a day, while men normally work less (Amsalu, 1996).

Despite the fact that there have been some prominent women in Ethiopian politics and it could be said that “in Ethiopia it was considered quite natural that a woman should have held supreme power”, the majority of Ethiopian women live in a different world than men in terms of influence, choices and opportunities. Women’s decision making power is still low; many women in Ethiopia have no choice of which they will marry, when they will begin to bear children or how large their families will be (Panos Ethiopia, 2005). By the same token, women’s education is lagging behind and this is more visible as one goes up higher on the educational ladder. According to NCTPE, in 2007, the literacy rate of women in Ethiopia was 34%, while for men it was 49%. In secondary education, females had constituted 22% and males 31%; whereas in tertiary education, it was 1% for females and 4% for males.

On the other hand, the socio-economic status of Ethiopian women ranked 141 from 143 countries women in the world (Hargewoin et al., 2004). As Abay (2007) indicated, harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, early marriage, and abduction are still pervasive social problems, though some are on the decline. It is true that both men and women are victims as well as promoters of harmful practices, as they are both products of the same culture. However, women’s share of victimization is much greater.

Similarly, early marriage for girls is not uncommon in Ethiopia, particularly in rural northern part where “7-8 years of age girls are forced to get married. The general prevalent rate of girls’ early marriage in Ethiopia is 57 % (MOH, 1996; UN, 1995 cited in NCTPE, 2005). In Ethiopia, 12 % of married women are polygamous; for instance, in Gambella region the prevalence of polygamy is 27% (DHS, 2005 cited in Abay, 2007:33).

There are socially constructed beliefs about men and women that play an important role in determining the perception of the society towards women and the way women perceive themselves. In Ethiopia, every woman grows up knowing that it is the woman who cooks the meal and generally sees to it that the house is clean and well-kept, and that every thing is in its proper place. Whatever her level of education or professional status is, she does not normally expect her husband to share the household chores with her. If the husband

enjoys cooking and chooses to cook breakfast or dinner one day, she appreciates the fact that he is being helpful, but she does not expect him to do so as a matter of course. Related to this, Dolphyne (1991) has found out that husbands who, when they were living with their wives in Europe or America, willingly did the washing up, put an end to that as soon as they return to Ethiopia. The wives do not normally protest because they know their society does not expect a man to do such chores, and they will, therefore, not receive a sympathetic hearing even from their own relations, if they complained.

Girls are usually guided into what are considered female occupations such as typing, secretary ship, catering, dress making, hairdressing and so on. In world economic forum's gender gap index, it has been found that only 33 % of female employment is found in the formal sector which is mainly engaged in clerical and fiscal administrative positions earning less than Birr 350.00 per month. Moreover, only 28% of professional positions are occupied by women compared to 72% that of men (Amdeberhan, 2007).

2.3. Role and Status of Women in Amhara Region

2.3.1. Role of Women in Amhara Region

According to Anteneh (2008), there is gender based division of labor in the long existed Amhara tradition. Women bake Enjera, pulverize corns, fetch water, etc. and men plough, hunt, slaughter, etc. Alike the national women's role, we can see the role of Amhara women in three aspect

Productive Role

Habtam, Yesuf and Hirut (2004) stated that the economy of the Amhara National Regional State, like the economy of the federal state, is dominated by agriculture, and also the activities performed by women in the region are similar to the pattern emerging from the national picture.

Similarly, Anteneh (2008) has found that 45.6% of women in Amhara region are engaged in agriculture related activities, and the time and labor input of female farmers in crop

production is 50% while their role in livestock production is 48%. Moreover, 4.3% women engage in pastoral work; 7.2% in handicrafts and 12.1% of them in private trade. Aside to this, there are areas in the region where women are seen ploughing. For instance, in Awura Amba community of Amhara region, the researcher observed women engaging in ploughing and weaving, while males in baking Enjera and spinning cotton.

Frank and Yaekob (1999) also stated that women in Amhara region are also engaged in sowing, weeding, manuring, cutting, threshing, collecting, transporting, scaring of birds, seed cleaning, herding, watering, supplying fodder, milking and milk processing. In addition, it is the women who prepare a flat ground called “Awudma” by cementing the ground using cow dung in order to secure the quality of the grain. In grain storing, women transport grain from field to home by carrying on their back (cited in Anteneh, 2008).

According to Anteneh, grain marketing is one of the back breaking works of women in Amhara region. Since market is a very important place for the exchange of goods, women visit the market at least once in a week and their work of marketing is very difficult. Women have to carry all the items they sell and buy on their backs. It is quite exceptional to find a man carrying any thing on his back; however, when men have to transport something to the market they usually do it by animal, a donkey or a mule. Though there does not exist a clear cut sexual division for the type of marketing goods, men usually sell goods that bring in a higher income such as grains of ‘*Akumada*’ (sack); whereas women are expected to transport a ‘*colella*’ (small basket) of grain. In addition, women predominate in the transaction of items of relatively low value like egg, milk and milk products, vegetables and fruits. With regard to this, Adanech (1991) documents that women in Amhara region brew “*Tella*” or “*Arakie*” (home made alcohol), twine baskets or weave cotton and garden “*Gesho*” (a plant which is used to prepare *Tella*) in order to have additional income to cover expenditures for household and/or personal consumption.

Reproductive Role

Indra (2005) states that reproductive role includes women’s roles and responsibilities in the family such as bearing and nurturing of children, cooking, cleaning, washing, caring for the sick and the elderly. Indra further states that women are principally identified in

relation to these roles, which is also true for women in Amhara region. By virtue of being born and grown up in Amhara community, the researcher would like to indicate that husbands are not culturally allowed to enter into “*Guada*” (backroom) and the kitchen, which are considered to be the territory of wives. Women do not allow their husbands to get into these territories, believing that this makes men “womanish”. A typical Amhara man is supposed to show his masculinity, his strength. If a man goes into the kitchen to cook, that would be the most incredible and in some cases shocking thing to happen. A typical man can not even go into the kitchen quarters, let alone cook, make tea or coffee.

According to Anteneh (2008) and Solomon (2005), taking care of children in Amhara region is assigned to women. There are particular cases in some communities like in Awura Amba community, whereby there is no clear division of responsibility between men and women. But this can not show the general picture of the region. Though there are tasks such as going to milling house and collecting firewood, where there is no clear division of labor, almost all reproductive activities are done by women alike the national one.

Community Role

As indicated previously, Indra (2005) defines Community role as inclusive of roles and responsibilities in the community such as maintaining kinship relations; religious activities; social interactions and ceremonies. From the researcher’s life experiences, women in Amhara region have been engaging in all of these activities. They participate in religious based associations like “*Mahber*” and “*Senbete*”; they attend wedding and funeral ceremonies; they participate in “*Debo*” (the most widespread social welfare association in rural areas).

In rural areas, if a farmer is having difficulty tending his/her fields, he/she may invite his/her neighbors, relatives or friends to help him/her on a specific date. In return, the farmer must provide food and drink for the day and contribute his/her labor when others in the same *Debo* require help. *Debo* is not restricted to agriculture only, but it is also prevalent in housing construction. The researcher knows that in Amhara region specifically in rural areas after a house is constructed from wattle, it has to be covered by mud. Digging the ground and preparing soil for mud is the responsibility of men. Women on the other

hand fetch water that would help to prepare the mud. After the preparation of the mud women carry it on their back using “*colella*” while men throw the mud and cover the house. When both men and women finish their task, men take a seat and drink “*Tela*” while women begin to prepare food, serve to the men and return to their home early in order to prepare dinner for their family members.

Furthermore, Amhara women had fought for the freedom of their country whenever foreign invasion arose. In line with this, Zenebework (1969) explained that “It was a tradition for Ethiopian women to fight side by side with the soldiers, and many young women of high birth and girls of the Amhara bourgeoisie played an active part in the resistance during Ethiopian –Italian war”.

2.3.2 Status of Women in Amhara Region

Many literatures and research findings show that Amhara women have equal status with men. For instance, a study carried out by Habtamu *et al.* (2004) takes public appearance as one of the indicators of women’s social status and rights and concludes that “in Amhara region women are allowed to speak in public and thus have equal social status with men” (PP.27) .

Similarly, Crummey (1981) has stated that Amhara women enjoy considerable property and inheritance rights. He further states that the “rist” system, which is open to women of all classes in Amhara and Tigray regions, keeps women from a wholly subordinate position. With regard to the ownership of land and moveable property and the right to institute divorce, Solomon (2005) said “the wife in Amhara region is very much the equal of her husband as their marriage is based on equal matching”.

Correspondingly, when we see the gender gap in primary education, as indicated by the Ministry of Education, there is almost no disparity among men and women in Amhara region compared to other regions. In the academic year of 2003/4, in Amhara region male were 54.6% and female 53.1%. In Afar region: male 12.6% and female 9.0%; Oromia region: 70.0% male and 54.4% female; Tigray region: 63.6% female and 68.7% male; Somali region: 14.8% males and 7.8% female; Addis Ababa city: 90.3% male and 97.6% female (MOE, 2007).

In spite of Amhara women's enjoyment in access to property rights as mentioned above, one has to take the class and other distinctions into consideration before making generalizations. There might be common things that women in the region share but the position of rural women can not be the same with that of the urban one and the same is true for the educated with that of the uneducated and the haves with the have-nots. To this, Salome as cited in Crummey (1981) said "the position of the peasant women in Amhara region was one of subordination. A woman was always treated as an inferior and always expected to act as a subordinate (PP.287)".

Similarly, Berhanu (2008) has found out that marriage in Amhara region is still dictated by customs and traditions. Young women, except few urbanities, are not free to marry the person of their choice. It is only the boys who are given the right to choose their partners. In the same way, Solomon (2005) has found out that in Amhara region women can not be the head of the household in the presence of the husband. From these all, one can understand that the status of women in Amhara region is not the same.

2.4 Women's Traditional Associations and Organizations as Coping Mechanisms

2.4.1 Women's Traditional Associations

Ethiopians prefer associative living to private one in almost all spheres of life. According to Greer McIver and Page (1962), an "association is likely to be formed when people have common interests and are in need of solving problem or getting promotion through collective action" (cited in Elias , 2008: 20).

Explaining how cooperative associations are created, Hailu (1995) noted that the need to organize and take action usually arises from experiencing an actual problem or from imagining the potential threat of adverse effects of impending disaster. Thus, felt need creates necessary for the community to get organized (Ibid).

Literatures indicate that Ethiopia is endowed with many types of and forms of traditional associations including *Debo*, *Wobera*, *Senbete*, *Wonfel*, *Eddir*, *Mahber*, *Equib*, etc. Accordingly, Ethiopian women have been organizing themselves in different forms to

fulfill their various needs. There have been traditional associations through which women tried to help each other in times of social and economic difficulties. According to Pankhurst and Endreas (1958), some of the most important women's traditional associations in the present day Ethiopia include *Eddir*, *Equib*, and *Wobera*.

Eddir

Eddir is believed to have been first practiced among the Gurage, one of the ethnic groups in southern Ethiopia (*Ibid*). It has become popular at the times of Italian invasion; when life became disorganized and large numbers of people were killed leaving no relative to bury them.

Mauri (1987) defines Eddir as: "An association made up by a group of persons united by ties of family and friendship, by living in the same district, by jobs, or by belonging to the same ethnic group, and has an object of providing mutual aid and financial assistance in certain circumstances(cited in Elias, 2008:15)".

Similarly, Dejen said that Eddir is a sort of "insurance programme" run by a community or a group to meet emergency situations. Dejen further said that women do not have the economic resources to invest in their home and a number of women borrow money from Eddir when they experience a shock (*Ibid*). Therefore, Eddir are serving as effective mechanism for women coping with economic deprivation. Moreover, according to Pankhurst and Endreas (1958), Eddir are used as important forum for women to discuss about marriage and the family, health, culture, religion, market situation, improved household technologies, local politics and etc.

Eddir give emotional support for women during hardships (emotional support refers to the comfort, caring and psychological reinforcement). It protects women from feeling of loneliness and gives them a sense of belonging. Eddir help women to fight common problems even when their educational level and economic status are not entirely the same.

Equib

According to Desalegn, *Equib* which is a form of voluntary association is originated among the Guraghe people of southern Ethiopia. Women with single cow among the Sebat bet Gurage (the seven houses of Gurage) join together to combine their milk and have enough milk to make butter. In this way, *Equib* was originated and latter disseminated to other societies. Today it is possible to generalize that *Equib* is common in every Ethiopian town as well as countryside (2007).

Equib may contain only few to hundreds of people; the members contribute money on a regular basis and a lot is drawn to decide who to get the kitty. The lucky winner who receives the money first is not eligible to receive the money in the second round instead others will receive it. *Equib* serves as effective mechanism for coping with economic deprivation (Ibid).

Wobera

Wobera, according to Desalegn (2007), is a labor group mainly among women. Women come in groups to do errands such as farm work, threshing and cotton spinning, and to prepare for wedding and other feasts. The members come in specific period of time, like once a week in each member's house or farm to work in turn or help one of the members of *Wobera* in a special event. A group of *Wobera* may contain as many as two dozens of women. There may be several *Wobera* groupings in a given community. Similarly, IIRR (2003:33-39) (as cited in Desalegn, 2007:23) says "women through out Ethiopia have known *Wobera* for hundreds of years". This literature suggests that *Wobera* is one mechanism of women to help each other cope up with life challenges.

2.4.2 Women's Organizations

According to Meaza (2008), Voluntary Organizations and Social and Economic Self Help Groups have existed in Ethiopia for a long time; and so Ethiopian women have been organizing themselves in different forms. However, more advanced organizations with a large public interest, such as the Ethiopian Voluntary Women's Associations (EVWA) came into existence in the 1930's.

Currently, various women's organizations based on profession, common goal or interests are formed in different areas. There are women's networks, action groups; cooperative associations and other sodalities that serve as pressure groups. These organizations voice for women's interests and initiate them to fight for their rights. For instance, women's professional associations such as: Women's Health Association, Women Lawyer's Association, Media Women's Association, Women Educationalist Association, The Ethiopian Women Entrepreneurs Association, The Ethiopian Midwives Association and the National Association for the Handicapped Women are concerned in addressing the specific needs of women.

The organizations in question organize seminars and workshops to educate women on certain issues such as laws affecting women, managing a small business, careers available to them, problems of working women and so forth. The grass roots women have also formed associations to have access to credit, self employment or to create various activities that are productive and beneficiary. They also look for sources of fund and have projects that improve their lives and satisfy their basic necessities.

By and large, Women's Organizations in Ethiopia bring out issues where women are disadvantaged in order to find solutions. They work in collaboration with other similar organizations in and outside the country. They promote Women's capacity by providing training programs and experience sharing forums.

