

**CULTURE AND GENDER IN SIDAMA  
FOLK POETRY: A POST STRUCTURALIST APPROACH**

By

NIGUSSIE MESHESHA

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE  
INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGES STUDIES  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF MASTER OF  
ARTS DEGREE IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

JUNE, 2005

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university, and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Kassa Mihiretie (student)

Signature  19/02/2007

Advisor Teshome Demise

Signature 

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**CULTURE AND GENDER IN SIDAMA FOLK POETRY  
A POST STRUCTURALIST APPROACH**

**NIGUSSIE MESHESHA**

**APPROVAL OF BOARD OF EXAMINERS**

---

**Chairman, Dept. Graduate  
Committee**

*Berhanu Mathew*  
**Advisor**

*Yimer Kifle (PhD)*  
**Examiner**

*Melaknot Mengist*  
**Examiner**

---



---



---



## Table of Contents

	Pages
Acknowledgments-----	I
Pronunciation Key - -----	II
Abstract -----	IV
1. Introduction -----	1
1.1 Statement of the Problem -----	5
1.2 Objectives of the Study -----	6
1.3 Methods of the Study -----	7
1.4 Delimitation of the Study -----	8
1.5 Significance of the Study -----	8
2. Review of Related Literature -----	10
2.1 Folklore-----	10
2.1.1 Genres of Folklore-----	11
2.1.2 The Role of Folklore in Socialization -----	12
2.1.3 Folklore in Forming Gender Identity -----	14
2.2 Oral Traditions-----	16
2.3 Oral Literature-----	17
2.3. 1 Oral Poetry -----	19
2.3. 2 Oral Poetry as a Narrative -----	20
2.4 Approaches in Folklore-----	21
2.4.1 Ideological - -----	22
2.4.2 Post Structuralism -----	23
3. Analysis of Culture and Gender in Sidama Folk Poetry -----	27
3.1 The Sidama Culture-----	27
3.1.1 Marriage -----	30
3.1.2 Social Administration -----	32
3.1.3 Circumcision -----	33
3.1.4 The Mourning Ceremony -----	35
3.1.5 Religion-----	37
3.1.6 New year-----	38

3.1.6 New year-----	38
3.2 Gender in Sidama Folk Poetry -----	38
3.2.1 Hanno Poems -----	39
3.2.2 Faro Poems -----	44
3.2.3 Danbaryo Poems-----	47
3.2.4 Haye Poems -----	49
3.2.5 Hamarancho / Harrokisse Poems-----	58
3.2.6 Work Poems -----	64
3.3 Self Confirmation -----	67
4. Recommendations -----	73
5. Conclusion -----	76
Bibliography	
Appendices	
Informants	

## **Acknowledgements**

I really express my gratitude to my advisor Dr. Berhanu Mathewos who has spent much of his time correcting the paper to have its present appearance. I really thank my mother Filflua Tessema and my brothers and sisters who have given me every help during my tenure in the university. I am also indebted to Ato Kassahun Hirutu for his advice and resourcefulness. I also appreciate Ato Hailu Fiche who has helped me in collecting the data. Finally, my gratitude goes to my friends and others who have contributed for the overall completion of the thesis.

## Pronunciation key

In Sidama Language the sounds are Latin origin since the introduction of new curriculum after 1991. Before this time the educational curriculum used Geez alphabet. Now in this thesis the poems are transcribed in Latin letters.

### Sidama Alphabets

B	Baa	K	Kaa	T	Taa
C	Caa	L	Laa	V	Vaa
D	Daa	M	Maa	W	Waa
F	Faa	N	Naa	X	Xaa
G	Gaa	P	Paa	Y	Yaa
H	Haa	Q	Qaa	Z	Zaa
J	Jaa	R	Raa		

### *Single Consonants*

Most of these consonants are read as they are written. However, some of the sounds have different ways of pronunciation where most of the sounds are read as they are written. The pronunciation of 'C', and 'Q' and 'X' is somehow different but they are pronounced stressing on the sounds as in the examples.

- X: 'Xalatico'/t'alatico/ to mean 'people from other tribe'  
'Maxi'/mat'i/, to mean 'hide'
- C: 'Chabicho'/Ch'abicho/, to mean 'light'
- Q: 'Qarra'/Ka'ra/ to mean 'side walk', etc.

<i>Pair Consonants</i>					
CH	Chaa	SH	Shaa	TS	Tsaa
DH	Dhaa	PH	Phaa	ZY	Zyaa
NY	Nyaa				
<i>Vowels</i>					
A	aa	I	ii	U	uu
E	ee	O	oo		

It is better to notice that there are long and stressed sounds. The long sounds are written with double letters and the stressed sounds are indicated with apostrophe.

## **Abstract**

*The thesis focuses on the themes of Sidama Folk Poetry in showing Culture and Gender differences. In Sidama women are treated as if they are weak, incapable of doing some thing by their own and they deserve everything of the lesser quality. They are respected only when they give birth to so many children, which is considered as their great life time achievement. Males on the contrary do almost nothing where as the women hold all the major responsibilities, but they are socially more influential. These problems are well stated in the oral poems and the poems portray women are subordinated and maltreated in the society since the social structure is built upon the reality that confirms men are privileged over women. The existing reality is set on the cultural conditions that dwarf the role of women in the society.*

*So it must be deconstructed so as to show the prejudices and the ill treatment of the women. The social institutions prohibit the women from participating actively and not to make any decision on their own family and life. The patriarchal culture also confirms this reality as it is seen in the different poems. The voices of the women haven't been heard for ages where women do express their opposition towards males' superiority.*

*The analysis of the poem is done based on the post structuralist point of view by deconstructing the male centered reality. The oral poetries are very suitable to learn about the voices of the women and at the same time they help to understand the social position of the women through their themes. The poems are collected through field work by administering interviewing (unstructured), and with participant and non participant observations based on situations. Other works in the area of folklore are reviewed to give the background for the analysis.*

## 1. Introduction

In this study the researcher focuses on the themes of the oral poetries of Sidama people in showing culture and gender differences in the society. The study of culture and gender will be explored through folkloristic study in general and oral literature in particular. As a genre in oral literature, oral poetry like the other forms is a very suitable area to conduct a research on culture and gender since it is the reflection of a society and it helps to know the social thought of the society.

The study of folk poetry comes under the study of folklore in general and oral literature in particular. Besides, folk poetry has a very close link to cultural studies as the study of folklore involves the socio-cultural, economic, political and religious conditions since its interest is to study about the spiritual and material aspects of human life.

Therefore, in order to have a thorough understanding of a society and to take any policy measures; a responsible body should first focus on the folklore of the people under study as it shows the socio-political, economic and religious activities. As it serves the purpose of the thesis so as to understand about the oral poems during their analysis, it would be appropriate to give some historical account of the people at this stage.

The Sidama people who were formerly called Sidamo are one of the Cushitic families of Ethiopia. They settled in the present area between Lake Awassa in the north, town of Dilla and Lake Abaya in the South, Loghita River and the mountain ranges of Gamba bordering with Arsi and Bale, which is the origin of Wabe Shebele River in the east, and Wolita in the west.

It is believed that the Sidama came from the present area of Dawa River. As oral traditions and genealogies are the main sources in Sidama, Destaw (1987: 9), the Sidama people settled in the present area coming from Dawa river valley in search of grazing land. On the other hand, Humer (1987: 1) tried to create a link between the Sidama and the Amahra of Ankober. He argues that the 'Bushe' "the

founding heroes" with 'Maldea' came from Ankober. However, Betena (1983: 66-67) strongly criticizes Hume that this was not a real history of these people, but it is a mere creation of his respondents who were the co-workers of the feudal lords. He says the respondents acknowledged the idea only to get administrative positions.

Furthermore, Hamer (1987: 1) quoted Murdock (1959) *Africa: its people and their Culture History* that: "Sidamo used to refer to the Gudela, Kambta , Tambaro, Alabba, and Walamo in the sixteenth century, peoples dwelling in the general vicinity of lakes Abaya and Awassa". This definition, however, shows that Sidama constituted different cushetic families. Hamer further added that Sidama people have traced back to the sixteenth century kingdom of Bali, which was presumably situated in its western extreme near Lake Abaya.

It is said the Sidama people were ruled by their own administration system which is known as 'Luwa'. The 'Luwa' system has been practiced till the introduction of modern administration very recently. But starting the imperial regime the Sidama was constituted in Sidamo kifle Hager and Sidama province where it had nine woredas: Yirgalem, Arbegona, Alet Wondo, Hager Selam, Leku, Daye, Arroresa, Awassa and Darra.

Nevertheless, by the current government the Sidama is administered into ten woredas including Boricha woreda where there is a separate woreda (Daraa) and three towns (Yirgalem, Aleta wondo; Awassa) called to the federal government. Moreover, these woredas are re-named after the provisional government in 1991. It is said the need to change the names of some woredas like Dalle (Yirgalem), Yaye (Arbegoa), Hulla (Hagerselam) and Shebedino (Leku) is just to give local names.

The Sidama people are one of the highest population of the country and Yonas (1990: 2) finds out the total population is estimated to be 1,788,1000 where the density is thought to be 208.4 persons per km<sup>2</sup> which is the third densely populated area in the country next to "Haikochina Butajira" and "Woliyta". Even now it is estimated that the populations of the Sidama exceeds 3 million. But

SLM (Sidamo Liberation Movement) recently announced that the Sidama people reach to 4.5 million.