2.5. Women's Right and International Instruments Ratified by Ethiopia

2.5.1 Women's Right

The term women's right can be defined as “freedoms and entitlements of women and girls of all ages”. Women's right often differs from the freedoms inherently possessed by or recognized for men and boys. Issues commonly associated with notions of women's rights include, though are not limited to, the right: to bodily integrity and autonomy; to vote; to hold public office; to work; to fair wages or equal pay; to own property; to education; to enter into legal contracts; and to have marital, parental and religious rights (Davis, 2008: 69).

Reproductive rights though understood as rights of both men and women, are most frequently advanced as women's rights. Reproductive right may include some or all of the following rights: the right to legal or safe abortion, the right to control one's reproductive functions, the right to access quality reproductive healthcare, and the right to education and access in order to make reproductive choices free from coercion, discrimination, and violence (Ibid).

2.5.1.1 Women and the National Constitution

According to the Ethiopian Federal Negarit Gazette, the Ethiopian Constitution was adopted on the 21st of August 1995 as the law of the country. The Constitution provides for a comprehensive catalogue of Human and Democratic Rights under chapter 3, including the Rights of Women as guaranteed under article 34 and 35.

In addition, articles 7, 33, 38, 42 and 89 of the Constitution have a direct bearing on the protection of the Rights of Ethiopian women. The other laudable and special feature of the Constitution is the importance it attaches to the protection of Human Rights, including the rights of women. As indicated in Article 25, the Constitution guarantees all persons' equality before the law, and prohibits any discrimination on grounds of sex. In addition, Article 35 clearly stipulates the Rights of Women as "women shall, in the enjoyment of rights and protections provided for this Constitution, have equal rights with men".

The Constitution also recognizes the history of inequality and discrimination suffered by women in Ethiopia and offers remedial and affirmative measures. Women are entitled to compete and participate on the basis of equality with men in political, economic and social life. Women have as well the right to protection by the state from harmful customs and practices that press them or cause bodily or mental harm. They have equal right to employment, promotion and transfer of pension.

With regard to women's access to and control over productive resources including access to farm land, the Constitution states that "women shall acquire, administer, control, use and transfer property". Article 3 of the Constitution on the other hand, provides equal opportunity for women to participate in the decision making process by giving them the

right to vote and be elected. Concerning maternity leave, the Constitution also affirms that maternity leave will be provided with full pay and the duration is determined taking into account the nature of the work, the health of the mother and the well being of the child and family.

In a nutshell, the FDRE Constitution has devoted 21 of its 106 articles to human and democratic rights, articulating a detailed and comprehensive list of fundamental rights and freedoms for individuals and groups. Among the major rights guaranteed in the Constitution are Civil Rights, such as the Right to Life, Liberty and Property (Art.14, 15, 17, 40); Criminal Justice Rights (Art.19-23), Right of access to Justice (Art.38); Freedom of Religion, Expression, Association and Movement (art.29-32); Political Rights, such as Rights of Nationality (Art.33) and Right to Elect and to be Elected for Government Office (Art.38); Economic and Social rights, such as Rights to Health, Education and Social Security, Labor and Cultural Rights (Art.40-42).

The Constitution also guarantees the rights of disadvantaged groups, such as women, children and pastoralists under Art.34-36, 39, 41 and 43. Most of these rights have significant implication for women in terms of ensuring their equal exercise of and benefit from these rights and freedoms.

2.5.2 International Instruments Ratified by Ethiopia that have Direct Bearing on Women

Gender equality among others involves signing and ratifying International Treaties. To this end, the Ethiopian government has signed and ratified many Regional and International Instruments that promote and protect the rights of women. Among these international conventions signed by Ethiopia, some are: The Optional Protocol to CEDAW; The Convention on Consent to Marriages; The Convention on the Political Rights of Women; The Convention for the Suppression of Trafficking in Persons; The Convention on Discrimination in Employment; and the International Labour Organization's equal Remuneration Convention. At the Regional level Ethiopia is signatory to African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women (Panos Ethiopia, 2004).

Furthermore, in order to domesticate these ratified International Conventions and Instruments, the 1995 Constitution provides in article 9 (4) that "All International Agreements ratified by Ethiopia are an integral part of the law of the land." It also provides that "the Fundamental Rights and Freedoms enshrined in the Constitution are to be interpreted in conformity with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenants on Human Rights and with the principles of other relevant International Instruments, which Ethiopia has accepted or ratified" (Art.13 (2)) (FDRE, 1995). The following are some of the main International and Regional Instruments that were made the integral part of the Constitution and laws in the country:

A) The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

In 1979, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Ethiopia ratified it in September 1981 (Panos Ethiopia,2004). CEDAW is often described as an International Bill of Rights for Women. The Convention defines discrimination against women in the following terms:

Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field (Mahmoud,2005:80); (Panos Ethiopia ,2004: 21).

The Convention also establishes an agenda of action for putting an end to sex-based discrimination for which states ratifying the convention are required to enshrine gender equality into their domestic legislation, repeal all discriminatory provisions in their laws, and enact new provisions to guard discrimination against women. Most important article of the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women states that: State parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right

- i. To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies.
- ii. To participate in the formation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government; and
- iii. To participate in non governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country. Moreover, article 10, 11, 13, and 14 of the convention confer on the states parties the duty to ensure to women international representation of their government, non discriminatory educational attainment, employment and career development; family and financial benefits, and effective rural development (Mahmoud, 2005).

B). The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Right on the Rights of Women

The draft protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa was prepared in September 2000 Hargewoin et al. (2004). This protocol stipulates that parties shall combat all forms of discrimination against women through appropriate legislative measures. Article 2 of this draft protocol contains such important provisions as "the elimination of harmful traditional practices, and all other forms of intolerance".

The Protocol which is better known as the Maputo Protocol was adopted by the African Union on 11 July 2003 at its second summit in Maputo, Mozambique. The protocol guarantees comprehensive rights to women including the right to take part in the political process, to social and political equality with men, and to control of their reproductive health, and an end to female genital mutilation. The Ethiopian government has signed the Protocol in June 2004 (Panos Ethiopia, 2004).

2.6 Background to the Wayto Community

2.6.1 Geographical History of Wayto Community

Waytos had no spaces to construct their huts, as a result they were forced to move every time. According to Tekelehaimanot (1984), the bank of the Tana lake area known as “Bahir Slash” was their earlier holding. They were settled in the area and used to cultivate it, but they had only the right to use it. Be that as it may, as farm land became scares, they were forced to dispose it. To this, Tekelehaimanot describes it in the following manner:

All the lands in the Wayto area were virtually claimed by the Amhara who said they were decedents of the pioneering fathers. The pioneering father, he who started the settlement by bringing Tabot (an altar stone) on his head, a bell gripped in his teeth and who killed all the wild animals and cleared the bushes (PP.35).

Presently, Waytos in Bahir Dar town are found in bands but in different kebeles. Though their villages are included in the urban master plan, they are still forced to move when the government needs the area for construction.

2.6.2 Social History of Wayto Community

Socially, Waytos are organized in the form of patrilocal and patrilineal bands in which polygamy is also practiced. Dominantly, the band practiced/practices an extended family system with some nuclear forms (Zelalem, 1986). As Zelalem stated, Waytos are endogamous groups where there had chances for the same lineage groups to intermarry.

On the other hand, Tekelehaimanot (1984) stated that Waytos ecological attachment to the lake region acquainted them with the aquatic birds and animals as their main source of food supply. Hippopotamus, among the different animals available, occupy an important place. According to the same author, hunting profession had a determinant role in the social life of the whole community in general and the male members in particular. He affirmed that the greatest mark of prestige among the Waytos was the killing of hippopotamus. With out such a kill, a male would be chided at public discussions as being no better than a woman. According to Gamst (1979) & Zelalem (1986), the symbol of manhood in Wayto community was the anointing of the hair with butter, a mark of distinction allowed only

after the killing of one's first hippopotamus. Hippo killing was also used as a sign of prestige. Therefore, a man who was successful in killing could take the bride as his own kins and his bride's kins would be proud of him. On the other hand, the man who fails to kill a hippo was insulted by the local songs of women. Consequently, this man will try again and again to kill and to achieve his prestige. If he succeeds finally, then he will profoundly boast by singing “ያልገደለ አልወድም ስትይ ሰምቼ ሞቼልሽ ነበረ ከመንጋው ገብቼ” meaning “I heard that you hate a coward so I almost committed suicide by jumping into the middle of a hippo crowd” (Tekelehaimanot, 1984:35).

As Tekelehaimanot stated, the unsuccessful male usually tried several times in order to save himself from public chidings and humiliations. It was a common thing for the hero to boast that all males were not equal; some were “men” and others women. Here, those who were seen as “men” were those who had killed the hippopotamus. Those who had not killed were treated as if they were less than women and they had to bow their heads down in front of heroes particularly when hunting issues were raised. In the social gatherings and occasional ceremonies, they were accorded the lowest status and recognition among their groups. Songs were instrumental to encourage the “heroes” and at the same time to discourage the looser of the game. Here, women singers are the most important motives of the male members (1984)

2.6.3 Economic History of Wayto Community

Economically, Waytos' living condition is characterized by poverty. Descent practices are less important for Waytos as long as they have nothing to be inherited. According to Tekelehaimanot, Waytos' communal life as a whole until the first half of the 20th c had been on the hunting profession.

Regarding the hunting profession, Richard Pankhurst also wrote that Hippopotamus was killed to fulfill the social and economic needs of the band. Pankhurst said that before the coming of the Italians, hippo killing was the best economic source of the community. Hippos' teeth, skin and tusk brought by Wayto hunters were highly demanded in Northern markets (Gondar), thus hippo killing had maintained Waytos' subsistence (cited in Tekelehaimanot, 1984).

However, as hippo killing was depended on good fortunes and as it becomes extinct on Lake Tana, Waytos economy was supplemented by fishing, craft making and transport by reed boats which latter became no more for Waytos' means of subsistence (Robert E.Cheesman; cited in Gamst 1979). According to Gamst, the advent of boats on the lake and a heavy truck road around it has impeded Waytos' ferrying activity. Besides, as Zelalem stated, "the lower demand of fish caught by Waytos make them to be less dependent on it" (1986).

Currently, papyrus plays a decisive role for the economic life of Wayto community. Waytos make fence covers from papyrus plant; they sell mats and also use it for house roofs purpose (Zelalem, 1986).

2.6.4 Political History of Wayto Community

According to Dowling (1968), Waytos in their community were egalitarian people living in areas where malaria is highly dense. Agriculturally the area is marginal. By the same token administratively, the community was also entirely outside of the state organization (cited in Gamst 1979). This is also true for today's Wayto generation as proved by Solomon's 2006 research findings. Solomon's research reveals that though Waytos are permitted to participate in village level political institutions, such as kebele associations, they never obtained leadership position in these associations.

Previously, as stated by Zelalem (1986), elders in their own community were responsible to take social actions on the deviants of cooperative living. These days however; they are accustomed to refer their cases to Keble or legal courts

2.7 Theoretical Framework

The notion of women's discrimination is central to feminist thinking, but in differentiated manner. The elements which differentiate various feminist positions are: the source of women's discrimination and the strategy they want to use to avoid the discrimination. For multicultural and global feminists race, sexual preference, color and religion by intersecting each other oppresses women. Multicultural feminists promote the value of diversity and insist that all cultural groups be treated with respect and as equals. They say "we should

learn to think of our as consisting not of a majority and minority but of a plurality of cultural groups. We have to cultivate mutual tolerance, respect and knowledge of each others' culture'' (Tong, 1998).

Global feminists, on the other hand, stress “the oppression of women in one part of the world is often affected by what happens in another and that no women are free until the condition of oppression of women are eliminated every where” (Ibid). In addition, Black feminists claim the inseparability of the structures and systems of gender, race and culture. They accept that a distinct woman tend to understand everything about her, such as the color of her skin, the amount of money in her pursue, the condition of her body, the sex of the person(s) with whom she is intimate.

This, however, provides parts of the explanation for her subordinate status, according to Black feminists. Hence, they say there is intersection of racism, sexism, and classism in the lives of black women, and no one of these forms of oppression can be eliminated prior to the elimination of any other.

They further believe that oppression is a many headed beast capable of regenerating any one of the heads temporarily served from its bloated body. They say the whole body of the beast is the appropriate forget for those who wish to end its reign of terror. Their one and only priority is to create a society in which every one is truly equal and where “difference” does not mean “inferior” but instead “unique” (Ibid).

Liberal feminists, on the other hand, see gender stereotyping and devaluation of women, division of labor into women's job and men's job, low pay for women's jobs and women's restricted entry into top positions as the source of women's oppression. Liberal feminists argued that equality for women can be achieved through legal means and social reforms (Yigremew, 2005).

Conversely, Marxist feminists believe that capitalism is the source of women's oppression, due to which they focus on dismantling of capitalism as a way to liberate women. Radical feminists, however, view men as the oppressors of women and they aim to dismantle patriarchal society. Socialist feminists, on the contrary, broaden Marxist feminists'

argument for the role of capitalism in the oppression of women and radical feminists' theory of the role of patriarchy in women's oppression. They agree with both radicals and Marxists in that there is a need to focus on social change and social structure issues as well as individual rights. Like Marxists, they acknowledge the importance of class and gender relations, but they say class and gender relations are intertwined, so that both capitalism and patriarchy are ultimately the cause of women's oppression (Tong, 1998).

Psychoanalysis feminists believe that the source of women's oppression is the social construction of women's psyches as well as biological difference of men and women. They believe that women's less sense of justice, more influenced by emotions, focus on good looks to make up for lack of a penis (which is considered as a symbol of power) are source of women's oppression (Ibid).

In this thesis, though all feminist perspectives listed above are taken to make analysis of the situation of women in Wayto community, the views of feminists who believe on the Interesectionality of various factors for the oppression of women are given more attention.

Interesectionality

Interesectionality refers to the interaction between and intersections of multiple identities, which are produced and reproduced in individuals, institutions and communities. These intersections result in complex and multi-dimensional experiences of, oppression, violence and discrimination (Davis, 2008: 68).

Interesectionality is a theory that seeks to examine the ways in which various socially and culturally constructed categories such as those based on race/ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, class, or disability interact and create multiple forms of women's discrimination (Crenshaw, 1993: 114). From Interesectionality theory what the researcher found important is Collins (2000) assertion that knowing a woman's life in a sexist society is insufficient information to describe her experience; instead, it is also necessary to know her race, sexual orientation, class, religion, age etc, as well as her society's attitude toward each of these memberships. This argument of Collins helps me to see how various factors

such as gender, religion, culture, age, class and poverty interact each other and multiply women's discrimination in Wayto community.