Therefore, having said this much about their history, the background of the study is that, first, Sidama folk poetry for its intense capacity in showing their socio-cultural thoughts; it is believed that it is an area that invites a researcher to make something of the highest value for the people and the country. Though modern education is a newly introduced culture where it has brought changes in the social strata, the Sidama have kept alive their cultural heritages. Moreover, some influences also come from the Protestants teaching yet some of the cultural rites have not still been changed. Hence, oral literature in general and folk poetry in particular is the major area that has an immutable contribution to the study of Sidama people.

Second, gender is the most sensitive area in these days. Moreover, Sidama women like many of the Africans have lots of problems. So these enlighten the researcher to address the issue of gender in Sidama society. Mainly, the women have deep rooted social, cultural and political problems and everything is shown in their oral forms. And it is believed the study of their roles in the society is pivotal for policy formulators to make applicable policies.

Lastly, when the researcher presented his study for the sixteenth annual conference of the *Institute of Languages Studies* with the topic entitled: "Gender and Literature: A Post Structuralist Analysis of 'Kadamas Bashger'" he found post structuralism to be the major area to deal with gender issues and to create gender awareness in academic situations.

Now this study focuses on culture and gender in Sidama folk poetry. There are a few works that have been done on the Sidama people. Most of them are for partial fulfillment of the bachelor degree in Amharic and English literature, linguistics and sociology. Some of the works include Haileyesus Seba (2001) worked on the Marginalized Minorities of Craft Workers of the Sidama and their real problems. Besides, Yonas Youma (1990) in his senior essay in the department of Sociology and Social Administration made on "The Traditional

Calendar System of the Sidama people. Gulelat Abate (1989) who worked on "Content Analysis of Sidama Folk Poetry about Women", " በሲዳማ ብሔረሰብ ሴቶች ላይ የተገጠሙ ሥነ ቃላዊ ግጥሞች ይዘት ትንተና " focused on the theme of the poems.

Moreover, Desta Gobeze (1987) did on "Mourning and Treatment Ceremony among the Sidama Nationality... and he discussed how mourning ceremony is practiced among the people. Abebe Kebede (1983) needs to be mentioned for his study "Circumcision and Folk Poetry in Sidama", "የግርዛት ባህልና ባጋጣሚው የሚዘፈኑ ግጥሞች በሲዳማ ብሔረሰብ." Worku Geda who studied about "የሲዳምኛ እንቅስቃሴዎች" "Sidama Riddles" he took some riddles and analyzed about the nature of the riddles and their themes.

Degafu Feyesa (1975) in his "Mourning Ceremony in Sidama" " የሲዳማ ብሔረሰብ የለቅሶ ሥርዓት" showed pre and post burial ceremonies of the people and its ritualistic nature. Terechi Mengistu (1965) made his study "የሲዳማ ሀገረሰብ ግጥሞች" Sidama Folk Poetry." Terechi made a critical analysis on the form of the poems and like Gulelat he made content analysis. Mengesha Meshena (1972) also interested in "ከጋብቻ ጋር የተያያዙ የሲዳማ ብሄረሰብ ሥነ-ቃሎች" "Oral literature related to Marriage in Sidama" and he discussed on oral forms related to marriage based on the their themes.

Some researches from the Department of Linguistics were done on "Sidama Verb Phonology" (Abebe G/Tsadik, 1986) and "Sidama Verb Morphology..."Anbesse Teffera, 1984). Works from foreigners like Hamer (1970) "Sidama Generational class Cycles..."Wedekind (1980) "Sidama, Gendeo/Derrasa/, Burji Phonological Difference"., Gaspairno (1983) "Sidama Dictionary" and Murdock (1959) "Sidama peoples" are to be mentioned

Therefore, different from other studies done on Sidama people this research's focus will be on Culture and Gender as they are reflected in Sidama folk poetry. Mainly, the research will be conducted from the folkloristic background and the post structuralist point of view. The researcher found that there are some similarities with his own study and the others mentioned. However, in this thesis

In fact, as it was discussed earlier, the existing culture that confirms male monotheism is the driving force behind the problems of the women. So, it must be deconstructed by injecting gender concepts to the subordinate group. That means, the male centered culture should be denied because it ignores the plurality of reality. This is the reality that both sexes accept the existing norm and tradition as if it were a single reality. The tension of gender differences seems to be reflected in the folklore and particularly in the folk poetry. However, no research has been conducted in the area to show these tensions in Sidama culture. Therefore, the aim of this research is to analyze Sidama oral poetry so as to reveal the existing gender relationships.

## **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this research is to contribute to the study of folklore in Ethiopia. Besides, it has the objectives to study Sidama culture and to show the place of women in the society. As in other societies, the socialization process of children in Sidama starts at home and that shapes the social relationship of the sexes. Therefore, through the study of Sidama oral poetry, the paper attempts to show how the socialization process dictates the role of women in Sidama socio-cultural and political conditions. The study will attempt to show the cultural thought and to what extent it dictates the gender differences.

As a result of that the study has multifaceted purposes. First, as the people constitute one of the largest populations in Ethiopia (more than 4.5 million as Sidama Liberation Movement report in May 2005), the study of their oral literature would have a pivotal role in formulating appropriate policies in socio-political and cultural areas. Second, as the people are an oral society the study of their folklore in general and the study of their oral literature in particular would help to understand about the people. Thirdly, folklore would help us to come up with a better understanding about the material and spiritual culture of the Sidama.

Though oral poetry is not necessarily the characteristics of illiterate society, the study of their oral cultures, as Sidama are mainly an oral society, helps policy

makers to set functional and applicable policies that create a conducive environment for development. Any policy formulation should base itself on the people's culture and social thought, which are carried in their oral tradition where most of the Sidama people are socialized by their oral cultures: beliefs, rituals and social administration that pass through generation in a word of mouth.

Besides, as it was discussed before, the study of Sidama folklore would become very helpful to learn about the society, where oral literature and genealogies are the main sources. As the cultural notions have got their real significance in the daily activities of a society like Sidama, which has diverse cultural ways as they form Ethiopia to be an ethnic museum of the world, then folklore takes a significant place to study the people.

The study also aims to un-gender the gendered. That means, it tries to show a different reality other than the male-centered reality. In short, the study will try to answer the following questions.

1. What is oral poetry?
2. Does oral poetry (folklore) depict the existing gender differences among the Sidama people?
3. What problems of women are reflected in the oral poetry?
4. How does oral culture dictate gender differences?
5. What role does oral poetry play in the socialization process?
6. What could be the reason(s) why women are subordinated as they are reflected in the oral poetry?

### **1.3 Methods of the Study**

In the study the researcher collected, classified and analyzed the poems. The instruments used in the collection of the poems are interviewing and observations. The interview was mainly unstructured and participant and non participation observations were done.

The informants are 28 and they are above 45 years. In the study both men and women are included based on their ability in telling the poems as they are acknowledged in the society. The researcher did observations for the New Year and in work places. There are about 58 poems collected and from these 40 of them are classified based on their nature of occurrence.

Moreover, in the study post structuralist approach is used to show the gender differences. The poems are analyzed based on their themes in showing the gender relationship. In the data collection, there is tape recording and note taking and the oral poems are analyzed with in their contexts.

As part of the methodology of the study, the researcher uses primary and secondary sources and most graduate and undergraduate works are examined. Furthermore, various books in the subject area were reviewed. Of course, reference books and other sources will be used in the process.

#### **1.4 Delimitation of the Study**

The study devotes itself to the oral poetry of the Sidama people. Mainly, it is limited to the study of the common beliefs of the people as they are reflected in the oral poetry about gender differences. In other words, it discusses about the role of culture and how it dictates gender relationship as it is seen in the oral poetry.

In the study only two woredas, Arbegona and Daye are included since it is difficult to study all where there are financial and time constraints. The other reason why these wordas are selected is that the researcher is familiar with these areas.

The researcher collects different poems that are mostly related to gender relationship. There are 58 poems that have been collected and from these about forty of them are analyzed. The poems are chosen based on their themes in showing the gender differences.

Finally, the work is limited to show the gender relationship and to deconstruct the male centered reality from the post structuralist point of view.

## **2. Review of Related Literature**

In this chapter the researcher tries to examine and make a review on those works done in the area of folklore study. Firstly, the paper discusses about folklore and its definitions. Secondly, it tries to show the different approaches in the study of folklore. Thirdly, it presents the role of folklore in the socialization of children and creating gender identity. Finally, as the focus of the study, the paper makes discussion of oral poetry under oral literature.

### **2.1 Folklore**

Folklore studies about the various traditions of a people. So it helps to study the material and spiritual culture of Sidama people. Folklore shows the cultural conditions that build the reality (ideology) in which a particular society lives in. Thus, the social realities that prevail in Sidama are found in their folklore. That means, the various cultural values, customs and traditions are reflected in their folklore.

Folklore reflects the socio-cultural, political, economic and religious life of a society and it can be taken as a bridge between literary studies, history, philosophy and anthropology where it touches all aspects of human life. Hence, folklore is the best way to study the values, customs and traditions of Sidama people where it touches all aspects of life.