In general, interesectionality also helps the researcher to understand how the interrelationship between productive, reproductive and community roles significantly affects Wayto women's experiences of and treatment in areas such as marriage and education. This in turn shows the researcher that the chief sites and multiplicity of women's discrimination in Ethiopia are not the same

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

Research design is defined as a plan, structure and strategy of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions or problems. It is how a research study is to be completed (Kumar 2005:84).

Hence, the process that the researcher adopts to find answers to my research questions was qualitative method. The choice of this method was made based on the aim of my inquiry.

For a research that needs to explore women's experiences and explain why and how they are discriminated and how they cope with their problem, qualitative research was found appropriate. Moreover, if one needs to study participants in their natural setting, the use of qualitative research is correct. Related to this, Creswell (2007) has said that studying participants in their natural setting is one requirement that has to be fulfilled in undertaking research on women and gender issues.

Similarly, Myers (1997) said that qualitative research is developed in the social sciences to help researchers understand people and the social and cultural contexts within which they live. He further explains that qualitative research also enables the researcher to view events, actions, norms, values etc. from the perspective of the people who are being studied.

According to Creswell, there are five major designs or approaches in qualitative study. These are: phenomenology, ethnography, Grounded theory, case study and narrative. From these five qualitative research designs, ethnographic research design was used in this study.

Ethnographic design as stated by Creswell is a way of studying a culture sharing group and concerned with the discovery and description of the behavior, the language and the interaction among the members of the culture sharing group.

Hence, for the research that explores the discrimination of women and their coping mechanisms within the culture of Wayto community, ethnographic research design specifically critical ethnography is found appropriate research design.

According to Shulamit (1992), critical ethnography is a type of ethnographic research in which the researcher advocates for the emancipation of groups marginalized in Society. In addition, critical ethnographer studies issues of power, empowerment, inequality, inequity, dominancy, repression, hegemony and victimization.

3.2 The Study Area

The Amhara National Regional State covers 170, 152 sq.km and comprises of 15.3% of the Ethiopian territory. Most of the region lies in the central highlands, with highland plateau stretching from North Shewa up to the neighboring Tigray region. The region has 11 administrative zones, 114 Woredas and 3240 kebeles. Bahir Dar is one of the 11 administrative zones (Anteneh, 2008).

Bahir Dar is a city located in the North western part of Ethiopia and the capital of Amhara region. Administratively it is considered as a Special Zone. Bahir Dar is situated on the southern shore of Lake Tana, the source of the Blue Nile (or Abay) river and located approximately 578 km northwest of Addis Ababa. The city has an elevation of 1840 meters above sea level (Fenta, Peter & Michael 2006).

Moreover, Bahir Dar is one of the leading tourist destinations in Ethiopia with a variety of attractions such as the nearby Lake Tana and the Blue Nile River. The city is distinctly known for its wide avenues lined with palm trees and a variety of colorful flowers. It is also considered as one of the most beautiful, well planned, and safest cities by many standards, and in 2002 it was awarded *UNESCO Cities for Peace Prize* for managing to address the challenges of rapid urbanization (*Ibid*)

The total area of Bahir Dar is 16,000 hectares. It is divided into 17 kebeles. The population of Bahir Dar in 2007 was 182,676 of which 93,610 were men and 89,066 were female (CSA, 2007). The population size varies from kebele to kebele. For instance, out of the

total 15,000 people in kebele 16 administrations, at least 6.5% were Wayto members (Solomon, 2006).

Besides, Waytos reside both in Bahir Dar town and rural kebeles of the Amhara region. They also live in South and North Gondar administrative zones. The total population of the community in 2006 according to Solomon was 3232 of which 1615 were male and 1617 were female.

3.3 Participants of the Study and Sampling Procedure

The target population for this study was Wayto women. But there were additional groups (neighboring women) that were included in the study because their views, experiences and so on would bring contrasting or complementary insights to the enquiry.

Once the appropriate study population has been determined, the second key consideration was what the appropriate sample size is. For this reason, 23 women were selected. The sampling technique used to select research participants was non-probability sampling. To this, Ritchie and Lewis (2003) said that qualitative research uses non-probability samples for selecting population for study. The rationale behind this, they assert is that (...the research process is one of “discovery” rather than the testing of hypothesis) and this also resounds the purpose of this study.

Furthermore, in ethnographic research according to Flick (2002), researchers rely on their judgment to select members of the sub culture or unit based on their research questions. Hence, women from Wayto community were selected using purposive sampling method. The researcher only went to those women who in her opinion are likely to have the required information and willing to share it. Since Waytos are found only in 4 kebeles of Bahir Dar town, women participants from them were selected from 4 kebeles which include Kebeles 03, 11, 13 and 16. The sample size of women selected from each kebeles includes 5 women from Kebele 03, 1 woman from kebele 13, 3 women from kebele 11 and 8 women from kebele 16. In addition, this selection was undertaken considering the number of female population residing in each Kebele. To this end, the researcher used

Solomon's 2006 survey study though there might be population changes due to birth, death or migration.

Table one: Wayto community distribution by kebele administration in Bahir Dar Town.

Kebele Administration	No of households	Community members by sex		
		Female	Male	Total
16	257	487	489	976
03	74	144	152	296
11	57	86	97	183
13	29	56	51	107
Total	417	773	7891	1568

Source: Solomon 2006 field survey

In addition, 6 women from the neighboring people were selected using both purposive and snowball sampling. Initially, Wayto women were asked to identify their neighbors. After the researcher makes contact with this neighbor, she used the neighbor to show her another neighbor. As a result, 4 women from kebele 16 and 2 from kebele 03 were selected. Kebele 13 is bordered by Lake Tana and Tana Heike secondary school's compound. The same situation is true for the Waytos' who live in kebele 11, which is bounded by forest and the lake. Consequently, no neighboring women were selected in these 2 kebeles. But this does not mean that these people are living in an island. Instead it means that there are no people outside their group, who can be considered as neighbors. Neighbors according to Fellin's (2001) definition are people who are intimate and close enough and engage in day to day interaction which includes visiting, greeting, borrowing tools or other exchanging services such as baby sitting or keeping an eye to ones house.

Moreover, all the study participants were selected based on age. The study participants were within the age range of 18-65. The age range was selected because of the fact that 18 years is a legal age for marriage where an individual is believed to be a mature person capable of reproduction, legally can engage in a contract, voting, having a job, sex and have settled ideas and opinions where as age 65 is the retirement age in Ethiopia where by a person is considered as an old or elderly (WHO, 1998).

In addition, key informants from Negede Wayto community (both men and women) were selected based on their community role as well as on their special ability. Related to this, Hamersley and Atkinson (1995) said that people representative of the culture sharing groups in terms of demographics, and the context that lead to different forms of behavior can be taken as research participants (cited in Creswell, 2007).

3.4 Methods of data collection

a. Interview

In this study, unstructured (sometimes referred to as "depth" or "in-depth") interview was employed as a major data collection technique. The rationale behind using this technique was that an in-depth interview enables to generate more information and exhaustive data than other techniques as it is possible to probe during the interview. In the interview process, all interviewees were asked about their personal biography (age, marital status, number of children and etc). Moreover, some were asked about their life since childhood in relation to education, work, health and other related matters.

The interview for each participant, on average, took one and half an hours. It was mostly a one phased interview. The researcher has personally undertaken all the interviews. During the interview sessions, more time and emphasis was given to individual participants because no one has more knowledge than the person her/him self about her/his life. With the consent of the participants, all the discussions were recorded using tape recorder.

In order that the interviewees speak openly and truthfully, the interviewer attempts to position herself as a friend. During the interview process she asked non-threatening demographic questions at the beginning and establish rapport. Such a rapport had improved the level of trust between the researcher and subjects, which, in turn, increases the validity of answers received. First, the researcher selected a group of people similar to those who are involved in the actual study and use the instrument to gather data from them. When she first approaches this group, her question had very little structure at all. She went into the interview with the aim of discussing a limited number of topics and she latter frame the questions on the basis of the interviewee's responses. Although only some topics were discussed they are covered in great detail. I decide in advance what areas to cover but the interview was open and receptive to unexpected information from the interviewee.

In summary, interviewing in this research had provided a way of generating practical data about the Wayto women's social world by asking them to talk about their lives. It had been really helpful to find out Waytos women's personal feelings, thoughts and experiences. Related to this, Shulamit, (1992) claims that interview is helpful to get information about the social world by providing a means for exploring research subjects' points of view.

b. Observation

Observation was the other data collection method used in this research and it helped me in many ways. First, it assisted in selecting participants. Secondly, it helped me to shape the interview questions and most importantly, it gave some insight to understand the body languages and the ways of communication the participants use in their settings. It also gave me some insights into what Wayto women look like in their appearances, situations and things surrounding them, which could not be easily revealed by other methods.

c. Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussion (FGD) was the other data collection technique used in this research. This technique was used because it has been found important to get additional information and only one FGD was held among six women participants coming from the 4 kebeles where Waytos live. In relation to this, Hansen (1998) noted that "the number of

focus groups one decides to have depends on the aim of the research and the available resources (pp.268”).

Hansen further stated that sampling of groups in a focus group takes careful note of any particular demographic, occupational or other dimensions. Hence, participants in this research were selected following this argument and the shared characteristics used were:

- 1) Their level of education: except one discussant all were illiterate.
- 2) Number of children: All focus group discussants have 3-6 children. Women who met the selection criteria were invited to participate in FGD on February 22, 2010. The discussion was held at kebele 03 in one participant’s compound as it was a place where they feel comfortable.

During the FGD, the researcher was the moderator who led the discussion based on the guiding questions. The researcher introduced the research and explains the main objectives carefully to create an open atmosphere and encourage participation. She then explains how long the session is expected to last and that participants can ask for clarification at anytime. Participants were also asked to introduce themselves to each other. The researcher warms up discussants for 10 minutes by introducing rules of the focus group such as no rights and wrong answers, that one person talks at a time and that honest responses are highly appreciated. In this research an attempt was made to give equal chance to all participants so that one person may not dominate the discussion. Like the interviews, the discussions were recorded using tape recorder with their consent. The time that the FGD took was 1:30 hours.

3.5 Data Analysis and Interpretation

During the process of data collection, the focus group discussion and individual interviews were recorded by tape recorder and notes were also taken during the discussions to further strengthen the recorded materials. Generally, there were three types of data written, visual and audio.

Since the research was a qualitative one, the different forms of data mentioned above have been found important during analysis. Every interview and FGD recorded was transcribed from Amharic to English. The data then was summarized into a manageable size and

translated into English as all the discussions were first held in Amharic. The translated data was cross checked with the note as well as with the transcribed data. Then the checked and double checked translation was put into a logical order by theme. Themes of analysis were determined based on the combination of the research questions, objectives of the study, the questions asked to the participants and the data itself.

In the interpretation of the research data, although the researcher tried to sufficiently represent the complexities of the experiences of women in this study, she is well aware as a researcher the limitations in interpreting and shaping the final account. According to critical feminist ethnographic stand point, the researcher must be able to keep a balance between her experiences as a source of understanding, and the participants' so that her life experiences do not engulf the inquiry (Nielson, 1993; Roman, 1993; Stalk, 1996 referred in Darare, 2004). To keep this balance, the researcher tried to create 'multivocal' presentation method, to give voice to the participants. By multivocal it means that the voice of the study participants directly quoted and then accompanied with the researcher's own interpretation.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Most authors who discuss qualitative research design address the importance of ethical considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality and privacy (Locke *et al.*, 1982; Marshal & Rossman, 1989; Merriam, 1988; Spradley, 1980; cited in Creswell, 2003). In line with this, the researcher has performed the following activities during the research process.

A. Informed Consent

David (2004) asserts that when selection is conducted, research participants should be asked their agreement to take part in the research. In this study, the participants' informed consent was obtained before the beginning of the study. First, the purpose of the study was properly explained and then the procedure of the study was elaborated by answering the how, when and where questions.

Informants understanding of the purpose and procedures of the study have been ascertained. After that participants were asked to decide, on their free will, whether they

would like to participate in the study or not. Moreover, they were also told that they have a right to withdraw or dropout after the interview or FGD has begun. However, having been clearly informed about the objective of the research none of the respondents were interested to withdraw. In general, it was after obtaining their oral consent that participants in this study were used as first hand informants.

B. Confidentiality

Confidentiality was also another ethical consideration that was employed in this research. To this effect, participants were told that the information they provide would be used for research purpose only. They were also informed that their names/identity will be kept anonymous if they do not want to be made public and all the names of research participants in the findings will be pseudonyms. There was variation in this case. Some informants were willing to have their names disclosed in the research while others were not willing. To have uniformity the researcher has coded their names.

C. Privacy

According to Shulamit (1992), privacy is one of the ethical issues in research work. In this research the privacy of the participants was respected. The researcher was restrained from going to the respondents without a prescheduled program and also calling them unnecessarily. In addition, it was only in the place where the interview was conducted that issues of discussion or interview questions raised. Moreover; the discussion issues have never gone beyond the purpose of the research. Whenever the participants found inconvenient, like shortage of time to finish the interview and noisy places other alternative measures have been taken by agreement. Most importantly, the researcher did not force participants to disclose the issue they did not want to.

D. Reciprocity

In this study, the researcher, in handling the research has reciprocated when there has been a need to do so. As the research was undertaken among low income group of women, participants were in need of money to provide information. To this end, the researcher gives some pocket money to those interviewed with out using these as means of exploitation.

3.7 Challenges

The noises and sounds from neighbors was a problem during interview sessions. The houses of Waytos are constructed in a congested manner and interviews were conducted at each participant's house.

Besides, the community's expectation to obtain financial aid from the researcher was also another challenge. Though the researcher provided a small amount of money for women who were included in the study, they did feel that the amount of money they received was very minimum and unsatisfactory since they are impoverished. What's more, the emotionally laden language they used to describe their lives had prevented to explore some of the deeper, more conflicted parts of their stories. Furthermore, they were fed up with interviews and false promises by previous interviews.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Entering to the Research Site

The fieldwork was carried out in Bahir Dar town, the capital city of the Amhara National Region State, from February 7 to March 7, 2010. The focus areas for the research were *Kebeles 03, 11, 13 & 16*. When the researcher first arrived at the Wayto community on February 7, 2010, she felt a distinct feeling, since she knows that the community does not welcome a person outside the Wayto group. Afterwards, she went to the Municipal Culture and Tourism Bureau, where she informed them that she has come from the Addis Ababa University to do a research thesis on Wayto Community. Simultaneously, she asked the authorities on how she can approach the community. The Head of the Culture Department asked her to show him the letter she obtained from her department at AAU. After reading the letter, the head introduced her with the chairman and traffic police of the Wayto community. Fortunately, the chairman was found around the office coming for his own affairs. The chairman again called the Secretary and Gate Keeper of the community via mobile and ordered him to help her. Having his mobile phone number, she made her way to kebele 16, the gatekeeper's post.