According to Laweless et al (2004: 128) folklore involves "The traditional cultural expressions of bounded and communal groups" that clearly depicts the cultural and political identity. Here the idea is that folklore enables to learn about the cultural conditions and the social realities of a people like Sidama. The Sidama people are cultured within their folk forms and the people keep their heritages in the forms of folklore. The social realities are set upon the folk ways. Lee (2004: 1) supports this by saying we are "products of our cultural heritage" and the "geographical, physical, emotional, and spiritual influences that we experience". Lee says the "songs and stories are, history, occupation, and religion, all form the basis of the traditions that mold us."

Burrison (2004: 1) explains about folklore as it is, "A community-shared resource of accumulated knowledge, folklore is learned informally, preserved in memory and practice, and passed on through speech".

In folklore, we learn the common values, customs and traditions. Folklore has the power to instill common and shared beliefs. The meaning/reality that we understand in our culture is the result of culturally learned behavior that we acquire through folklore. Shareve (1982: 49-50) talks meaning in folklore is "derived from the natural occurrence of an event in context". Here, of course, folklore exists in context and in different forms. As it includes performance, during performance it is done in a very attractive manner with lucid language.

### 2.1.1 Genres of Folklore

According to Abernethy (2004: 2) "Folklore is generally classified under four basic groupings: oral literature, material culture, folk custom, and performing folk arts. Oral literature includes the traditional prose narrative forms: myth, legend, and folktale. Folksongs and ballads (poetry) are also in oral literature, as are riddles and proverbs". These forms of folklore do exist in most societies whether they are literate or illiterate societies as it is observable in peoples' day to day activities in one form or the other.

Besides, Fekade (1991: 7-8) quoted Alan Dundes (1965) that

*Folklore includes myths, legends, folktales, jokes, proverb, riddles, chants, charms, blessings, curses, oaths, insults, retorts, teases, toasts, tongue-twisters, and greeting and leave-taking formulas... It also includes folk costume, folk dance, folk drama...folk art, folk belief (or superstition) folk medicine, folk instrumental music... folk songs (poetry)... folk speech...folk similes...folk metaphors...and names...*

As Dundes tried to classify the different forms of folklore, these are observable also in Sidama as it does in most societies. There are, for example, songs/sirbba/, tales/ 'maatto'/, myth /'hayyo'/, poetry /'kirro'/, mourn /'willa'/,

greetings and leave taking formulas/'ke're'/, insults/'onnansho'/, blessing/'masso'/ and so on. Most of these do also exist in Sidama folklore.

Finnegan (1970: 25) uses folklore interchangeably with oral literature as it is functional in both literate and illiterate societies. It helps to learn the peoples' socio-cultural and political conditions in the context of its occurrences.

### **2.1.2 The Role of Folklore in Socialization**

In any oral society the socialization process is done with the oral narratives: tales, legends, folk poetry, folk songs, riddles, proverbs, etc. And that is how children are taught about their cultural norms and laws. This training starts in infancy at home and also in schools, neighborhood, in religious centers, in media, etc. In the meantime, the children acquire common and shared knowledge in their culture. Lawless et al (2004: 234) say, "Children have been exposed to, are familiar with, and have practiced these and other literary conventions common in children's literature. These conventions are present in the many literary and literature events in which children participate in their daily lives". But such kind of socialization is limited to school. In Sidama Society the socialization process is done based on the orally transmitted traditions that equip the young to follow the ancestral history, glory and heritages.

As Kidd (2002: 16-17) "the learning of a culture-the process where by the traditions of a community are passed down the generations-is known as socialization". The process helps to transmit the ancestral heritages to the young. Dube (2001: 105) discusses how males and females are socialized. For example, girls are expected to "speak softly and avoid abrasive-'male' language". Boys, however, learn all forms of abuses. If a girl talks and laughs, he is treated as ill mannered. Dube adds that, girls should shoulder all kinds of abuses" which is of course part of the training process.

In Sidama people a woman is expected to be submissive and should obey herself to what ever her husband says though she does not believe in it as in most of the societies in the world and Chodorow (1993: 58) supports this saying

that "The care and socialization of girls by women ensures the production...personalities" across cultures.

In the socialization process the media (print or electronic) also plays a pivotal role. Catlin (1989) discusses that "political socialization is the name for the process of learning values, beliefs, and attitudes in a society". But, naturally, children are socialized through "the traditional agents of socialization", that is, parents, family, school, peer groups, community, church, etc. In Sidama, for instance, the socialization process is through the traditional agents but school as it is a new introduced phenomenon. And the socialization process determines our beliefs, attitudes and values where our identity is derived from. Besides, in our days media has become very influential. Media together with religious institutions and schools have a great role in socializing and also Ferguson (1977:22) indicates, "social construction of role and gender are created through the process of socialization with formal and informal education". Davison and Yu (1975: 2) believe "the human personality is a product of communication; human culture and all social institutions are products of communication" as a socialization process.

Furthermore, Lakoff (1973: 47) discusses about the socialization of girls who are victims of culture which advocates male monotheism in a structural society in most cases across cultures. And so Lakoff presents it as in the following.

*If a little girl 'talks rough' likes a boy, she will normally be ostracized, scolded, or made fun of. In this way society in the form of a child's A parent, and friends, keeps her in line, in her place. This socializing process is, in most of its aspects harmless and often necessary, but in this particular instance the teaching of special linguistic uses to little girls-it raises serious problems though the teachers may well be unaware of this. If the little girl learns her lesson well, she is not rewarded with unquestioned acceptance on the part of society.*

This is a common thinking in the patriarchal world that prevails to males domination and it is something seen in the socialization of children .Brown (1964: 53) supports Lakoff where children most of the time are "subjected to approval

or disapproval" by the community they live in by parents, siblings, peers, teachers, etc. As this is male centered thinking, it must be deconstructed in order to show a reality other than male centered reality that is conformed by culture.

### **2.1.3 Folklore in Forming Gender Identity**

Gender consciousness cannot be out of the study of oral culture. Through the oral forms both sexes are socialized to accept their identity either as strong , brave and wise on the one side and weak, submissive and foolish on the other. Such identity formation is maintained through the oral traditions that build the reality in which any society lives in. Lawless et al (2004: 133) believe that "culture should be understood as more or less integrated wholes". Culture is what is taken as a guiding line for people who belong to the same group characterized by the same values, customs and traditions. Those values, customs and traditions have dictated the relationship between the sexes.

Barker et al (2003: xv) discuss about "the central problem of the social construction of gender", which is of course "the questions of subjectivity and identity". Nature is over towered by culture where the equality of men to women is denied by the power of culture. In all societies children are socialized by their cultural ways, which privilege men to women. This hence paves the ground for gender differences. Kidd (2002: 19) explains that what we understand by this is "the product of culturally learnt behavior rather than the result of biologically programming."

The gender identity in Sidama is the result of culturally learnt behavior as it is in most societies. Mainly the identities of male and female are rooted from their physical bodies where male are mostly stronger than female. Scott (2001: 286) discusses identities that we take for granted are rooted in our physical bodies (gender and race) or our cultural... heritages". Mitchell et al (2000: 60-62) finds out "polarized discourse... are at the heart of the culture wars. Because sexual meanings, identities, and knowledge are constituted through discourses." and "sexual speeches... transforms the so called natural modesty of children" into inflamed desires and that is how gender identity is formed.

Gender refers to the social institutionalization of sexual difference; it is a concept used by those who understood not only sexual inequality but also much of sexual differentiation to be socially constructed. Here the very point is that gender actualization is what we acquire in the socialization process.

Again, Moore (1996: 62) brings his view that "nowhere is the power of socialization so clearly illustrated as in the creation of gender roles". Of course, gender roles start at home in telling stories by fireside or in bed time. Normally such stories always tell man is stronger than woman. Moore (P: 63) says the physical condition of women who "are expected to be physically weaker" is the base for gender inequalities. Still Snyder and Mary (1995: 14) explain, "Gender is a social construct that asserts the expectations and responsibilities of men and women (that) are not always biologically determined".

The gender identity of children begins at the age of three (the beginning of oedipal period), Chodorow (1993: 49) and the development of the sexes as Ortner (1993: 7) "becomes radically different" where gender identity is the product of culture no matter how both sexes are biologically different. This point is in line with what Scott (2001) discusses. And Mott and Julie (1991: 13) believe "Gender is rooted in societies' beliefs that the sexes are naturally distinct and opposed socially beings. These beliefs are turned into self fulfilling prophecies through the sex-role socialization: the biological sexes are assigned distinct genders."

Consequently, the way we socialize a child is a building block for gender differences and Corinne (1964: 53) states that "a child plays his or her roles as the culture defines it "in the relationship to other people.

## **2.2 Oral Tradition**

In any of the societies, for example Sidama, we acquire the various tradition, customs and beliefs through oral forms despite the proliferation of the writing system. All societies "civilized or "backward" educate their children telling them stories at home, in schools, in religious centers, etc. This socialization process indeed comes through oral cultures or you may call it oral tradition. Ong (2000:

and that their preservation depends on the powers of memory of successive generation of beings."

Therefore, according to Vansina (1965: 39) any society has social organizations to regulate the orally transmitted traditions, to keep alive all ancestral heritages and that is of course done in the oral traditions. Thus, this cannot be different in any of the society.

### **2.3 Oral Literature**

Oral literature is one of the genres in folklore that consists folk narratives such as folk poetry, folk tales, legend, myths, proverbs, riddles, etc. In general, Oral literature is as Ballantye (2001: 2) "One of the aspects of folklore, and by oral literature we mean such things as legends, tales, proverbs, sayings, dialect speech and folk songs". Ong (2000: 14) indicates literature, as it is both the oral and written forms. This mainly emphasizes on the idea that oral literature comprises the oral culture that is characterized by "powerful and beautiful verbal performances of high artistic and human worth."

The study of oral literature has become more significant because Chesaina (1994: 85) believe "oral literature is the heart of a people's way of life" since it shows the social consciousness and the culture of the people. And it is a springboard to examine day-to-day activities of a society where it "is seen as the foundation on which the cultural direction and development of a people stands".

In Sidama recurrent themes, messages, symbols are transmitted from generation to generation by a word of mouth. That is, the oral stories are the ways in which the cultural heritages pass from generation to generation. However, when they are narrated there is adaptability and that may some times change meanings. In other words, there are lots of changes made when the narrator tells the stories and the "original composition" does not exist.

As oral cultures are contained in oral literature, the latter helps to transmit messages (customs) to generations with its entertaining power since it pleases the ears of the hearer. The Sidama like any other people use their oral literature

to transmit the ancestral ways. What makes oral literature more fascinating is that Pike (1983: 14) its performance, which makes it "unique and transitory, fully meaningful only to members of the particular society."

As a result, Pike further advances saying oral cultures (literature) usually are "embodied in verbal archetypes" where archetypes are recurring themes over generations with the images, symbols that describe the collective consciousness of a society. Arewa and Shreve (1982: 64) define oral literature as it is "the study of ways of speaking which appear in the life world as the manifestation of rule systems."

Thus, oral literature is something that is orally transmitted which tells as the present the past and with some speculations to the future. Here, however, the definition is only from historical perspective. In other words, oral literature also recounts what is in the present as it forms the present oral culture.

On the other hand, Dorson (1972: 64) describes oral literature as an aspect in folklore and folk life, which is a verbal art, or expressive literature. Dorson brings his view that all folk narratives including myths, legends, folk song and poetry, folk tales, epics, etc are under folklore that go together with folk custom: religion, medicine, etc which constitute the folk life.

Finally, oral literature Finnegan (1970: 2) is "by definition dependent on a performer who formulates it in words on specific occasion." Finnegan also states (p:8) that there is high variability since there couldn't be a question of originality in the composition. The reason is that it is preserved in oral cultures and it is liable to changes as the performer's ability, intention, etc

. Oral literature is consisted of the oral narratives (for example, oral poetry), folk tales, legends, myths, etc. Particularly, the oral poetry as it is commonly practiced in most societies for the theme it carries and for its entertaining power as it pleases the ears of the hearer, it helps to know the social beliefs , customs, values, traditions, etc of Sidama society. There fore in the following section oral poetry will be dicussed under oral literature.

### 2.3.1 Oral Poetry

"Understandings of folklore can affect a local political context, that is mostly speculative in the context of its occurrence", Lawless (2004: 12). Oral poetry is one of the genres in oral literature; its study emanates from humankind's unlimited desire and of course where folkloristic studies involve performance. As oral literature is a genre in folklore, oral poetry is a sub genre in oral literature under narratives. The oral poems are composed with performance and Toelken et al (2003: 97) claim that "Performance is more than composition of transmission, probably agreed to be the single most important stage in the life of oral poetry".

Basically oral literature in general and oral poetry in particular Mesfine (2000: 8) "plays a vital role in understanding the lives and beliefs of a society in order to have a clear understanding of a given society and important culture based development."

So folk poems do show the social realities of Sidama people and they reflect the existing relationship. In other words, the oral poems would help to understand the social thoughts and the patterns of life of the Sidama. Kennedy (1993: 104-5) then strengthens this saying "poetry is mimetic" and it creates image in the mind of the reader (listener) where it "aims to capture what is far more difficult to understand and far more important: not just how people look but how they act, and how they are motivated to act".

Furthermore, Ngara (1990: 15) discusses poetry works in "a complex interaction of historical and social factors, subject matter, theme, ideas and the ideological element," which accompanies with the form that is aesthetic dimension "the mode, the linguistic structure, imagery, symbolism, tone, rhythmic patterns and sound devices."

Dorson (1972: 39) indicates folksongs entail folk poetry that are available in all cultures where "people in all cultures" sing folksongs and they help to reflect cultures. And Dorson states that narratives in general and folk poetry in particular are subject to change but they are "impersonal in their approach to their subject."

Finnegan (1970) stresses that, "a society cannot be fully understood without its folk poetry. And "Oral poetry takes the place of newspapers among non-literate peoples. Songs can be used to report and comment on current affairs, for political pressure, for propaganda, and to reflect and mould public opinion." poetry according to Finnegan helps to "pressurize those in authority or to comment on local politics" (P: 273).

Therefore, the poems are performed in the form of lullabies, songs, etc and the themes they carry help one to understand the Sidama people. Besides, the different social beliefs, customs, values and traditions are transmitted through generations using the oral poems.

### **2.3.2 Oral Poetry as a Narrative**

Folk poetry is a form of oral narratives and it has a mythical value, where there is a myth of creating ones identity in the themes of oral poems. The oral narratives include folk poetry, folktales, myths, legends, etc. Narratives are genres under oral literature and they portray the social realities. More over, the narratives (stories) tell us about people and they are means to create their identity. In the narratives most of the time there are protagonists and antagonists and always the good wins the bad, and that is mythical. At the same time, stories tell the courage of a people in a certain land undermining the other and this kind of mythical creation of ones identity is done in oral poetries. There fore, the narratives build up the culture that we live in.

Culture binds us together and bases itself on the myth of creating our identity and Lawless et al (2004: 128) present, for example, " the black in the Diaspora who" resist homogenizing cultural influences in order to preserve modes of worship," belief and their identity is through the myth of creating ones identity which is ideological. Therefore, oral poetry as a form of narrative it is a means to create ones identity and that is mythical.

In the same token the identity of the Sidama is established under the "mass culture" that the ideological form privileges the dominant group. But the people

do resist this through the oral narratives. In the narratives the Sidama express their oppressions based on ethnic group, gender, etc.

Kidd (2002: 22) talks about the myth of "mass culture" as it "is not a neutral concept it is historical, specific and ideological." The very fact it is a representation of reality as Kennedy (1993: 3-4) defines myth, as it is "a traditional narrative that is used as a designation of reality. Myth is applied narrative". Kennedy believes myth a "special speech" that "a given society affirms its own reality through narrative."

Therefore, the oral poetry as a form of oral narrative show the social set up and the binding principles as they are told in the Sidama society. In the narration the poems are told for entertaining purpose or to escape from the world of dissatisfaction, despair, or to create ones own identity and in the mean time it is creating myth/reality.

Shreve (1982: 41) says narratives "transcend daily life in the sense that they refer to" and they originate from "the experience of oneself and one's contemporaries and particularly poetry is close to the experience of oneself.

Finally, Frye (1963: 1) describes literature both the written and unwritten in general and oral poetry in particular as a 'displaced mythology' and he says "myth is the central informing power that gives archetypal significance to the ritual and archetypal narrative". There fore, the folk poetry is a kind of narrative and it has mythical value.

## **2.4 Approaches in Folklore**

There are different approaches in the study of folklore and as Dorson (1972: 5-46) who is often acknowledged in the field found out that there are about twelve theories in the study of folklore, They are "historical-geographical, historical-reconstructional, ideological, functional, psychoanalytical, structural, oral formulic, cross-cultural, folk-cultural, mass-cultural, hemispheric and contextual "

Further more, Finnegan (1970:25) presents that the study of folklore is something related to "performance, transmission, and social contexts with the various

implications these have for its study". Finnegan tries to show the nature of folklore and its social significance in portraying the ideological structure. According to Finnegan the social structure is ideological and it is built up on the cultural conditions. Deign (1972:53) also says "Stories are able to adapt themselves to any local and social climate" and so they show the existing ideological form.

Therefore, from the different approaches mentioned by Dorson the ideological approach is chosen to show the social structure of the Sidama as they are reflected in the oral poetry. The ideological approach is used in relation to the post structuralist approach in showing the tension of gender differences. So it is important to discuss the two approaches at this stage.

#### **2.4.1 Ideological**

In a given cultural condition every act of a society is interrelated and that makes a structure. According to Kidd (2002: 47) ideology is a "cultural control by ruling ideas" and culture contains the ruling class ideology; here by 'ideology' it is to mean about the existing structure.

As ideological theory, every society has a structure. If we take the Sidama, the people have different social institutions that form a structure. There are political, social, economic, art, law and religious structures determine the common values, customs and traditions.

The ideological approach can be noted within Rosaldo and Lamphere (1993: 35) the structural model that shows the power relationship, the societal values, and the "cross cultural articulation of domestic and public roles". As Rosaldo and Lamphere each society is structured and operates in a certain way and that is well manipulated in the language that a particular society uses. And van Dijk (1985: 30) strengthens this idea by saying "powerful way of examining ideological structure is through the examination of language". In other words, the linguistic structures could tell about the social reality of a given society.

In the same way, the Sidama culture is believed to show the ideology of the society in which all social and political activities are established. Besides, the

power relationship, for example, male to female is the result of the existing structure.