The gatekeeper gives her information about the community and she used him as a key informant. Additionally, she requested the gatekeeper if he can introduce her with a woman from that community. Luckily, she met a woman whom she saw on television giving information about the Wayto community. She introduced herself, described about the research and asked the woman's help. The Woman expressed her willingness and the researcher went to the woman's house with half a kilo of coffee beans. The researcher also used her as key informant.

Furthermore, the coffee ceremony prepared at her home paved the way to interact with women in the community. In the ceremony, the researcher introduced herself to invited relatives and friends of the woman whom she went with. In fact, the woman played a great role in this aspect as she assisted the researcher in giving further explanation about the aim

of her visit to their kebele. Besides, she asked them to help the researcher in any way they can. As a result, based on her appeal, an old man whom the researcher also saw on the ETV program, told her about the community and she used him as key informant.

Subsequent to this ceremony and interaction with members of the community, in order to enter into other Kebeles where Waytos live, it was enough to mention the names of women and other key informants the researcher met initially at kebele 16.

Similarly, in order to understand and analyze the day to day activities and living conditions of Wayto women, direct observation was equally important. To this end, the researcher has made fieldwork visits in sites where women collect firewood, uproot papyrus and also attended *Equib* associations.

4.2 About the Wayto Community

4.2.1 Naming and Foundation

In order to describe the differences that Wayto community has with its neighbors, the researcher found it important to begin by discussing about the foundation of the community. Though many travelers and writers tried to forward their own reports about Waytos' origin and identity, there is no commonly agreed idea, as it has already been indicated in the introductory part of this thesis. According to the data obtained during key informant interview; the various travelers and research reports influence community members themselves to have different opinions about their own origin. For instance, key informant-2 says that they have their origins from the Oromo "tribe" and further tells a similar story to what has been explained by Aleka Taye on the introductory page of this thesis. On the other hand, key informant-3 and key informant- 5 trace their history back to ancient Egypt during the time of Pharaoh and Musa. This also relates them to what Zelalem (1986) had assumed but from different account.

A 65 years old man and sheik of the community explained that the name "Wayto" was derived from the Amharic word "Wattewu" or to swallow something. This happened due

to the fact that the Wayto groups used to drink too much water when they went to war. Here is how he described the derivation of the name “Wayto”.

During ancient times, there was a religious war (Yebetre Tornet) between prophet Musa and Pharaoh. In this war when the warriors went to the battle field they were very tired and thirsty. On their way they found a river and they run in a hurry to drink but their leader ordered them saying “drink a little and follow me”, and continued ahead. After they quenched their thirst, some warriors followed their leader while our group remained there. This group remained there, because they were unable to go faster as they had drunk too much water. Later on, at the battle field, when the leader counted his army he missed many of them. He asked the whereabouts of these lost soldiers calling their name and he understood that they had stayed behind at the river. He became infuriated and cursed them by saying “አላህ ህይወታችሁን ወንዝ ለወንዝ ያድርገው” (Let Allah make your life from river to river); “ንግግራችሁ አይጣጣም” (never agree in your communication) “አትብዙ አትነሰ” (don’t increase or decrease in your demography) “አታግኙ አትጡ” (Don’t gain don’t lose) “ኑሯችሁ በደሳሳ ጉጆ ይሁኑ” (your life be in small huts). These vanished and cursed people started to search for food following the river and they reached Khartoum (Sudan), but their origin was Egypt. As they were cursed, they did not settle in Khartoum, instead they came to Ethiopia following the Abay (Nile) River. Since, they had drunk too much water they were named “Wayto” to say “Wattewu” (Key informant- 3, kebele 16, Feb.10, 2010).

Although it seems a little bit similar on some points, key informant- 5 has different story from key informant -3. It looks similar because both of them started their story from Egypt and from the same historical period, i.e., the time of Pharaoh and Musa. Here is what key informant -5 said about Waytos’ origin.

During the time of Prophet Musa and Pharaoh, Egypt was hit by famine. Swarms of locusts ate away the crops in Egypt. When this happened, Prophet Musa gathered people and left from Egypt. When the Pharaoh, learnt of their escape, he followed them with a huge army. When these people reached sea, they saw Pharaoh approaching and were sure they were going to be killed. However, Prophet Musa with the order of St. Jibrel (Gebreal) struck the waters of the sea with his stick and the waters parted, making a dry path. The people rushed through and crossed the sea safely. Seeing these people passing the sea, the Pharaoh and his armies also went into the separated sea in their pursuit. However, the sea united itself and drowned the Pharaoh and his army. Those people who had crossed the sea did not reach the country they needed to go. Instead, they stayed in a desert area. During their stay in the desert without food, water and shelter, these people gave-up. Some decided to return to Egypt so they separated themselves from the majority and disappeared. These vanished people reached Nigeria then to Egypt and

Sudan and finally came to “Najashi” which was the ruler of Abyssinia through the Nile River. After they came to Ethiopia, they were located in Geshabay (A place currently known as Shum Abo, a recreational center behind Lake Tana and in front of Bahir Dar University, Engineering campus). Bahir Dar town was first inhabited by these people. They cleared all the dense forest and settled in this place. During their river journey these lost people adapted eating anything they find such as aquatic animals like hippopotamus and birds. They also ate rats, frogs, fruits and leaf. It was from this time onwards that these people were called “Wayto” to say “Wattewu” or swallow it as they do not choose what they eat (kebele 16, Feb 22, 2010).

Though both informants (key informant 3 & 5) believe that the Waytos came from Egypt, they did not say that they were Israelites. But it is possible to assume that they are Israelites as it is written in the Bible and other religious books that they were Israelites who were under Egyptian bondage during the time of Pharaoh, who crossed the Red Sea and stayed in the deserts of the Middle East for 40 years (see Exodus 14-15).

As it is described above, the Waytos’ believe that they are created or cursed to live in unfavorable life conditions. In addition, their families’ eating habit also made them develop a feeling of inferiority. Key informant-5 accredited this by saying:

We were the first residents of this town [Bahir Dar town], but we lived around rivers and lakes in very destitute situations as we were cursed once. You see!! Waytos’ life is still inseparable from marine areas even today and there is a saying that ‘Wayto’ is the same as fish as they can survive if they get water (Kebele 16, Feb 22, 2010).

Waytos neither want to hear nor say the word “Wayto” because their neighbors use the word “Wayto” as an insult to anyone who appears to be wasteful and unclean. According to key informant-4, it was during the *Derg* regime that this community saw a little transformation. They were incorporated into Kebele Associations, where they got the opportunity to interact with other community members.

Moreover, Derg also banded the use of the name “Wayto” which has a derogatory meaning and called them “Negede Wayto”. Negede Waytos’ also gave Thanks to the *Derg* regime for this deed by saying:

ደርግ አለም (Derg Alem)

ደርግ አለም (Derg Alem)

አንተ ለፋህ እንጂ. (you scarified a lot)

እኛስ አየን አለም (but we enjoyed the world).

Even though this name brings some relief, Waytos are still not happy with this name too. They would be happy if they were simply called “Amhara” leaving the name Negede Wayto. Because, according to key informant - 1, the prefix “Negede” does not bring any change to them. In a final note, from the very beginning of naming, the Wayto community differs from its neighbors in various aspects too.

4.2.2 What Makes the Wayto Community Unique?

I. Religious Issues

There are two contradictions that exist within the Wayto community regarding their religious beliefs. Key informant-3, a 65 years old man and Sheikh of the community believes that Waytos are different from other Muslims in the surrounding. He said the following in explanation to this fact.

...We are real Muslims who did not change our faith for money like others have done. The so called “Muslims” in our surrounding areas are not real Muslims. Instead they are ‘wuhabeye’ who are preached and changed their faith for money. Their religion is a newly arrived one, which is not real and we do not want to follow theirs (Kebele 16, Feb.10, 2010).

On the other hand, key informant -5 asserts that Waytos are Muslims just like other Muslims in their surrounding areas, who believe in Allah. He added that Waytos accept both Quran and Hadis. In addition, they fast 28 or 29 days based on the cycle of the moon during the Ramadan season. Moreover, they also fast on the Saturdays and Sundays every week. Furthermore, a woman who has recently given birth to a child will not fast before she passes her 40 days. In addition, a woman who is menstruating and a sick person will not engage in fasting, rather, they can postpone and fast in another day. We undertake “Solat” with them at the grand mosque. We celebrate Maulid, Id Al Feter (Ramadan) and Arafa (Id Al Adaha) together. We do not have any difference except we are poor and they are rich, he explained. Supporting key informant-3’s idea, key informant -4 had said the following.

Currently there is high competition between various religions. There are catholic organizations that need to erode and if they can to change our faith. These organizations use our weak sides. They give us and our children clothes, books and other materials. Observing this, Muslims who came from other areas like Wallo, advice our neighboring Muslims saying that 'Why do you discriminate them when they believe in Allah too'. Because of this, some of the neighboring Muslims are now approaching us. They did not prohibit us from participating in religious practices. Otherwise, we are different (03, Feb, 13, 2010).

Regarding membership from outside groups to their community, key informant- 2 who is the community secretary, said “if that individual is learnt by our Imam and accepts Islam as his/her faith then he/she can be a member of our community, if not, it is not possible to join our community ”.

Generally, it has been found that Waytos are different in their religion from their neighbors. Though Waytos share some common elements with their neighboring Muslims they have their own Imam and a place of worship. They have Mosques at kebele 16 and 03. They also go to other Muslims' Mosques in order to attend religious practices, but other Muslims never come to their mosque. There is no marriage relationship among Waytos' and other Muslims. Moreover, Waytos have their own burial places too.

II. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

According to the data obtained through key informant interview, there is no female genital mutilation in Wayto community. Instead it is considered as forbidden or “Haram”. In addition, the community believes that the Quran does not allow female genital mutilation.

On the other hand, according to key informant-5, there is male circumcision in Wayto community and when a boy is circumcised there is a celebration consisting of feast and this makes them different from their neighbors as there is no special ceremony prepared for male or female circumcision.

As this informant further explains, in Wayto community, if the parents have money then a bull is slaughtered for the celebration. However, if they do not have money, then it will be celebrated by boiled peas. In any case, there will be dancing and singing in both

celebrations. The male is circumcised based on the parents' potential to prepare feasts. If parents have money or a well to do relatives who can help them in preparing feasts, the circumcision will be held on the 7th day. If they do not, it may extend up to 2 - 3 months. The circumciser is an experienced man, whether from their Christian neighbors, coreligionists or from their own community. In any ways, they pay money for the service given by any one of them. The amount of money paid is based on prior mutual agreement. If they do have close relationship like kinship, friendship or any favor done for this man before, it can even be done for free. In addition to the circumciser, there is a second person involved in this process. This person is a man who carries the baby during circumcision. The man who carries the baby is known as the **"penis father"**. From the above testimonies it can be seen that Waytos are different from other communities in their practice of FGM. Moreover, it is found that Wayto women are free from the practice that is believed to suppress woman's sexuality.

III. Marriage

Regarding marriage, Waytos have strong stand that couples have to share burdens and benefits of life together (*kendish be kinda*). They also believe that marriage is a union between a man and a woman to live together as a husband and wife. As has been pointed out by key informants, Wayto males and females are said to be free to select their mate, but it is not done in the practical sense. All key informants agree that in reality, arranged marriages are features of the Wayto community. They further remarked that although there is limited intermarriage relationship outside of Waytos own social group for men and women, men have wider opportunity than women to have such kind of relationship. It is much easier for Wayto men to be adopted by non Waytos if they change their religion according to the religion of the wife. However, Wayto women's marriage remains within members of their own community. According to participant 8, a 28 years old woman who marries a man from her own community, women's marriage restriction only to their own community is related to their reproductive role. She further explained the case:

As the other community considers Wayto to be impure and this lack of impurity is attached to the women, women's marriage with outside men is almost negligible but there are some visiting unions among Wayto women and other community men. Let alone to think about marriage, in this case even, the man does not want to make it public as he would be

laughed at. It is shame for non Wayto man to say that he falls in love with Wayto woman (Kebele 03, Feb, 18, 2010).

To this end, the researcher observed young Wayto women with children living in their parental home. In Wayto community, the marriage proposal usually involves male elders, who travel from the groom's house to the parents of the bride to ask for the marriage. When a young man decides he wants to marry a particular woman or when parents want their son to marry; they, together with village elders, try to find out all they can about the woman's family and herself, whether she is: a needle woman, hard worker, submissive, not adultery and has no blood tie among the two families.

In the same approach, a bride's family also investigates the groom and his family's background. Finally, if both families accept the relationship, elders will sign a marriage contract which is locally called "*Semania*" and set the exact date when the ceremony should take place.

Following this, the families of both the bride and the groom prepare feasts with the help of their relatives, friends and neighbors. In this regard, the Wayto women contribute 5 to 10 *Enjera* while the men give money (3 to 5 *birr*) which is called "*Dibra*". Christian neighbors who feel sympathy also contribute 10 to 20 *Enjera*. During the ceremony, Waytos prepare special food for neighbors invited from other communities though neighbors are usually not willing to eat there. Neighbors instead attend the dancing and singing ceremony and when it is over, they return home. Friend's of the bride also give her gifts such as face mirror, body lotions, Girdle, Needle (*Wosfae*), "*Mudie*" and "*Agelgil*".

In addition to this, bride wealth is provided by a prospect husband to his would be bride. The presentation of bride wealth from the male to the female includes dress, scarf, shoes, glove and an umbrella. Even though there is no gift that the wife presents to her 'would be' husband in kind, she has to be a needle woman and industrious enough, who can show her basketing products to the gathered people including her husband's best men. After the ceremony is over, the bride is taken to her in-laws home carried on a man's back. The bride will stay there for 10 days. During the 10 days, the mother in-law will be responsible to feeding the bride. After the 10 days, the couple will come to the bride's parents' home in

order to attend the ceremony of “*Milash*”. Afterwards, they would stay there for three days. At the end of the three days, the couple will start their own living (Honey moon).

When couples start to live on their own, either she becomes part of a man’s family (patrilocal) or vice versa (matrilocal). In this case, the tragedy lies when the woman becomes part of her husband’s family. Because, according to participant 8, when a woman starts to live with her husband’s family, she will have very little power in her home. She will often be ill-treated by both her husband and her mother-in-law. She, therefore, is required to be submissive for both of them. In this regard, it becomes mandatory for her to do her own and her mother in law’s errands. If she fails to do these, she is considered as sluggish and lazy. As a result, she will either be sent to her parent’s home or be forced to live bearing her mother-in-law’s plague and her husband’s beating.