Scholes (1985: 1) further states that "As an individual speech acts are to the language in which they are spoken, so many other individual actions to the codes of the cultures in which they occur." There fore, Dorson (1972:17) discusses the ideological theory from the Marxist perspective as it is a way to study folklore where folklore is" an echo of the past, but at the same it is also the vigorous voice of the present" about the relations among different structures of the humans activities in their given socio-cultural milieu.

One of the proponents of structuralism Piage (1970) defines "a structure is a system of transformations. In as much as it is a system and not a mere collection of elements and their properties, these transformations involve laws" and that is ideological.

Hence, in ideological approach things are defined in their relations in a given social set up. And the structure confirms that as there is a single reality as if there could not be any other. The myth of creating a man's world under a single ideology is structural despite the differences that prevail in a society. In other words, it means, if there is any relationship does exist, it is because of the socio-political reality (structure) and this can not be different in a society like Sidama where every thing is set up on social coordination and ties.

#### **2.4.2 Post Structuralism**

Post structuralism denies the totality of the universe that is guided by a single ideology. In other words, the universality of truth that is 'logo centric'(having a center) is challenged because there is no single reality/center/. Therefore, post structuralism objects the idea of final truth.

In post structuralist thinking every text is 'logo centric' as Jacques Derrida is the proponent; things should not be seen as independent (Subarao 2004:1-2). In structuralism a thing is taken as if it has a determinate meaning with a center,

but things need to be seen from their signification where meaning is 'deferred' or postponed, this means, there is no center to define things as they are absolute.

Here the idea is that the meaning of any text should be seen in relation to other things where the center is de-centered. According to post structuralist theory there is no definite center to define things. That is, there is no absolute meaning and every thing works in relation and so there are always binary oppositions (male over female, good over bad, etc).

In other words, in texts there is no final meaning where the supposed metaphysical 'presence' of meaning offers 'traces' of its 'absence'. Subaro (P.3) says deconstruction is "a philosophy and methodology for interpreting the meaning of texts including literary texts." As its scope is very wide, post structuralism does help to the analysis of folk poetry as it is a literary form. As meaning has no determinacy, texts, for example poems, the metaphysical presence of male-centered reality is deconstructed since "Fixing a meaning for a text will be most unreasonable" where there is female centered reality.

Wheeler III (2000) claims that truth is always relative since there are pluralities, multiplicity and contradictions of meaning. Therefore, post structuralism is a philosophy that goes against the structuralist view that there is a single reality. Derrida believes what we see as a reality is 'logo centric' in its nature since it denies other realities. He argues we need to interpret things in relative terms. That is of course why Wheeler III (2000: 44-45) advances saying "Every interpretation is subject to alternative interpretation, since every level is language like and no interpretation is privileged. The incompleteness of analysis into meaning and fact then obliterates the possibility of determinacy of meaning."

Here the argument is that meaning is indeterminate since there is no absolute reality to be favored. Indeed, there is no form of independent entity, which can be stated but it is a matter of interpretation and how it is perceived in the human mind.

In post structuralist philosophy things are deconstructed in order to show their relative importance. And post structuralism has been seen as Gashe (1996: 4)

"The attempt to account in a certain manner, for heterogeneous variety or manifold of no logical contradictions and discursive inequalities." Rorty (1995) believes "Deconstruction can perhaps best be discussed as a theory of reading which aims to under mine the logic of opposition within texts ". That means, it deals with binary oppositions: male over female, white over black, privileged over unprivileged, good over bad, etc. So as a literary form, folk poetry can show the binary oppositions.

Besides, Peck and Coyle (1993:197) say "a text is a complex thing and ...there is no determinate meaning to the text (that) allows a degree of reckless freedom in discussing it". There fore, post structuralism can help to view things out of their metaphysical presence.

In an oral society as that of Sidama any kind of social discourse, for example, is framed in any kind of text must not be taken as a single ideological form but it constitutes differences and 'separatism'. In other words, it shouldn't be given loyalty to absolute truth and objectivity. Any discourse that is done in the oral poetry can be interpreted in showing this relative importance instead of confirming the existence of an absolute truth. If we take the oral poetries, they can show the relative importance, for example, male centered and female centered reality side by side without giving objectivity to the dominant group.

Belsey (1983: 109) well explained deconstruction (post structuralism) as it is mainly about "the multiplicity and diversity of its possible meanings, its incompleteness...and above all its contradictions". Besides, Belsey explains that reality is "in consistent, limited, contradictory". Hence, this school of thought takes truth conditionally.

Finally, Coward and Ellis (1977:49-51) brings Barthes view that narratives violet the homogeneity of reality since there is" a limited exploitation of the plurality of meaning through a controlled process of echoing, re-calling".

Therefore, post structuralism is a methodology to approach folklore particularly oral poetry in order to show the multiplicities of reality denying the idea that takes truth unconditionally. In Sidama it is believed there is the tension of gender

### **3. Analysis of Culture & Gender in Sidama Folk Poetry**

#### **3.1 The Sidama Culture**

This unit presents a critical analysis and interpretation of Sidama folk poetry based on their themes. In the first section the paper discusses the culture of the people and the various social activities. In the second section the focus is on the classification, analysis and interpretation of the different kinds of poems based on their themes from the post structuralist perspective. The analysis and interpretation of the poems is to show the social disparity and subordination of women as they are portrayed in the oral poems. Finally, there is a section that deals with women self confirmation negating the men's world.

The oral poems of the Sidama people depict that they have very rich cultural rites, that is, they have their own social customs, values, beliefs and traditions. The people have different cultural rites that make them similar to the rest of the peoples in the country. Nevertheless, there are some distinct features that show their identity.

The Sidama, for example, have their own dressing styles. The folk costumes together with their dance, rituals, and songs do show their identity. There are poems that are composed for various occasions and there are different songs that are sung depending on the kind of occasion. During any kind of anniversary, celebration, ritual, ceremony, etc there are poems that are composed and they do vary in their themes. In the poems the different costumes are mentioned as they mark their identity.

The kind of costumes that is worn by the young and the old depending on their sexes is not the same. The males wear the 'Gonfa' which is made of cotton and it is like shorts. 'Derbeta', a kind of blanket, is worn by the young and 'Sema' is a blanket for the adult males. There is 'Kune' which is worn by adult males and 'miite' worn by young boys and they are used as belt. The females wear the "Tuba" which is a kind of skirt and made of animal's skin, but it is now replaced by modern skirts and 'Dukana' which means 'dress' is worn by girls. 'Barko' is to

mean a pillow and it is made of wood with "X" shape. The bed /'Manna'/is made of bamboo tree and it is just like the modern bed but it is unmovable from one place to the other where "ashucho" - dried 'Wesse' or Enset' leaves (a plant with wider leaves) is used as mattress.

In Sidama, the people live in a social group called 'Gare'. The cultural ways like in most of the societies are kept through the teachings of the young with their oral literature in general and oral poems in particular. In the poems they teach the young to keep their heritages and the ancestral ways.

Basically the Sidama are characterized by cattle breeding and crop production. The oral poems also show their social and economic activities. The agricultural production varies all along the climatic conditions 'Alichu' (high land) to the 'Gamojje' (the lowland) that include dominantly inset planting areas to those 'Woredas' that breed animals, plant cereals and cash crops together with animal husbandry.

Sidama women hold most of the responsibilities and the poems also indicate this social disparity and the problem of women. Males are mainly confined to field work where as females do both household activities and farming. The economic activity of the highlanders includes 'inset' planting and animal breeding where as the lowlanders produce cash crops, fruits, sugar cane, cereals (maize, wheat, teff) and animal breeding. The house hold activities and the field work mainly lie on the women's shoulder and they express their detest using the poems.

Moreover, the Sidama have long standing socio-cultural and political traditions. The people are one of the earlier settlers of Ethiopia and as oral traditions and genealogical count indicate, they come from the southeastern part of the country. The earlier settlers according to my respondents (they learn from their oral traditions) settled in the present area of Dawa River-and then they settled in their present area coming from the south east in search of grazing lands for their herds and cattle.

Though there is widespread of writing culture because of the introduction of modern education, the people preserve and pass their ancestral heritages in a

word of mouth all through generations. The people keep their long standing and pertinent cultural ways through their oral cultures. The oral cultures are preserved in their oral literature particularly in the oral poetry.

The people of Sidama have the 'Luwa' system which has a great place in the socio-cultural, political, economical and religious ways of the people. 'Luwa' is a word taken from 'Sidamu affi'(Sidama language) and it is a social and political system, which makes the young to grow into adulthood all through social hierarchies in leadership. Though there is no concrete evidence, according to the oral tradition, the 'Luwa' system was started in two ways.

The first group claims that according to my respondents the 'Luwa' system was started many years back in the history of the Sidama. This argument may be related to the history of Sidama. The Sidama are referred to the highland Cushitic group (family) of the Hamite and that goes back to the time of the settlement of the Hamite and Semite people in the land of Abyssinia. Besides, written documents show that the modern Sidama history mainly shows as they came from Borena area to Dawa river valley. Therefore, it is believed that the 'Luwa' system was started with the history of the Sidama but no evidence is given how the 'Luwa' system was started.

The other group argues that the 'Luwa' system was started with some superstitious connotations. The idea comes from the legendary story that once upon a time while shepherds were keeping their herds and cattle, they heard a child talking about five different things in a very dense forest.