Waytos do not go to the town’s municipality in order to register their marriage. Instead, elders are the one who will register the marriages of the community. Regarding divorce in the community, participant 15, a married woman and aged 28 asserts that:

Since we women in Wayto community have no property of our own, and as we expect no financial support from members of our own families because they are poor too. We are less prepared to leave our home what ever we are faced with a problem. Consequently, we are forced to suffer in silence, accepting the violence in our home as part of our husband’s personality (Kebele 16, Feb. 10, 2010).

Furthermore, elders who were responsible for the marriage proposal are also responsible for solving domestic disputes and divorce cases of the couples. Therefore, whenever the couples enter into disagreement, these elders try to mediate them and force them to reestablish their living. The elders have an accepted right to fine the wrong doer and the fines include the preparation of the coffee ceremony, feasts and even money sometimes.

In other extreme cases, the couples are referred to the court in order to discard their “*Semania*” (marriage contract). In cases where divorce occurs, it is easy for the women to go out empty handedly, since they do not have any substantial wealth that can be divided between the husband and the wife. In addition, these divorced women, with little or no

income, suffer a lot especially when their children depend on them. According to participant 10, a divorced, aged 40 and mother of 5 children, in Wayto community, if parents get divorced, a child of five years or older is asked to choose with whom he or she wants to live. Since children have the greatest exposure and affection to their mothers and their female relatives, they choose to stay with their mother. As a result, this will force women to be constrained from finding another suitable mate.

Similarly, participant 11 said, divorced women, most of the time, return to their parents' home with their children, which, in turn, creates lack or shortage of shelter. According to this participant, changing the community and the environment also cause psychological and social trauma for women and their children. Divorced women face difficulties to adjust themselves to the new situation; loneliness and unrelenting pressures associated with the dual demands of home and jobs. She further stated that the divorced women also feel discomfort in social relationship. Since they do not have a helper, they save less money than others in *Equib* and *Eddir*. Furthermore, married women feel discomfort with the divorced women to be friends. As a result, divorced women are vulnerable to depression.

Thus, it can be said that women face oppression in their marriage. Wayto women are not welcomed by their neighboring men as marriage partner. In addition, the community women themselves measure their status with their attachment to a man.

Furthermore, women's marriage relationship with their own men is not stable. These all shows us to understand how Wayto women bear special discrimination.

4.3 Neighbors' Perception of Wayto Community

Neighbors of Waytos have prejudicial and stereotypical attitudes about the Waytos. Neighbors describe Waytos in negative terms. The stereotypical attitudes that neighbors have towards the Waytos is related to the impression of "impurity". They define them in terms of the physical environment characterizing them as unclean. Here is what neighbor 2 said regarding the cultural differences that exist between them and the Waytos and how she perceives it.

Wayto women sink deep inside water to draw papyrus. After they collect the papyrus, they carry it on their head. Since the papyrus is wet, the

water from it drops on their clothes. Because they neither put of their clothes nor change it, the droppings dry on their body. As a result, this makes them to have unpleasant smell (Kebele 16, Feb.10, 2010).

In addition, neighbor 5, a 25 years old woman and a university student believes that all human beings are equal and she feels sympathy for Waytos' poor living conditions. However, what she can not tolerate is their lack of sanitation. Furthermore, she added:

Waytos are human beings like us, but what we dislike from them is their uncleanness. They are not the only impoverished people in Bahir Dar town. There are also others who do not have anything to eat. But look at them, they are clean. They wash the clothes they have. But Waytos are special. If you see their clothes, their faces or anything of theirs, they are not clean but still we respect them. We do not invade their privacy. Even we do not call them "Wayto" since they do not like it; but we do not participate in any activity with them (Kebele 16, Feb 10, 2010).

From this excerpt, it can be noted that there is a subtle way of discriminating Wayto women. Neighbors use Waytos lack of sanitation to justify their discrimination. Besides, the stereotypical view of neighbors' forces Waytos to live and act according to these stereotypical roles. For Wayto women, discrimination by their neighbors is encountered early in their lives at school and continues in their marriage. Women's economic disparity in this community can be alleged to be caused historical reasons. Regarding this, the educational level in the parents' generation was almost negligible, which affected the present generation through deficits in formal education. Participant 11 recalled a childhood incident that distorted her life. She explained her school memories as follows.

We were two Wayto girls in the school. During break time students come together and play. But they did not allow us to play with them. In the classroom, they do not want to sit with us. Instead they say "Wayto"! "Wayto"! When we approach them, they feel discomfort and humiliated. I used to feel embarrassed. In case my friend did not come to school, I will not enter into classroom. Instead I would return home. Therefore, finally when the discrimination heightened, we dropped out school and I got married when I was 13 years old. I am now 32 and have 2 children. You see!! After I dropped out of school, I married three husbands but none of them were good. I divorced all of them and now I am living alone with my kids. This had never been my wish. My wish was to learn. But what can I do. It is our chance (Kebele 16, Feb. 10, 2010).

This kind of discrimination has its dwelled impact not only on the psychological well being of the Wayto women but also on their economic life too. In addition, Waytos are said to eat

impure meat brought from dead animals, which is not slaughtered while it was alive. With regards to this, here is an extract from an in-depth interview with a neighboring woman.

Waytos do not choose on their eating habits. They eat what they have got. They do not worry whether it is dead or unclean. They drink flood from the nearby sewerage during rainy season. They wash their clothes with this muddy water. You know!! I remember that ones upon a time we bought a sheep for Easter and unfortunately we find it dead on the grass where we have tied it. Then, we threw the dead sheep away. Wayto women came and took it. This is really disgusting, to eat dead animals. In addition, if you go to their yard, you will learn how it is a shambles with bad odor so, leave alone eating together with them, if any kind of my household utensils, touched or is used by Wayto woman, I will either throw them or give them to beggars. I do not know why!! But I do not feel comfortable while being with them. It might be our difference in religion, our eating style and our hygiene. In any case, we are enormously different. In our religion, as it is with Muslims, let alone eating dead animals, the flesh of animals with uncloven hoofs and those that do not chew their cud are avoided as unclean. In addition, animals used for food must be slaughtered in both religions "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost" if the slaughterer is Christian or "In the name of Allah the Merciful" if the slaughterer is Muslim. But this people do not do either of these ((neighbor 1, kebele 13, Feb.25, 2010).

Wayto interviewees, however, have a different opinion on this issue. They say that the negative perception of their neighbors on their community is without any objective basis and is related to their previous families' characteristics such as the hunting of hippopotamus, birds and other wild animals for food in particular, and their current poverty in general. The prejudicial attitude still exists even if Waytos have changed their eating habits. Speaking about this issue, focus group discussant 4 said; "Neighbors blame us to be responsible for what happened in the past. Our fathers and mothers may have done something wrong due to the problem they had faced. But it's not our fault. We didn't eat anything unique. Nonetheless, we are mistreated."

As a matter of fact, neighbors not only saw the social practices and religions of Wayto women as less developed, but also claim that they represented a primitive past; one that was left behind. Wayto women are labeled as being quick to anger, lack respect and shame, are envious and unable to keep secret. They are drunkards and easily dance for simple

social occasions. They are wasteful and extravagant consumers, who are thoughtless about their future.

Consequently, there is only limited interaction among Wayto women and their neighbors. Marriage relationship with any one of their immediate neighbors is not acceptable. Their daughters are not even welcomed as maid servants. As discussed above, Wayto women do not go to burial places to bury the dead from their own community. Nevertheless, they go to Christian churches in order to accompany their neighbors' in burial and also eat at funeral feasts. On the contrary, neighbors do not participate in Waytos' funeral feasts. This finding is opposite to Fellin's (2001) argument that neighbors serve as friends, providing for intimate, close, intense and frequent social relationship which includes visiting, dinning together, borrowing tools or food, celebrating holidays or other events, exchanging services such as baby sitting or help with household tasks.

4.4 Women's Discrimination in Wayto Community

From the interview and FGD conducted with participants from Wayto women, it was found that what so ever differences they have in their age, education, occupation and marital status, all have experienced discrimination. This was observed in by asking the participants "Do Wayto women experienced discrimination?" Note the following quote from one of the interview participant.

Yes we are discriminated; Wayto women are the most discriminated group. We are looked down by both our own men and our neighbors. We are discriminated. There is imposition of unreasonable burden on us. Our life is full of hardship and calamity. Our source of discrimination is many. Any body that is found in garbage collection and with dirty look is considered as Wayto. We are humiliated by police. Life is hell for us (Participant 1 kebele 13, Feb.25, 2010).

From this quote it is possible to understand that there is the intersection of sex and gender discrimination in Wayto women's life experience. Similarly, another elderly woman of 41 ages confirmed Waytos experience of discrimination as a whole by saying:

We are humans like any human beings, see our face! Yet we are invisible to the government or to our neighbors. We have no country, our homeland has casted us out. We were the founders of Bahir Dar town. The late comers always refuse to acknowledge us. They throw us. They

erase our history and our experience. Previously, we were the one who were famous for canoe making and water transportation. However, we were overtaken by the presence of boats and we lost that too. We are the coarse rock. We still survive by wandering here and there (Discussant 6, Kebele 13, Feb.28, 2010).

Regarding their mobility from place to place key informant -2 had also said the following when he spoke about the community.

*አጂፕ ላይ ነበርን / we have been in Ajip
ፋሲሎ ነበርን / we have been in Fasilo
ግብርናም ነበርን / we have been around the Agricultural institute
ቅጠል ሰፈር ነበርን / we have been in Qitelsefer
አንጓለው አንጓለው / they cast us into Dibanqa far-off area from the town
ደባንቄ ጣሉን / and burial place of both Muslims and Christians
የሰው ግፍ የለውም / they would like to think we have disappeared
እስከ አሁን አለን / but we have not!! (Kebele 16, Feb.7, 2010)*

From this quote it can be said that Waytos' possession right to land had got less attention by the government. On the other hand, women's economic and social rights given by the EPRDF Constitution under article 41 (1) and states that "Every Ethiopian has the right to engage freely in economic activity and to pursue a livelihood of his/her choice anywhere within the national territory", is not exercised very well. Negede Wayto women use Papyrus as a means of livelihood by making and selling basketing products out of it. This papyrus was collected and accessed for free from areas where the Resort hotel is constructed, the areas behind the Agricultural Research Institute, the localities around St. Michael's church, and the areas behind the Development Bank. But today due to the expansion of construction around Lake Tana, women have been barred from these papyrus collection sites. To clear the ground for their use, investors protect the areas for some times and sell the papyrus in a wholesale, which the community's women cannot afford to buy. Despite the fact that the sites are not Negede Waytos' own possessions, the government could do other alternatives to ensure their right in order to pursue livelihood as citizens.

Moreover, women are the ones bearing most of the burden to finding alternative collection sites in kebele 9, behind Bahir Dar textile factory as well as "Gerima River" (a river like flow of water from Tana to Tana in the Island). They are forced to travel far longer distances, by spending extra hours and by also risking humiliation by cattle raisers. They go for one and half an hour on foot in order to collect papyrus. Many women, who

previously spend this hour collecting a head load of papyrus, now, spend it in the journey. Women with children also go this far distance carrying baby on their back and the papyrus on their head. Furthermore, women struggle with marshland, “*Garsa*”, “*Tisha*”, “*Arjano*”, snake and flood in the collection sites (Appendix F: photo 1).

During the rainy season, women sink up to their neck carrying the papyrus on their head. Their bodies are cut by “*shafrew*”. It was observed from FGD discussants that there were women who had been raped but whose case is not reported for fear of losing self respect and being shy. According to participant 14, some women especially pregnant and the sick require additional help from young daughters, which negatively affects the latter’s schooling. This also implies to sustain the poor situation of women in the community because uneducated and less educated women are likely to be poor. Besides, children who have too little to eat today will be physically and mentally underdeveloped for the rest of their lives.

At the same time, Wayto Women also suffer from lack of adequate shelter and food. Looking at their home one does not feel comfortable to regard Waytos’ hut as home. The houses that I have observed do not have the identity of home. Some are made from “*Tirar*”, *thick Carton*, Papyrus and plastic which expose family members both to sunlight and cold (*Appendix F: photo 2*). Related to this, here is an excerpt from a 45 years old, illiterate and widowed woman with 6 children “... During rainy seasons I will cover the roof with plastic and protect myself from rain but the calm (cold) is my friend and I have adapted it at both summer, winter, day and night”.

Conversely, these kinds of houses are also rented for those who do not have it. According to my interviewees, most of the time, these houses are rented for divorced women as they are fired from their house. In addition, the monthly rent for these houses is 60 up to 80 Birr, which is unaffordable for most of the divorced women especially for women with children.

Moreover, the observed houses have no rooms designed for specific purpose; no back room, no bed room, no toilet, no kitchen, etc. There is only one room where all family

members along with their stuff dwell. Consequently, this leads women to engage in early marriage. For instance, 19 years old woman, who dropped school from 5th grade, gave birth to a child and get divorced, noted that;

Because of the housing condition we live in, our daughters are sexually active in their early age. As you see, our house has no separate room set aside for exclusive purpose; and, therefore, all our family members sleep together. Daughters hear the sexual act among their parents. This leads them to become sexually active and engage in early marriage. The early marriage further leads women to divorce and with no means of livelihood (participant 6, kebele 03, Feb.27, 2010).

In the same fashion, the so called “kitchen” in Wayto community becomes the double edged sword of domesticity. It does not have facilities and appliances which can be arranged in a standardized choice of floor plans. Moreover, the kitchen has no ceiling and wall and is, therefore, just an open ground. As a result, the women cook out in the sun. The cooking fire is wasted by the wind which results in plenty of fuel, which is too far to reach them and is the responsibility of women. There is also fire and smoke from the bottom, and sun from above which exposes women to high energy expenditure and severe physical stress. I have also observed women’s tears roll down because of the smoke when the wind blows the fire here and there.

Of course, it is apparent that having a poor housing condition affects both men and women but the effect varies. Women, as they are responsible for domestic activities, suffer a great trauma. Pregnant women and women, who have recently given birth, also suffer from lack of comfortable sleep. Children eat outside their home in the backyard in the open air observed by all those who pass by (*Appendix F: photo 3*).

In addition to these, the women also suffer from the lack of toilet and sanitation in their residential compounds. Unlike other Kebele Waytos, there are four toilet rooms constructed for Waytos in kebele 16 by the collaboration of the kebele with Amhara Development Association (ADA) but the toilets are full, therefore; the community has stopped using them. Lack of toilet is a common problem for men too. However, for women, as they spend much of their time at home and are responsible for all care taking activities both for the children and sick members of the family, they suffer most. Women are forced to excrete

and urinate under trees as well as in the surrounding houses which creates bad smell. This, in turn, makes women to become infected with frequent common cold and trachoma. This finding indicates that all persons have the right to clean and healthy environment as stated in the 1995 Constitution article 44(1) (FDRE, 1995); is not given due attention.