Later, the shepherds went to their villages and told to the elderly. Then the elderly went to the forest but they didn't see the child. They preached to god ('Magano') and they slaughtered a sheep, but they could not see the child. Then the elderly asked witch doctors and witchcrafts, and they were told to shed the blood of more sheep and the elderly did accordingly. After wards, they heard the child talking to five different names on the eighth day: 'Fulasa', 'Hirbora', 'Wawasa', 'Mogsana' and 'Darara'. These are the five stages given to the 'Luwa' system.

The elderly people found the child on the eighth day from the time they were told by the shepherds. Hence, starting that time the 'Luwa' has become the common tradition of the people. Based on this legend the five stages of the 'Luwa' are entitled to men every eight years and that totally makes 40 years. In Sidama there are twelve months in a year. The people count months of the year in relation to the moon. The moon rises and sets in every 15 days and it makes 30 days, i.e. a month.

Any kind of cultural and social activities are determined by the 'Luwa' system. In other words, the circumcision, the marriage, the ritualistic activities, the mourning ceremony, and many other norms are well connected to the 'Luwa'. There are poems, as they are discussed in the later sections, that are composed during these occasions. The poems show the existing social set up and institutionalizations. A man who becomes the member of the 'Luwa' system is respected by all members of the society. Moreover, men who are in the various stages of 'Luwa' do respect each other based on their status. Every act of the people works under this tradition. That is also observable in their oral poetry.

The Sidama have many things that make them similar to other people especially to the Cushitic families. For example, the 'Luwa' system is more similar to the Gada system of the Oromo people. According to my respondents the child who was found in the forest was taken by the elderly and he was entitled to be the founding father of the 'Luwa' whose name is 'Gadana' which means 'the father of Gada'. Though my respondents do not agree whether it has some relation to the Gada system, I think the idea might come from either of the sides. Thence now it is better to see the cultural ways of the Sidama separately to give a background for the analysis of the poems.

### **3.1.1 Marriage**

The oral poems reflect that marriage in Sidama people like most people in Ethiopia is a very respected social institution. As my respondents, marriage in Sidama is classified into four, that is, 'Huc'ato' (marriage done based on the will of the family of the married bride), 'Adulsha' (to make the bride to flee from her

parents home to her lover's home through persuasion but without her family's will) 'Adwana' (when the girl goes to her lover's home with her will) and 'Diera' (Abduction).

For the Sidama, like in other societies, marriage is something blessed and the children born are also great assets given by their Magano (the sky). In marriage the man has every right to choose the woman whom he likes. If he has a better economic status, a man can marry many wives; however, the women cannot do as men do. This is really seen in the poems and the socialization process is done in this context.

The marriage system is done based on the 'Gare' - which means sub ethnic group. The 'Yemerecho' (the "Pure race" who are farmers) do their marriage to the 'Talateticho', but from the 'Talateticho' they don't marry to the 'Hadicho' (potters and smiths) and the 'Awacho' (the tanners) who are the marginalized groups. The 'Yemerecho' do not marry the 'Yemerecho', but they marry the 'Walawicho' (people of other clan-'Talateticho') except 'Hadicho' and 'Awacho'.

What is more peculiar about marriage in Sidama is that when a married man dies, the wife would be married by his brother and it is called 'raggea'. Though this is mostly accepted in the culture as it is observable in the poems, as it is in the later sections, women also express their protest in the poems.

Besides, the marriage ceremony is done in a very colorful condition that is accompanied by poems and dances that have different cultural significances. During marriage the poems are composed and they plead to the ears and every body participates in the occasion. Nevertheless, such poems can be rarely found where most of them, as it is found out, are from the Bale Oromo marriage poems. This might be because the poems in Sidama language are forgotten, or they have been borrowed from the people who live in the bordering area and other cultures.

### 3.2.1. Social Administration

The oral poems of the Sidama, as it is going to be discussed, portray the social administration in which all the social realities are built upon. In other words, they reflect the existing structure. The socialization of children is done with the poems by teaching the values, norms and traditions in the social system.

The administration system of the Sidama works with three levels 'Chinancho' (chief of small village), 'Olla' (administration of Kebele) and Gare (the sub ethnic group). In the administration system the 'Chemessa' (elderly men) play a very important role in the group. The 'Chemessa' are those who have come through the 'Luwa' system and they have the 'anga' / they have the power to do something/.

The 'Shengo' / the 'parliament'/ is the other social institution that helps to solve the problem in the society. The 'Shengo' would be held if a person makes consecutive mistakes. There could be mistakes at different levels and they will be given punishment based on the nature of the mistakes (simple, difficult and repeated, according to their hierarchy). And so, the 'Shengo' would be called for judging repeated mistakes. The decision made by the 'Shengo' even goes to isolate or ban the man from the social participation, his children or cattle could be isolated from the group. Moreover, when the members of that family die no body participate in the funeral ceremony.

This social administration is very common all over the sub ethnic groups of Sidama: 'Arbe', 'Kebena', 'Alaata', 'Hollo', and 'Garbicho', 'Hadicho', 'Sawola' and 'Fardano', 'Shabadiino' /Fakias/, 'Habela', and 'Malga'. In these social sets we find the 'Yemericho' and 'Talatcho'. And the 'Shengo' works at all groups of the Sidama, however, the 'Talatcho' especially 'Haddicho' (blacksmiths and potters) and 'Abaccho' (tanners) do not promptly participate in the 'Shengo' unless it is called by the 'Chemessa'. They are marginalized from the society. Usually women do not participate in the 'Shengo'.

Women in Sidama are not given equal place to men. This is well portrayed in the oral poetry and the women also challenge the patriarchal world. Though the

The 'jala', (friend or an assistant) is chosen based on his physical health and his relation to the person who is going to be circumcised. He must be physically strong, well built and not handicapped. Besides, he shouldn't be left handed because that is not favored based on superstitious beliefs. He has to have his mother and father alive, he shouldn't be a son born from a concubine. The circumcision makes the person ready to climb the highest hierarchies in the 'Luwa' system.

The person makes the circumcision three months after he starts the Luwa system. The first stage of the 'Luwa' takes eight years and the person who becomes the member of 'Luwa' is legible to the circumcision. The wife for her own respect prepares everything, that is, she keeps much butter and she prepares all the necessary things including 'Wasa' in Amharic 'Kocho', milk and other local drinks 'katikala' liquor and tella (local beer) is brewed.

Circumcision in Sidama is something meant to males. Women circumcision doesn't have any ritualistic activities. Of course, women circumcision is done when she is going to marry a husband. During the circumcision of woman her friends gathered and sing different songs but there are no ritualistic activities. The women's circumcision unlike men has no visual connection to the Luwa system. It is rather a sign for her marriage as she is going to marry in the nearest future. This indicates how women are marginalized in the society.

As it was mentioned earlier, in males' circumcision various preparations are made, mainly 'Tiba' is made ready that includes money, butter, honey, cereals, goats, sheep, or ox (en). These things are expected to be fulfilled. Of course, this is determined by the wealth of the person." Barchumu Daase, which means a hut that is built for circumcision purpose as it is one aspect of the ritualistic activities.

The appropriate day is decided based on words of the witchcraft and when the circumcision is done by fulfilling all the cultural things, for example, all the elderly (the 'chemessa') prey to 'Magano' and they shed blood to the creator where that makes everything better. The circumcision is done in the very dawn where the 'shafeta' which means 'Buresame' very buttered 'Kocho' in a big object or 'wasa'

is made ready with 'milk'. The circumcised person is advised to drink blood and an animal is slaughtered and the person drinks it with much butter in the day of circumcision. The day is very co-memorial and everybody in the village participates in the ritualistic activities. The poems that are made in the rituals show the respectfulness of the occasion and they also portray the place of men and women in the society. Mostly the poems show that the women are marginalized but some times in the poems the women create their own world of self confirmation.

The person who is circumcised stays for two or three months in the hut that is built for this purpose and in this duration he is named 'Turacho' which means 'dirtier' since he doesn't wash his body from the day of circumcision. After his circumcision if he urinates, he is healthy and if this is proved, people in the hut says 'Hibo, Hei, Hei' to congratulate others that he is in a good health. The ladies then express their joy by saying el-el-el-el-el...

Besides, there are very interesting poems made in the occasion. He is then made to put something on his neck, that is, soft leaves which purify him from bad or evil things and it is called 'Meracha'. After this, the youngsters start to make songs. When he got in to his former house, relatives in the near and far, and the neighbors visit him saying "Turu Tumiha Iko " it is just wishing the dirt to be with good luck. Songs are sung all through the days that the circumcised person stays at home.

The themes of the poem in the different songs confirm the tradition and that is the way to preserve the cultural ways. The circumcision rituals, poems, etc have a very important role in socializing the young. In the day of circumcision the 'welima', a kind of bird will be killed and the circumcised person put on its long feathers on his head that it is an indication for his circumcision.

#### **3.1.4. The Mourning Ceremony**

The mourning ceremony in Sidama has a more ritualistic nature when adults die. But for the death of babies there is no ceremony and they will be buried in a yard, that is, there are less ritualistic activities. Unlike to babies if children die,

there is a burial ceremony but mainly when an adult person dies the 'Murucha' (a person who announces about the death of a man) announces the death in the locality and the villagers would be gathered. The males are expected to dig grave and bury the dead. The females are expected to gather firewood and prepare food. If the person who died is 'Chemesa', the corpse will be kept till seven days. Normally, the burial ceremony is held in the third day. They keep the corpse without having any smell by washing the corpse with honey and smoking it with naturally odour giving leaves.

In the mean time, there are poems, as they are seen later, composed to express their deep sorrow and used to praise their lost ones. The poems are composed to tell about the death of the man or the woman. The themes of the poems do vary based on sex and life time achievement of the dead person.

In Sidama, one differentiates whether a man or a woman died looking simply what is kept in the mourning place. The mourning place is fenced with different woods. The fence that is made for the death of man is stronger and stays longer time than that of woman. Besides, if a man dies, something which looks like a combed hair is put on the fence. But for women five sticks are erected and on the top of them there are the leaves of 'Besho' ('inset' in Amharic), a local plant, which is a source of food ('Wasa') and a pot, is put on it with necklaces.

If the man who died has killed enemies, lions, tigers, rhinos, etc, the wife wears the clothes or the skin and mourns praising her husband. The groits made other people to weep with their striking poems and there are very known groits called 'Hamaranchicho' for males and 'Harrokissette' for females. There are real performers of the song that is done with some ritualistic manner. In Sidama as grief is very seriously handled, the males hit their back and neck with a sharp object while the females scratch their chick with their fingers to show their deep sorrow. If a brave person or an important person dies, the mourning becomes more serious and there are more rituals. This has a greater place in socializing the young where the young is expected to pass in the same way.

### 3.1.5 Religion

The Sidama people have their own religious beliefs. They believe in 'Mangano' (the sky) and 'Bato' (the earth). Further more, they believe in their ancestral beliefs and spirits. The people of Sidama believe in the ancestral spirit as it has a purifying power. They think every success is because of the help of 'Magano' and 'Bato' which give them health, children, and wealth.

There are poems made to praise 'Magano' and 'Baato though the researcher has come up with few of them. In the poems they preach to 'Magano' and 'Bato'. The religious activities of the people are done by the 'Chemesa' (elderly men) and they prey to the ancestral spirit, and they appeal to the words of the witchdoctor and witchcraft.

Besides, they worship in praising the power of river and big trees. These are sacred places and every religious activity is done there. They prey to 'Magano' and 'Bato' by slaughtering sheep or goats and by shedding blood to their creator. The kind of sheep or goats is told by the witch doctors and that is well maintained by the society, and the 'Chemesa'. Then they do as they are told. To have a good harvest and a successful year /Fiche/ they go to the 'wise men'. If rain doesn't come and if there is no good harvest, people of the surroundings come to 'Gudumale' (a sacred place or market), and prey to their god by slaughtering animals. Poems can be composed in such ritualistic activities. The themes of the poems do tell the power of their creator.

The old are always respected and it is believed by the community that if they raise their voice to god, god accepts their voice. All people are expected to come to 'Gudumale' to get all the blessings from their fathers. Gudumale is usually set where there is (are) long and aged tree(s). So all kind of ritual is made, for example, the old and the 'Chemsa' stand in front of the mass and they prey to 'Magano' and the people say 'Amin'. 'Masso' which means 'blessing' is very common in Sidama and those who are blessed by family and neighborhood are blessed by 'Magano' and 'Bato'. It is believed that if a person is cursed whatever

he does, wouldn't be favored and he will be outcasted from the society where the sorcers tell something unwelcome would happen.

### **3.1.6 New Year**

Different from most of the Ethiopian societies, the Sidama people have their own calendar days. These days are named based on market days. There are four market days: 'Diko', 'Kabado', 'Dabalenka' and 'Dela'. Then a week comes every 5 days and six weekdays make a month where a month has 30 days. The counting of months is based on the rising and setting of the moon in every 15 days, which together makes a month. There are 12 months that make a year. The New Year comes during the Christian Epiphany. The days are counted by the 'Cemessa' and that is told to the elderly and the local people in the place where people gather (Gudumale).

The New Year as that of the Christian New Year in Ethiopia comes with hope for new life, better success and every joy. Like wise, it is a very peculiar day for children who celebrate "Fiche" /New Year and they congratulate saying "Chambalala" which means "Happy New year" and the response is "Elle-Elle" which means "Happy New Year, too". They are invited to get into home to eat "Burisame" - buttered 'wasa' (Kocho) and milk. They eat what they are given. Every joy is made and children sing songs and basically 'faro' is played in a week before and after 'Fiche' and after it. The poems are of love songs and they are the means to express love to a beloved or a lover. At this time, all feasts are made with dancing and singing of songs that are composed to commemorate the day with the poems. Mainly, it has a very great memory for children.

## **3.2 Gender in Sidama Folk Poetry**

. As it was discussed earlier, the thesis discusses about Sidama culture and how that is preserved in the oral poetry. The oral poems are a means to socialize the young and that will be shown in the analysis. Further more, in the paper it is tried to make analysis based on post structuralist thinking by showing the existing reality and deconstructing the male centered structure to show women's

perception of the cosmos, the contradictions and multiplicities of meaning. Here, therefore, the major focus is to the themes of the folk poems.

In Sidama, there are different poems that are composed for different cultural conditions: Circumcision, New Year (Fiche), Marriage, Mourning, Religious celebrations, etc. The kinds of poems vary based on the kind of events. The oral poems have different functions and themes with the context of their occurrence. As a result, there are different poems like 'Hanno', 'Dambaryo', 'Hayye', 'Hammarancho/Harokisse'-andwork poems. Though there are praise poems as the meaning is clearly understood, it won't be discussed in the following section.

### **3.2.1 Hanno Poems**

'Hanno' poems are composed by both men and women with music. The musical instrument is mainly 'Dibbea' or the drum. The 'Hanno' poems are used when the singers sing 'Hanno' songs in the night during a man's circumcision. An adult man is expected to be circumcised based on Sidama tradition. The 'Hanno' songs then are sung during this occasion. Circumcision is very respectful, as it is the way to keep the ancestral heritages. The 'Luwa' is maintained through the circumcision rituals where it is the circumcised person who is able to join the 'Luwa'. In the ritualistic activities the 'Hanno' songs are sung praising the person, talking about the ancestral spirits, braveness, etc through the poems.

The 'Hanno' songs are also sung when a new house is built. It is a kind of song to express joy and good wish. In the occasion the males wear 'Gonfa' which is sewed like shorts and they hold 'Kalacho' /a spear / with their left hand. The females on the other hand they put on "Tuba", a cloth made of skin and it is like skirt but it has disappeared, or "Kollo" - it is a skirt made of cotton. Moreover, they used to wear "Boki", it is a cloth made of skin and worn on the shoulder. And they put beads on their neck and bracelet, too.

The males and females sing different songs which show their traditions. Besides, they express their joy and the happiness within the poems. From the poems mainly there are poems which praise strong men, and sometimes women though

it is not common. In the poems men are depicted as all knowing and clever, but women in the contrary are given the image of being incapable to do something, weak, selfish and as if they are foolish, and this is also the way how children are socialized.

As it was discussed before, 'Hanno' poems are usually performed in the time of circumcision and a new house is built. Here are some of the 'Hanno' poems. They are used to express ones feeling to admire or criticize someone. The cultural beliefs are well mirrored in the 'Hanno' poems together with the portrayal of women in relation to males. The poems confirm the superiority of males and women are made to think that courageousness, being wise, hard working, etc. are the qualities of men. In the society the structure confirms men should be brave, wise and courageous. Otherwise, it is believed that they act like women. For example, this fact is stated in the poem below.

<i>Dubbo gerre nigrrre</i>	<i>The armor of the forest</i>
<i>Arusse shiinoohu</i>	<i>Who killed the Arsi</i>
<i>Bukkichcha finohu</i>	<i>And combed his hair</i>
<i>Goowiyarra weelle</i>	<i>I wish him to rolled up on my (neck) waist</i>

The theme of this poem is just to praise brave men who killed enemies. if a man kills an enemy, a lion, a tiger or a rhino, he grows and combs his hair to show his braveness.

Growing ones hair-'Bukkicha' (line 3) is a symbol of braveness. 'Dubbo' is to mean 'forest' and usually in Sidama a brave man lives in the forest killing enemies and wild animals. 'Arusse' (line 2) of the neighbouring Oromo used to fight for grazing land and because of these both sides they see each other as enemies. So if a Sidama man kills the Arusse the he is praised for his braveness.

Even the women praise him wishing he rolled up on her neck 'welle'- 'rolled up' (line 4) as it is a way to express love. All the girls and the boys in the village talk about his deeds and glorify his social status. This is what is expected from a brave man. And children especially the males are advised to act in the way the

adult men do. A woman is not expected to be brave, even if she does; she is not given any value. This is how the socialization process starts at home and that is maintained in the social and cultural milieu.

On the other hand, the women also express their respect to the clever men by insulting the foolish men as it is presented here.

De'ellema gowwa                      *I don't give birth to the foolish*

Gowwa manna ellee                *I don't want to suffer*

Mayirra qarramemma              *Giving birth to the foolish.*

The theme of the poem proves that the young should always be brave and wise. 'Gowwa' (line 1) means 'foolish' and a foolish person is not given any place in the society and giving birth to the foolish is something which decreases families dignity especially the mother where a foolish person is assumed to act like a woman.

A foolish person is taken as [- male] that probably indicates women are treated as foolish and not knowing. In most of the cases if a foolish person is born it is believed that the family might have done something evil or they have committed sin.