Moreover, their houses are constructed in close proximity to each other. Therefore; it is common to listen to the conversation of one's neighbor, music, nagging etc. It is usually difficult to get sleep in this condition. In many instances, the researcher faced difficulty in recording the voices of the participants of the study due to noise and loud talks from the neighbors.

According to focus group discussants, lack of enough food is the other serious problem for Wayto women. Women, especially while pregnant, need to take much more food and nutrition for their unborn child and for breastfeeding. Unfortunately, irregularity of their income obtained from basket making made them incapable of paying for their food expenses which has contributed to their hunger and malnutrition. Focus group discussants had agreed that they get food only once in a day. There are also women who explained that their meals vary from situation to situation. Regarding this, it was explained that when available they eat their lunch and dinner, while if food is not found, they sleep after only drinking coffee and water.

In summary, development induced programs cause livelihood displacement that deprives women off their means of production and increase women's workload. Lack of pipe water, adequate personal house, kitchen and toilet are just some of the many challenges women face in the Wayto community and this is in contrast to the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights such as the right to work, the right to housing, the right to health, the right to social security and adequate standard of living, which Ethiopia has also signed.

Thus, it can be said that various socially and culturally constructed categories such as those based on sex, gender, religion and class interact and create multiple forms of Wayto women's discrimination. This finding also goes inline with Collins (2000) argument that knowing a woman's life in a sexist society is insufficient information to describe her

experience. Instead, it is also necessary to know her race, sexual orientation, class, etc, as well as her society's attitude toward each of these memberships.

4.4.1 Source of Wayto Women's Discrimination

A. State

In addition to the loss of their livelihood gathering areas by investors as it was discussed above, the regional government also put restriction on the use of Papyrus. One interviewee from kebele 16 expresses this situation as follows:

Water retention power of papyrus is high, making the area prone to deluge. In addition, the papyrus is a natural habitat for various birds. But as a consequence of our growing dependency on it, it is being destroyed. So the Lake is being dehydrated and birds are lost. Consequently, the government began to control the area and we are humiliated by police when we went to pull out Papyrus particularly "Talis" (newly grown and young papyrus plants which women use for sewing (Kebele 11, Feb.28, 2010).

Furthermore, Waytos have no urban land rights and their land is snatched anytime the town municipality needs it. This happens due to the fact that Waytos are not able to fulfill the official formalities of the government because they are poor. As it was explained by my key informant -1, Waytos do not have residential plans and designs even though they are in the town's master plan. There are cases where women are banned to constructing their houses from tin. A literate Wayto woman that experiences such kind of state discrimination had this to say:

I had a small hut made of straw and I live there for most of my life. When I got 2000 birr engaging myself in Equib, I asked the Kebele administration to allow me to construct tin-roofed house. The Kebele asked 'Are you going to build tin-roofed house? You are a woman. You Waytos! Why do you disturb us coming here? You know that you're incapable to do that. You better go and cover your roof with plastic as you familiarize. I plead them rolling down my tears but they do not give me consent. The rain was falling on me; I lived for one additional year in that small hut (Desasa Gojjo). One day the kebele [Tana Kebele] women's affairs representative came to our community. The representative called us for a meeting. In the meeting we managed to elect our representative who can take Wayto women's case to the kebele women's affairs office. Fortunately, I happen to be the elected representative. During my work as a representative, I told my problem to the kebele women's affairs representative and she replied that it

would be solved. She added ‘you can have your own house if you want. I felt glad and I started to work day and night in order to restore the money I spent from the one I had before. I also bought tin roofing and constructed my house. But the worst was yet to come. As soon as I finished the building, “Denb Askebariwoch” (Lit. scouts) came and demolished it. I felt sorry and I lost everything I had for nothing. My money, my energy and everything (clapping her hand she looks up the sky). I was almost going crazy (Participant 11 age 32, divorced and mother of 2 children, Kebele 16, Feb.12, 2010).

From this, one can conclude that there is a belief that all members of Wayto possess characteristics specific to them especially that distinguishes them as inferior. Besides, it shows the state’s failurity to provide an appropriate and professional service causes multiple forms of Wayto women’s discrimination.

B. Sex and Economic Discrimination

In this research, it has been found that Wayto women face discrimination from men and women themselves. Regarding how men discriminate women, one FGD discussant expressed her experience as;

I got married when I was a child. I do not even remember the time I got married. I was in “ankelba”. I lived with my husband for a long time. But I never remember a day I was happy with him..... Even for one day! My husband does not allow me to go out for shopping. One time when I needed to visit my families, who are found in Gondar, he said you can go forever. Since I do not have a choice, I live with him and have not visited my families for 10 years. One day, we quarreled fiercely and he threw me out with nothing. While I was wondering in my neighbors’ home searching for a place to stay, he remarried without discarding the Semania he has with me. I took him to court but while my case is on process, the so called “new wife” gives birth to a baby boy had she been pregnant from my husband before we were separated. Fortunately, my husband died after being sick for a week. Afterwards, I went to my home, threw out his “wife” and entered. Today my husband’s son is 18 years old and he came to my home and asked me to leave the house. He says “this is my father’s house so we have to rent and use the money in share”. The son is living with his mother in a small hut she had before she married my husband. She says ‘where do I live if I lost this small hut (Dasasa Gojjo)? I am in problem. The informant added, ‘I am still facing discrimination from a younger male person. Now, I do not want to see what will happen in the future. I am pleading to Allah to take me away (discussant 2, age 40, kebele 16, Feb.23, 2010).

Similarly, another interviewee from the same kebele has said that she has also faced similar problem as discussant 2. This woman is 40 years old and has 4 children. She lived with her husband for 25 years in a small hut. During these 25 years, they were living in harmony supporting each other. Unfortunately she encounters visual impairment while she was giving birth to their last child. After that she expressed her situation as follows.

When I became unable to see, my husband began to nag me day and night looking for minor things. Since I could not do things like before, he threw me out from our home. Accompanied by my 5 years old daughter, I went to the streets and mosques to beg. Afterwards, I would send my daughter home, but I have no where to go. I do not have money to rent a house. The money I collect by begging is not enough since most houses rent from 60 to 80 birr.” She added, “If I need something to eat, I beg and eat but no one could assist me to pay a house rent. I wonder from house to house and sleep in my friends lodge on “Kesha”. Neighbors feel sad for my condition and advice my husband to allow me to return home but he was not willing. Instead he insults me saying “yetm eyetenkeratetsh enan atasedbign ligenem lemagn atadrgiate (wandering here and there, do not make others laught on me and donot make my daughter beggar like you) what can I do? I did not bring the problem by myself, but my husband always blames me (participant 4, kebele 16, Feb. 23, 2010).

The above excerpts are great examples of how men discriminate women in their own community. The cornerstone of men domination is sexism; denying women their human rights and dignity. Men want to control women and one way of doing this is “blaming the victim” as it can be seen from the second quote. Moreover, bringing marital issues to public is believed by the man to be shameful to his pride. So the problem of violence against his wife has to be kept in silent. He believes that he has a mandate to rule his wife the way he wishes even if she is out from home. She is denied a means by which she could express her despair and disappointment. A family is taken as a private place where no one should interfere even if a woman is treated inhumanly. This is in contradiction with the fundamental rights and freedoms enshrined in the Constitution under Article 18 that “Every one has the right to protect against cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment” (FDRE, 1995).

Moreover, there is also woman to woman discrimination in Wayto community. Regarding this, women are involved in verbal or physical act of violent behavior, hostility and intimidation against other women. Here is an excerpt from interview participant aged 18. The participant was born from an impoverished family in Wayto community. She grew up

with her father until he died. As a young girl, she realized the contradictions in her life. After her mother's death, her father was left to care for her. She helped her father who was a daily laborer with the money she got from garbage collection. Her father remarried when she was 12 and she started to live with her father and her stepmother by collecting Papyrus for basket making. Unfortunately, her father died when she was a grade 4 student and was left with her stepmother. In addition to these mismatched realities was the fact that her stepmother never gives care for anything about her. Instead, she acted like unconcerned stranger and things stayed hard. She does not have food to eat, her stepmother condemns her work unfairly and she gossips about her. One day she came late from school after her friends. Her stepmother insulted her saying "*antch defi yetm eyewalsh eyemetash enan litbeygn new*" (*you unlucky girl, you finished all your parents and now are you going to eat me coming let everywhere?*) From that moment on she decided to escape the negligent home environment. She became a street girl and started to live in a shop veranda shining shoes. She dropped out from school. She said "lack of shelter threatens my life and makes my condition worse. I am worried thinking I will be raped someday since I am the only street girl here".

In addition, women face discrimination as a result of economic issues. In the community, there is high competition to get livelihood in women's basket market. In that market, when a buyer comes towards their craft, each woman tries to promote her own craft. When a buyer is observing a woman's craft, the other woman speaks that her craft is better. Then the buyer shifts, at this time, the two competing women insult each other. If one achieves success those who could not achieve it feel cultural jealousy. It seems like "survival of the fittest". There are women who rent a house for other women in their own community. There is a move towards individualism instead of supporting and cooperation. This finding, however, is in contrast to Waytos' egalitarian way of living as it is discussed in the review literature. Formerly, in Wayto community, there was no income difference between men and women as well as between women and women. To overcome their poverty, they were assisting each other. The money that women got from selling their basket was shared equally. Participant 10 had said, "Waytos do not know nothing of what is mine or others, for it may be said that what belongs to one belongs to another".

However, currently as discussed above, this has slightly changed. The intervention programs teach Wayto women about saving. Now every woman wants to have surplus, whatever its amount is. Related to this, participant 16 had said;

Previously there was sympathy among women in Wayto community. But today there is no such thing. Every woman lives her own life. No one knows what the others have or need. I do not know whether my friend eats her dinner or not. And she does not know nothing of mine. No one knows my backroom [the living condition she is in], and I don't know theirs. You see! If you tell your friend that you do not have something to eat today, she never cares about you. Instead you will hear her saying "yich chigaram andken bilo ayalflatim (Kebele 11, Feb.29, 2010).

On the other hand, there were religious based organizations that provided support for Wayto community. An Islamic Affairs was one of these institutions. Islamic affairs provides donation for orphans (children who do not have both mother and father). It also supports women in terms of providing scarf, blanket, bed sheet and other utensils such as barrel and steel saucepan. It was possible to learn from FGD discussants that Wayto women did not receive the whole donation provided for them. Focus group discussants agreed to this fact by explaining the following.

The donation which organizations send to help us passes either through the kebele administration or the Islamic affairs. These two institutions have not been able to transfer the money to us properly. Both of them are trading with our name. Every time our photo is taken for the sake of aid, however, the aid brought in our name is given for others. Why do not they send the money through our Eddir? When we ask for loan, the kebele says "you can work and repay your loan. Therefore, they always enfold us in their usage of vocabulary such as orphaned and needy. The Islamic affairs also say we have given you enough and you do not deserve anymore (Kebele 03, Feb.22, 2010).

From this quote it is possible to understand that in order to control women, the religious institutions as well as the kebeles deliberately take the negative view of human nature. They belittle and try to weaken women by calling them needy. Generally, this finding traces back to the Socialist feminists' argument that both economic and sex differences are ultimately the cause of women's discrimination.

C. Religion

Wayto women were asked about the source of their discrimination and whether they participate in the activities of women outside their community. All interviewees stated that religion was an important variable that affects their life the most. Participant 11 said “we face high level of discrimination from our coreligionists than Christians”. The reason she ascribed was that, an Islamic believer starts “Solat” by cleaning him/her self. A believer has to cleanse his/her parts of body three times when he/she wants to bow down. This is, washing their right and left hands three times each, taking water three times to the holes of nose, washing the face three times, and washing the mouth three times, etc. Though there were some Waytos who follow this Islamic guideline the majority of them do not. According to this woman, this happens due to Waytos’ shortage of water. Some Waytos buy water from their neighbors and the water they buy is not enough even for their daily consumption let alone using it for ritual practices. Others fetch water from the Lake Tana going far distance. Therefore, the Waytos’ lack of such cleansing activity is taken as disobedience of Islamic guidelines and a legitimate for discrimination against them.

In the same way, another participant stated that, even though Muslims can pray in any clean environment, alone or together, in a mosque or at home, at work or on the road, both men and women members of the community are inattentive for religion as they are cursed at the beginning. Instead, they are always in a hurry to get their daily food.

In addition, this participant also added that, going to beer house and drinking alcohol is haram for Muslims, especially for Muslim woman but Waytos drink alcohol and this brings discrimination from other Muslims. More specifically, neighbor 3 a Muslim woman said “Islam in its verse 24:30-1 tells the believing woman to lower her look and be modest. We are ordered at least to veil our hair but Wayto women don’t perform that”.

In fact, there were few Wayto women who wore a scarf around their shoulder. Even these do not cover their hair like other Muslim women I have observed in the town. Majority of the observed women in the community did not wear headscarf.

Thus, Wayto women's' disregard of the above mentioned Islamic practices exposed them to face discrimination from their coreligionists. They were considered as faithless. They were also discarded from community activities such as eating in a festival. Regarding Wayto women's participation in the activities of women outside their community, participant 4 said the following.

During Islamic holidays such as Ramadan and Arafa, we commemorate together with our coreligionists in the grand Mosque at kebele 04. We pray together and perform other ceremonies like them; such as wearing headscarves. When it is time to eat from a communal dish, people have to come together according to their sex. There is a separate dish for men and women. In one dish there would be at least 6 people. Other Islamic women neither want to sit with us nor allow us to sit with them. If there are 6 women from our community, we sit together and eat. Otherwise we move back home without eating (Kebele 16, Feb. 23, 2010).

4.5 Role of Wayto Women

In Wayto community, labor is divided by sex. Men and women have their own role at the household and community level. Men are responsible for collecting lava stone, transporting it to their surrounding by cart, curving mill stone and trading it, engaging in daily labor as cobble stone makers that serves for the town's road construction and working in condominium constructions. In addition, men also collect papyrus, make fence and thatch and sell. There are also men who work as traffic police. Besides, boys collect and sell mats from papyrus. They are also engaged in garbage collection.

Women, on the other hand, are responsible for the domestic sphere. They are incharge of cooking, buying consumption goods, collecting and carrying wood, fetching and carrying water, washing clothes and taking care of children. Women in Wayto community spend much of their time in making baskets. At the gate of each household, there is a woman sitting under a garden shed with her basketry (Appendix F: photo 7).

Regarding this, the women frequently finish one "Moseb" from 7 up to 15 days after sewing day and night. They are also responsible for the wellbeing of the family. Therefore, family consumptions are covered with women's handicraft making. Women buy 10 liters of jar water from their neighbors with a price of "mezzo" (25 cents). Besides, in order to

cover their school expenses and /or support their families, girls are involved in basket making (Appendix F: photo8).

In addition to their domestic work, women are also engaged outside the home. Men spend their free time drinking “Tela” (local beer). Here is an extract from an in-depth interview with a woman who is working in Bahir Dar textile factory. Regarding the question on what role women hold at household and community level, she replied;

I am working in a textile factory as machine operator. At the beginning, my salary was 170 birr but now it is 521 birr. Though it is far better than before it is not sufficient compared to the duties I perform. I have completed grade 10 and I have got this opportunity when the factory gave the chance to recruit one person per household from the town. My husband is a daily laborer in condominium construction and earns 20 birr per day. The good thing is he works only on the day time. When he finishes his work he comes home, he washes, eats, talks to our friends and finally sleeps. However, I can not do these things because I have to shop, prepare food, and look after my child. Whenever, I have to work at the night shift at the factory, my mother will take care of my child in addition to her domestic chores. Moreover, when I come home in the morning, the whole chores present themselves in a new situation. Childcare, breakfast, lunch, sorting things out, washing dishes, preparing coffee; thus, repeating tasks again and again every time and everyday. The factory works the whole day both at night and during the day time. During my shift, whether it is night or day, I have to work 8 hours standing with the machine (participant 8 ages 28, Kebele 16, Feb.23, 2010).

4.6 Status of Women in Wayto Community

Waytos’ life in general and the women’s in particular is very much impoverished. Women in the community are living in subsistence way of life, mainly through handicraft making such as “Moseb”, “Sebatra” and “Wolewol” and women are doing their handicrafts because of the limited alternatives available to them. Most of them are not satisfied by their handicrafts. In spite of the considerable amount of time spent by women to make their crafts; they are sold with cheap price. Some women are working as daily laborers in construction sites. There are women who bake *Enjera* at Bahir Dar University. There are also others who are employed in state owned organizations with certain salary.

Likewise, it was common to see Wayto women stationed in the street between Mulualem Cultural Center and the grand mosque at Kebele 4 to sell their basketing products especially on Saturdays. These women were sitting on sunny street with out any shed. Wayto women are easily distinguished by their products and the type of clothes they wear around their shoulder. On a related issue, at home context customs that reflect the inferior status of women were observed. For instance, when the researcher first enters into the community, there was a woman whom the researcher went with to her home. Her daughter roasted coffee beans, while the woman invited her friends and relatives. When roasting the coffee bean was done it was immediately taken towards the invited man. Whimpering something, the man smelled the smoke from the coffee beans. At this moment, the women give him a round of applause. As the coffee smoke stopped, the women stood one by one and kissed the man's hand.

Mothers also lack the knowledge of family planning services. They also neglect the service even when they know it because of religious purposes. Moreover, there was high level of girls' early marriage in Wayto community. Consequently, there was high fertility and high divorce which, in turn, affects women's life. In fact, having large family affects both men and women. However, women with frequent child bearing aggravated by poverty, poor sanitation and poor nutrition suffer more. It is women who experience the discomforts and risks on pregnancy. In addition, it is also women who are responsible to nursing children. Thus, women's fertility is central to the quality of their life and the wellbeing of their children. While the researcher was in the field work, she has observed consecutively born children with tattered clothes, looking miserable, thin and starved.

Wayto women have fewer opportunities to get out of poverty. Most women that were observed have been divorced or widowed, and became household heads alone. These women were the only earners and their income was used for food. They faced many difficulties as they try to win bread for themselves and for those depending on them. They had less formal education.

Finding jobs in neighbors' house as a housemaid was like a dream and only the luckiest ones can secure this outside the town like in Metema. Women were restricted by their

husbands from leaving home and engage in local drinking houses. Women buy a can of “Tela” and drink at their home. Men on the contrary, make contact with people having different aspirations in the local beer houses which later help them to propose even for marriage. Moreover, there are quarrel among couples mostly focused on men’s wastefulness. Wayto women were interviewed about who makes decision at household and community level? Here is an excerpt from what one of the interviewees had said:

It is 10 years since I married my husband. My husband’s occupation is curving “Wofcho” (mill stone). The curved “Wafcho” is sold for 40 to 60 birr compared to my basket products which are sold for 30 to 50 birr regarding their sizes. When I sold one “Moseb” after sewing for 2 weeks, I bought “Dagusa” and other items which are relatively cheap, for our food. My husband, on the other hand, came dead drunk with all the money he has got. When I ask him for money, he said that he has none and even if he has, he plans to do something with it. When I express my objection, he told me that he does not like my interference on his affairs. I went to village elders and asked them to talk to him. Afterwards, he became a good person for one or two weeks. Then, just when I thought I have got a relief; the same problem arose on the third week. This is what I often experience in my home (Participant 16, Kebele 11, March 3, 2010).

From this quote, it can be observed that asking money from husband (hence challenging her husband’s authority as the controller of finance) has disastrous effects. Husbands were placed at the head of their households, and when their position was challenged as we have seen above, they will prevent the intruder. It is also possible to learn that women’s discrimination comes in varied forms. When the husband asks to be fed by the wife, even if she has no sufficient income, because it’s the wife’s role to do so, when he leaves her to carry loads and he walks free of the burdens. Therefore, she is expected to take care of the family and even work to feed her children. This shows the inferior status of women in Wayto community.

Moreover, if a pregnant woman does not have a helper (daughter and or son), she will travel a long distance to the lake in order to collect Papyrus and carries it on her head to bring home. She has to collect much more papyrus after she enters into her 7 months of pregnancy because nobody helps her in bringing this material when she gets weak in the next months. The same is true for a woman who has recently given birth. Consequently,

this woman has to travel for at least 300 meters in order to collect papyrus. Afterwards, she would return home carrying her child on her back and the papyrus on her head. Freedom for women to work outside the home is a gain. But for most Wayto women, it is not a matter of choice. For fear of being raped when going out for papyrus collection, girls often drop out of school and marry early. It is after they have been married that most girls are sent to collect papyrus from field. Accordingly, it is possible to say that Wayto women have low status in all spheres of life.

4.7 Women's coping Mechanisms in Wayto Community

In this research, three types of coping mechanisms that Wayto women use to overcome their discrimination were found. These were emotion based, action based and the combination of the two (emotion- action based).

The choice of these coping mechanisms depends on the context in which the event occurs. For example, in cases where women are confronted with other women in their own community and with men in general, the individuals studied utilize more verbal counter attacks (give a verbal response). On the contrary, if Wayto women come into conflict with out-group women, they use force collectively in addition to the verbal response. In this case, Wayto women have mutual and strong relationship to defend themselves from any kind of outside attacks. For instance, if two Wayto women were in quarrel with each other, and if one of them simultaneously enters into conflict with a woman from outer group, then they come together and fight with that outsider woman especially if they observe blood on the side of their group. Due to this behavior, Wayto women are labeled as being quick to anger by their neighbors.

In fact, the researcher has observed that Wayto women have no problem to throw stones or any thing they find nearby and they also curse loudly when they are angry with something. Equally, women in their papyrus collection sites use sickle to protect themselves from cattle raisers' harassment. Above all, in situations where they face financial constraint, they engage in self help and support activities as it is discussed in their marriage practice

section. Here are the emotion based coping mechanisms of Wayto women found out through interview.

4.7.1 Emotion based Coping Mechanism

A. “Terakib”

Terakib is a coffee ceremony among Wayto women. The women first draw a lot in order to choose who would prepare the ceremony turn by turn. The woman who draws the first lot prepares it first and then the cycle continues in rotation. This coffee ceremony can be taken as the equivalent of “*Mahber*” in their Christian neighboring community. What is different, however, is that Wayto women’s associations like that of their neighbors is not in the name of Saint Marry, in the name of Holy Trinity, Saint Michael or any other holy names where feasts are served in much greater amount and on monthly or annual calendar but it is undertaken in the name of coffee.

There association is known as “*Terakib*” and it is done on a daily basis. Members are not formally registered. The only banquet prepared is boiled maize and sometimes bread. This association provides pattern of ties among women. Women discuss about their private lives and their relation with their husbands. They give emotional support and information to each other and make themselves feel better.

In spite of the fact that Wayto women face multiple discrimination based on economy, religion, sex, and age, most interviewed participants have expressed that they get relative mental satisfaction especially when they come together and discuss in “*Terakib*”. In “*Terakib*” women share their worries, happiness, and sorrows and raise their consciousness. Consequently, these groups might be taken as empowering, as members join together for a common purpose. The ceremony takes place within each kebele. All women come to the ceremony having their handicrafts. Implicit in this element is an emphasis on personal responsibility for advancing oneself as well as the group. Furthermore, women drink alcohol and chew “*chatt*” together which provides them with temporary escape from their problem.

Generally, it has been found that “*Terakib*” is the indigenious practice that Wayto women use to cope up with their discrimination.

B“Nuer Abinaz (Shah Abinaz)” Festival

“*Nuer Abinaz*” is a great festival celebrated by Wayto community at Bahir Dar town. The celebration takes place annually and is attended by both men and women. In this ceremony, a bull that does not cross the Nile River is slaughtered under “*Warka*” tree on one side of the river. Men above the age of 18 attend the sacrifices. Women, on the other hand, do not cross the river instead they gather on the other side of the river, a little far from the sacrificed spot and celebrate the date by eating chicken sauce. Men have to eat the whole meat. If there is leftover, they did not bring it back. They either have to spend the night there to finish it or they will throw it into the river. This is because Waytos attribute their achievements to the generosity of “*Nuer Abinaz*” (Divinity of Blue Nile). Anybody who was in stress or needed to get something better in the future makes promise with the divinity of Blue Nile to bring something in exchange if the divinity solves the problem. When things happen as they had wished, they feel happy and try not to think of the event that had stressed them. Additionally, in the ceremony they give what they had promised to the divinity of Blue Nile. These people come together from both rural and urban areas and share information.

In a final remark, the *Nuer Abinaz* festival is found to be the other emotion based and indigenous practice that Wayto community as a whole use to cope up with their discrimination.

4.7.2 Action-based Coping Mechanism

Action-based coping mechanism involves dealing with a problem that is causing discrimination. In Wayto community, women, because of their roles as mothers, wives, and carers of other dependants, were found to be much more likely than men in order to experience social work intervention. In this regard, there are social services provided to women by NGOs and GOs. These services are offered in several fields including education, mother welfare, personal counseling, and trainings in saving. Examples of action-based coping mechanisms that Wayto women use are:

A) “Dile Behberet Yeras Agez Budn” (Victory together self help association)

Initiatives that focus on addressing women’s practical needs (linked to the basic needs of women such as water, shelter, clothing, food, health care, etc.) have emerged in Wayto community. NGOs like Jerusalem Children and Community Development Organization (JECCDO), is giving adult education program for mothers. In this Adult education program, women are taught about sanitation, saving and family planning. In these programs, the teachers are their own daughters who have completed grade ten. In addition, in order to solve their financial constraints, women in Wayto community have saving association organized by the same organization. This saving association is known as “*Dile Behberet Yeras Agez Budn*”. In this association, women from each kebele; Kebele 13, 11 and 03 come and meet at kebele 16 where a large number of Waytos live. Each group has 20 women. There is a women’s group that met on Sundays at 10 a.m. and the other met on Mondays 2 pm. I have got the opportunity to observe both of these groups during my fieldwork. Women gathered in the street around their resident. Some were sitting on stone, while others were simply sitting on the ground. The amount of money each woman was saving is 3 birr per week (12 birr per month). Women starting from age 18 enter into saving. There were women engaged in different activities like “*Tsehafi*” (a woman who is in charge of clerical activities), “*genzeb yazia*” (a woman who controls the money as treasurer), “*Hisab shume*” or accountant (who is in charge of managing monetary affairs, the incomes and expenses).

JECCDO had also provided women with fodder. Women who had a plot of land on their backyard were selected and got training on how to garden their yards with vegetable. The organization gave them certain implements such as pick, spade, shoes and Tuta. This is done to make a crucial difference for women’s nutritional habit according to one of my interviewees.

Due to the concern that women suffer from nutritional depletion as a result of frequent pregnancy, childbirth and breast feeding, JECCDO gave chicken for Wayto women. The chickens were given for 20 women and each woman got 9 hens. Except the 5 JECCDO committee members, women had got hen through lot. The five committees were given prior

to others to serve as exemplary for other women in terms of raising hen and using egg for food. This is one way of NGOs' practices and action based coping mechanism.

B) “Yebereket Dabo Hibret Sera Mahber” (multiple bread cooperation)

Aside to JECCDO, Save the Children International had appeared to show sensitivity to the discrimination faced by Wayto women. The organization brought 56 women and organized them in saving associations. The saving association organized by these 56 women is known as “*Yebereket Dabo Hibret Sira Mahber*”. The association has got land from micro-enterprise office and a bakery shop was built. The bakery shop is known as “*Bereket Dabo bête*”.

The organization gave this saving association 10 quintal of flour and a car load of fire wood as initial capital and the bakery starts its production on 22/11/2001 E.C. The organization serves women not only to engage in saving and meet their basic needs but also teaches them to have leadership role. To this end, from 56 founding women, 5 serve as committee such as chairwoman, assistant chairwoman, secretary, treasurer and cashier.

Even though the bakery had a potential to produce 1500 pikes of bread per day, at the time of the research, it was producing 250-300 pikes of bread. The buyers were the community members themselves and Felege Hiwot Hospital in Bahir Dar town. Other community members did not buy bread. The construction of this bakery has helped women at least to eat bread and this is also found out to be the other way of NGO's practices and action based coping mechanism of women's discrimination in the community.

4.7.3 Emotion-Action based Coping Mechanism

A. “Be Bahir Dar ketema ye Negede Wayto Eddir ena Merdaja Mahber”

As it is indicated in the review literature, *Eddir* is an association that provides financial assistance and other forms of support for people during times of stress, such as illness, death, and property losses from fire or theft. With regards to this, in Wayto community, the formation of *Eddir* has its own history. According to key informant 4, it was during the *Derg* regime that the community as a whole managed to get government support. At that

time, the administration of the town had brought Waytos into kebele associations and they have started to interact with other community members.

However, in 1983 E.C. when Derg was almost overthrown, the kebele had burnt and members had lost their files. After this, each religious group started to establish their own associations. The Christians started to establish *Mahber* in the name of Holy Spirits like Saint Mary *Mahber*, while the Muslims established *Eddir* in the name of their mosque such as *Awol Mesgid Eddir*. Similarly, Waytos had established their *Eddir* in the name of their mosque “*Mesgidel Neja Eddir*”. This *Eddir* was called by this name up to 2000 E.C. After 2000 E.C, it was renamed to “*Be Bahir Dar ketema ye Negede Wayto Eddir ena Merdaja Mahber*”.

The members were only married men and women. Moreover, divorced mothers, fathers, widowed wives and husbands can also be members. The amount of money each member contributes per month is 5 birr. During the time of this research, the *Eddir* had 400 members both men and women.

Although, the amount of money that the *Eddir* pays varies based on the condition of the death, it serves as a source of finance. If the death is an announcement (“*Merdo*”) the *Eddir* pays 350 birr for the families who lost their close relative or family member. If the death is daily, it pays 700 birr.

Therefore, *Eddir*, in addition to serving as a source of financial support it also serves as a source of food. The *Eddir* buys bread and feed the hungry in the name of the deceased person (*Sadaqah*) especially for beggars in the mosque. In addition to the beggars, relatives and friends who came to console the deceased’s family and their relatives are provided with food and accommodation after the burial.

Furthermore, *Eddir* gives emotional support for women. In Wayto community as it is discussed above, only the men bury the dead and thus, women remain at home. During this time, they advice and share emotional support to women members of the deceased family. Hence, *Eddir* is found to be one way of indigenous practice of women’s coping mechanism financially as well as emotionally.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary

This chapter sums up the key issues that arose out of the study. As noted in the previous chapters, the experience of women's discrimination and coping mechanisms in a particular community located at Bahir Dar town was explored based on the methodological and feminist theoretical standards. The researcher managed to use qualitative data collection tools such as; in-depth interviews, FGD and observation. One of the findings of the study is that the origin and identity of the Waytos is a controversial issue which adds insult to injury for the community women. Similarly, the study also finds out different legends regarding Waytos origin as well as the derivation of their name.

A circle of different but related and intertwined factors have been found worsening the discrimination Wayto women are experiencing. Religiously, they are considered as faithless and consequently discriminated both by their coreligionists and Christian neighbors.

5.2 Conclusion

This study through in-depth interviews has found out that Waytos are recognized by themselves and/ or by others as a distinct group of people based on their own cultural backgrounds and religious practices. Waytos do not want the name "Wayto" as their neighbors use it as an insult to any one who appears to be wasteful and unclean.

In Wayto community there is no female genital mutilation. Moreover, FGM is considered as forbidden or "Haram" and this makes women to be free from the physical harm that FGM could bring.

Regarding their marriage practice it has been found that though males and females are said to be free to select their mate, it is not done in the practical sense. In reality, arranged marriages are the features of the Wayto community. Wayto men can engage in marriage relationship with neighboring women as they can be adopted by them, while women's

chance of having this kind of relationship is negligible. Instead, women's marriage is restricted with only to Wayto men and this happens due to the stereotypical view of neighbors towards the Wayto community and specifically to women's lack of sanitization. Instead of having marital relationship with women in Wayto community, neighboring men prefer to engage in visiting unions which further multiply women's discrimination.

Moreover, it has been observed that the community is in absolute poverty. In fact, they are in a state of observable and demonstrable disadvantage relative to the wider society to which they belong. They were in a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, drinking water, sanitation facilities, shelter and education. It was observed that no social provisions have been made in terms of housing development activities for the community. Women's survival probabilities are at stake, as they have lost access to the papyrus plant, upon which their livelihood depends. The papyrus has become difficult to get because of the women's growing dependency as well as the expansion of constructions around Lake Tana. This narrows the site of economic activities for Wayto women and pursues different ways of survival by which they can come out from the problem they are in.

Waytos are in the middle of the worst economic crisis which extends to the extent of shortage of foodstuffs which has a great impact on women as breast feeders and providers of food. Women live in poor housing conditions which are made from straw and papyrus, with no pure water supply, no kitchen, and no bed room. They are not certain what their life would be since their means of livelihood is almost devastated. In addition, women are in a great mental distress and insecurity and thus, are not sure in their existence. Although there were community development organizations such as UNICEF, JECCDO, Save the Children International and ADA that worked with Wayto women by providing the perceived needs of women, they are not enough to change women's position with in the context of larger social institutions. For instance, in 1984 UNICEF had built a grain mill house for women in Wayto community with a capital of 3,040 *birr* but no neighboring people used the milling house. Therefore, it was only the community members, who unfortunately don't have plenty of grain to grind, that made use of it.

On the other hand, though Wayto women were found experiencing more social work intervention than men, the interventions especially the religious ones and the aid coming through the *kebele* administration had reinforced patriarchal relations. Wayto Women were called “needy” when they ask their fair share of any aid that is given in their name. The state’s relationship to Wayto community was also marked by ideas and practices which associate Waytos with people involved in uproar and disturbance, which are also used to ‘justify’ their discrimination against them.

Furthermore, the logistical constraints of the intervention programmes created work burden on women. It was also observed that organizations that bring women together in some associations did not pay them for their contributions to the associations. For instance, the committee members under “*Yebereket Dabo Hibret Sera Mahber*” distribute and sell the bread. They buy wheat grain, take it to grinding house, buy fire wood for the bakery and attend meetings and so forth. These women spend most of their time doing the association’s task without any payment. In addition, these women were also responsible for domestic chores and activities in and around their homes, as well as in generating household income by involving in activities outside their homes such as in papyrus collection. Therefore, these activities increase women’s work burden and multiply their economic discrimination.

Wayto women are discriminated with many interdependent factors. In their economic activities, they are confined only to basket making, hair dressing and daily labor. There are also ideological impositions by their neighbors, by their own men as well as by the *kebele*, which restricts their involvement in various social activities.

Generally, women were found to be doubly discriminated as member of Wayto community and also as women. They are subject to all the restrictions against Waytos and in addition to those against all Ethiopian women. Domination based on age, religion and economy were found to be additive to the discrimination of women by sex. Wayto women throughout the study have been found experiencing discrimination in the form of age, economy, religion and sex.

5.3 Recommendation

5.3.1 Intervention

Wayto women are facing discrimination in various forms. Although there are NGOs and GOs that work to alleviate problems that Wayto women have, they are not enough compared to the problem that this community women have. Therefore; it is recommended that it is time for other organizations and stakeholders to intervene and give a helping hand for the Wayto community in general and its women in particular.

5.3.2 Education

To make women be able to earn enough so that they could feed, cloth, and take better care of their children, they have got training on food processing activities (such as making cookies and bombolino). However, the major problem facing these women is access to market, since the attitude of their neighbors is negative. Moreover, Wayto women have to leave the town if they want to work as maid servants and this is because of the stereotypical view of neighbors. Hence, it is recommended that the regional government has to provide appropriate emphasis by either searching for market elsewhere so that Wayto women can sell their products and get income to alleviate the economic discrimination they encounter or providing sub-disciplines like multicultural education to the general public of the town through media to help communities- to develop positive cross- cultural relations.

Voicing out for the disempowered and neglected part of the society is among the values of feminist research. The importance of education to the emancipation of women can not be overemphasized. It is ignorance that adds insult to injury for Wayto women. Most Wayto women who started school did not continue beyond the primary school level. Moreover, in a community where there is no economic security; parents feel they need their daughters make a living out of basket making consequently, they dropout of their school. Hence, it is recommended that the regional government has to develop partnerships and collaborations with various educational institutions in order to provide free education as well as free provision of educational materials such as exercise books, pen, pencils, and uniform for women and teach them because if women get an education, they will be able to earn income and improve their living and latter will be free from economic discrimination.

5.3.3 Research

More research is certainly needed to examine how to avoid the stereotypical views of neighbors towards the Wayto community.

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Appendix A: Guiding Questions for Key Informants (Influential People of the Community)

Date of interview -----

Place of interview -----

Informant's code -----

Basic information

Age -----

Occupation-----

Position in the community-----

Issue of the community

1. Is Wayto community different from other communities? If so what makes it different?
2. What kind of religion are you practicing? Can some one be a member of this community having his/her own religion?
3. Do you have a place of worship?

Probe;

- How is your relation with the surrounding community in relation to religious practices?
- Are there differences or similarities? If so, what are the differences and what are the similarities?
- What do you think is causing these differences?

4. How is marriage arrangement in your community?

Probe;

- Does Wayto community engage in marriage relationship with people out side your own community?
- Do women and men have equal right in selecting their mate?
- Is there any criterion set for women to engage in marital relationship? What about men?

If you have any question, suggestion and advice you are most welcomed

Appendix B: Guiding Questions for Women Interviewees from Wayto Community

Date of interview-----

Village (Place of interview) -----

Name of Respondent: -----

Basic information

Please give a brief personal biography?

1. Age
2. Marital status
3. Educational background
4. What is your occupation? How did you get it? Is it your preference?
5. Do you have children? How many? Where are they living?

Issues of women's Discrimination

1. Do Wayto women experienced discrimination? If so, what was the major source of this discrimination? And who discriminates you?
2. What role women hold at household and community level?
3. Who makes decision in these roles?
5. What type of resources do women gain?
6. How do women in the community resolve personal, group and community problems?
7. Do women have social organization? **Probe;** Who founded the organization? When was the organization founded? Why was the organization founded? How many members do you have? How often do you meet? What do you discuss about?
8. Do you participate in the activities of women outside your community?

Probe; In what kind of activities you participate? How do you participate?

Thank you for your genuine cooperation and if you have any question, suggestion and advice you are most welcomed.

Appendix C: Guiding Questions for Women Interviewees from Neighboring People

Date of interview-----

Village (Place of interview) -----

Name of Respondent-----

Basic information

Please give a brief personal biography?

1. Age
2. Marital status
3. Educational background
4. Occupation
5. How do you explain the social relation that you have with Wayto women?

Probe;

- Do you participate in any activities with Wayto women? In what kind of activities you participate? How do you participate? Do you eat together? Do you borrow utensils and others? Please let us discuss in detail.
- If not, why? Is there any cultural difference between you and Waytos? What is that difference and how do you perceive it?

If you have any question, suggestion and advice you are most welcomed.

Appendix D: Observation Checklist

About women's role

Is their gender division of labor in Wayto community?

About women's status

What does Wayto women's life experience look like?

- Their relationship with women in their own community
- The ways in which women deal with their discrimination

Appendix E: Guiding Questions for Focus Group Discussion

Date of the FGD-----

Place of the FGD-----

Time of the FGD-----

1. I am not from here. Could you share me a little bit about your community women experience? What I mean is; Do Wayto women experienced discrimination? Let us discuss on the major source of this discrimination? Who discriminates you? And how do they discriminate you?
2. What are the main activities that Wayto women do? Let us discuss on the roles women hold at household and community level?
3. Who makes decision at home and in the community?
4. What type of resources do women gain? Who gives them? Why?
5. Do you participate in the activities of women out side your community? How? Let us chat about the attitude of the community towards Wayto women.

Appendix F: Photos



Photo 1: A woman drawing out Papyrus at the marsh lands of Tana



Photo 2: Wayto house at Kebele 16.



Photo 3: Wayto house at kebele 13.



Photo 4: Wayto woman collecting Papyrus for fire wood from Lake Tana



Photo 5: Wayto woman carrying Papyrus fire wood in the stony path.



Photo 6: Wayto woman return from Lake Tana with jugs of water to wash clothes.



Photo 7: Nursing Mother sewing Mosseb



Photo 8: A 9 years old girl making basketing at Negede Waytos' basket market

Note: Photos are taken by the researcher her self

Appendix G

Socio-Demographic Information of the Study Participants

Table two: Background characteristics of key informants from Wayto Community

Name	Age	Level of edu.	marital status	No of children	Occupation
Key informant-1	45	Illiterate	Widowed	3	Government employee
Key informant-2	38	12 th grade comp.	Married	2	gatekeeper
Key informant-3	65	-	-	-	Sheikh
Key informant- 4	48	12 th grade comp.	Married	4	Factory worker
Key informant- 5	42	5 th grade comp.	Married	3	adoration

Table three: Background characteristics of women interviewees from neighboring people

Name	Age	Level of edu.	Marital status	No of children	Occupation	Relationship
Neighbor 1	28	Degree	Single	----	Shop owner	neighbor
Neighbor 2	42	Diploma	Married	3	Teacher	“
Neighbor 3	27	12 th grade comp.	Married	1	Shop owner	“
Neighbor 4	39	12 th grade comp.	Married	3	Government employ	“
Neighbor 5	25	3 rd year university student	Single	----	Student	“
Neighbor 6	28	Diploma	Married	---	Clinical nurse	“

Table four: Background characteristics of women interviewees from Wayto community

Name	Age	Level of education	Marital status	No. of children	Occupation	Residence
participant 1	60	Illiterate	Widowed	5	Handicraft making	13
participant 2	40	Illiterate	Widowed		Handicraft making	16
participant 3	18	4 th grade	Single	-	Shoeshine girl	11
participant 4	40	Illiterate	Married	4	Housewife	16
participant 5	19	Read & write	Married	1	Handicraft making	03
participant 6	19	5 th grade	Divorced	-	Handicraft making	03
participant 7	22	8 th grade	Single	-	Hair dressing & Handicraft making	03
participant 8	28	10 th grade complete	Married	1	Factory worker	03
participant 9	25	8 th grade completed	Divorced	-	Hair dressing	11
participant 10	40	Illiterate	Divorced	5	Unable to see & no work	03
participant 11	32	6 th grade	Divorced	2	Handicraft making	16
participant 12	38	4 th grade comp.	Widowed	3	Handicraft making	16
participant 13	18	8 th grade	Single	-	Daily laborer & Handicraft making	16
participant 14	45	Illiterate	Widowed	6	Handicraft making	16
participant 15	28	8 th grade	Married	2	Handicraft making	16
participant 16	41	Illiterate	Married	4	Handicraft making	11
participant 17	20	8 th grade comp.	Married	1	Handicraft making	16

Table five: Background characteristics of Focus group discussants

Name	Age	Level of education	Marital status	No of children	Occupation	Place of residence
Discussant 1	60	Illiterate	Widowed	5	Handicraft making	13
Discussant 2	40	Illiterate	Married	4	Housewife	16
Discussant 3	40	Illiterate	divorced	5	Unable to see & no work	03
Discussant 4	38	4 th grade com	Widowed	3	Handicraft making	16
Discussant 5	45	Illiterate	Widowed	6	Handicraft making	16
Discussant 6	41	Illiterate	Married	4	Handicraft making	11

Appendix H

Consent Form

Dear Interviewee and Focus Group discussant

I am Haimanot Minwuye. I am post graduate student at Addis Ababa University, Institute of Gender studies. As partial fulfillment of the study, I am expected to work a thesis. To this end, I am working a thesis on Women's Oppression and Their Coping Mechanisms in Negede Wayto community. The purpose of this study is for academic use only.

Participation is completely voluntary. There is also no right or wrong answer. You can freely explain what you think is relevant. Once you consent to participate, you can also skip questions you do not want to answer. I will record with tape not to miss important points during the interview. Every cassette will be kept confidentially and will be destroyed afterwards. I want to assure you that the information you provide me with is very valuable for the successful accomplishment of this study. As a result I am kindly requesting your co-operation. Are you volunteer to participate in this study?

Thank you!!