So the woman does express her dislike in giving birth to the foolish in the poem as it is in the fourth line 'Mayirra qarramemma'- 'I don't want to suffer'. In the poem the woman is expressing the social beliefs where a man has to be always clever and all knowing otherwise he is taken as [+ female]. The woman in the poem shows this truth since it affects her life and she will be insulted because of him. A foolish person does not have a social respect as it does in other societies. Whenever it is, as in the poem especially young boys are advised and told in the oral forms to be wise men where that gives them a social position.

Women do criticize and insult the foolish men. A courageous man is well respected and he is appreciated by women for his strength and power. Here the social structure confirms that to be wise, courageous, and brave are the qualities given to man. If not, it is said he acts like woman. That is why women are made to accept the patriarchal world of domination and subjugation. In fact, a foolish

person is not praised in any of the society. Nevertheless, the bad thing is that it is thought women do not know any thing as if they are foolish and they are never thought of to be knowledgeable and clever.

It cannot be possible to deny males do appreciate women for their beauty, but the problem lies on the fact that if a girl is not beautiful.

Tinino annete tiino annete                      *This is mine; that is also mine*

*Hateyye hogummaro ba'ema balete*      *If I miss her, I throw myself to well*

*Babba gaani dibbe gante nadamata*      *Mother, bit the drum that you'll be praised*

*Ubbe hiqqanturo gorfa kafalaata*      *If she fell and broken, 'Gorfa' will be paid.*

The above poem shows the words of a man who wants to make a woman to be his lover. If he wants to make her as his partner, he pays every price and he gets successful. 'Dibbe' which means 'drum' (line3) is used to symbolize happiness and it is a musical instrument.

The biting of the drum shows the ritual and the ceremony. In some ceremonies the men express their appreciation to the women they are attracted by. 'Gorfa' (line 4) is a kind of cloth worn by women and it is mostly given to the mother of a bride as a dowry. Here it is learnt that when a man marries he pays dowry to the family of the bride. In Sidama dowry has a great place in marriage where if a man pays the dowry he can marry the girl he he wants to marry

In reality, however, women in no way do have the same freedom to choose a man they want. If a man loves a woman, the boy tells to his father to ask the family of the beloved one to make her his wife.

Some send the elderly people to her family and if the family is not willing, the lover with the help of other mainly 'aunts' and a wise woman in the village try to persuade her; that is called 'Adulsha'. If she agrees and her families are not willing, she goes to her lover home with her will that is called 'Adabana'. If the bride's family are not volunteer to give their daughter to the boy who proposed for marriage she will be abducted. If her family sues the man who abducted their daughter, then the family of the bride groom is expected to pay only much

In the poem males can present a question of love to the women he loves, but women are not expected to do so since that is something unusual. In other words, men have every privilege, but women are scolded if they do this.

Bunna angi sinnette

*With cup we drink coffee*

Tinni shaga kaddohe

*Let this beautiful girl sing for you*

Naqqanseenna birreette

*Where she is decorated*

The poem is about her physical appearance and her power of attraction because of her beauty and wearing of jewels. She is analogically compared to a cup- 'sinne' (line 1) which is decorated and attracts the eyes. 'Naqqanseenna' (line 3) is originally an Amharic word which is a kind of beautification of oneself by drawing something on the face or the neck. So the narrator is talking about this beautiful woman. In most of the poems nothing is said about the strength of women as it is in the next one.

Tiire intoo sinqqese

*He opens up and eats what she does hold*

Bakke Bunna kaddohe

*The daughter of Bakke make her sing*

Dawoleena silkkette

*If you get her in phone*

This poem also shows the relation between the opposite sexes. And the theme indicates that the modern communication system 'silkkette' (telephone) (line 3) has become a means to express love.

Here the poem shows women start to express their love to the one they love through the modern technology where it indicates women are challenging the structure. In other words, the men centered reality confirms women need not talk about love with her lover. In most of the cases it is her family who decide the man she marries even without knowing him.. So talking with a lover is unthinkable and it goes against the male -centered culture

The poem is about Sidama woman who goes to visit her lover in far areas carrying food and when she meets him, he takes up what is in her hands and opens up. Then the man eats the food and presents his love to her and makes

privileged as to males and that also depicts the way how the socialization process is done.

### 3.2.3 Danbaryo Poems

These poems are mainly performed by young girls. They are very often composed in wedding and when one enters into a new house. In addition, these poems are exercised within the 'Danbaryo' songs when young girls keep cattle and it is for entertaining themselves during their spare time. The girls sing Danbaryo songs till boys gather to play 'Faro' songs. They are done in a lucid language and they show the collective consciousness of the women

Danbaryo poems are practiced, as it was discussed earlier, by girls. Most of the time the poems are used to express women's problems and they clearly show their subordination.

The following poem narrates about Fura. In the poem a woman desecrates the man who killed Fura.

Ani diafomma afinohu yeinonna	<i>I don't know but people told me</i>
<i>Fura mentu billo</i>	<i>Fura who is females' friend</i>
<i>Fura geerchchu shinno</i>	<i>Was killed by an old man of bald</i>
<i>Fura shihu shimmo</i>	<i>He should dissolve like salt</i>
<i>Fura shihu shillo</i>	<i>Let him decay like plant</i>

The theme of the poem is about the death of Fura. Fura is a legendary queen who came to throne in Sidama land. She is taken as a freedom fighter for Sidama women (line 2) 'Fura mentu billo', which means Fura is a friend of women. The deprivation and the servitude of females resulted in the anger of 'Magano' and 'Bato' and then resulted in the reign of Fura to power. Fura always called women and advised them to treat all males harshly. The reason was just to teach all males who used to maltreat the females. And the women curse the person who killed her saying, (line 3)'Fura shihu shimmo', which means let him dissolve and 'shillo', decay (line 4).

Therefore, the above poem describes about queen Fura who is loved by women and finally she was killed by old man who is bald. And the girls in their poems praise Fura and curse the old man who killed her. The males in Sidama society did not feel comfortable about Fura's treatment of males and as a result they strongly hate her and they say:

<i>Fura reyiyitu warro</i>	<i>When Fura died</i>
<i>Ayi ragiiri quu' ne</i>	<i>Who came to the throne</i>
<i>Aree qelitinoohu</i>	<i>The man who is won by his wife</i>
<i>Honsenno dudiuro</i>	<i>Though she milks nine</i>
<i>Itanno qatumme</i>	<i>He eats with out milk</i>

Fura is taken as a savage woman since it is said she used to treat all men as slaves. She advised wives not to show 'Buro' (butter) before it is prepared to eat, she used to tell them not to show the 'Wassa' before it is cooked, when wives sleep with their husbands, she told them to complain that they don't wear properly the night cloth (blanket), etc.

The reason that women were told not to show unprepared butter and raw 'Wassa' is that when butter and 'Wassa' are cooked their amount becomes smaller and the husbands then ask where the women put the rest. Still now this has become a common tradition among Sidama women. The reason that they do complain in wearing the night cloth is that to get much comfort in their sleep and to ill treat their husbands.

Even, if there is milk at home, the women do not tell their husbands as there is milk or they do not serve them much, 'Itanno qatumme' (line 5)- eat with out food, because if the husbands learn the wives give them, then they often ask for milk. As a result, every woman says there is no milk, or gives for her husband complaining. This is just to resist her husband's supremacy.

Therefore, the women are shown as selfish and the one who opposes her husband is taken as she is ill-mannered 'aree qelitinoohu' (line 3). a husband who listens might be taken as he is defeated by her.

<i>Bant'anni areerra</i>	<i>A wife loved by her husband</i>
<i>Woddare sassette</i>	<i>He buys three skirts as she does need</i>
<i>Ginbbanni areera</i>	<i>For a wife hated by her man</i>
<i>Gerreechu karrette</i>	<i>He does buy her skin</i>
<i>Haku gerechchiira iwiiwe baseete</i>	<i>When the skin becomes full of pests</i>
<i>Hakko tinqiitanni hossannno qa'ete</i>	<i>She stays in the village while she cleans</i>

From the structuralist thinking this poem is a deductive one and it teaches girls/ women to be good wives. The theme of this poem is that those who are not good wives are mistreated by their husband. Here this shows that the number of clothes that a wife wears seems a signification of love.

In the contrary, if a husband doesn't buy clothes to her though he has property, it is an indication to show the poor relationship between the partners. Of course, there are conditions that a woman buys clothes to her husband. Mostly in the highland areas the women take 'Wasa' to the nearest market place and after they sell it, they buy the necessary thing for their home - salt, gas (oil) etc and clothes for their husbands. However, it is usually the males who are expected to buy everything for their wives.

Hence, as these poems are practiced in danbaryo songs by young girls, that is the way how girls are socialized in order to be good wives. And what a girl learns from such stories is that to be good wife rewards physical needs and it reveals the collective consciousness of the people. To be a good wife perhaps means to be submissive and to bear every responsibility with out the help of her husband.

### **3.2.4 Hayye Poems**

'Hayye' poems are poems that start with a line "Ooso hayye hayye" which are composed when mothers make songs to make their children sleep, that is, simply a lullaby. Mothers make lullaby and through these poems they express their depressed feelings and sometimes to revolt or to oppose their masters who despise and degrade them.

'Hayye' poems are often used by mothers at home. Children who grow listening them are socialized in the process. When mothers make lullaby children listen what their mothers sing and they start to sing as their mothers do. In the meantime, mothers are training them at home. Mothers express their likes and dislikes, praise and denial, their own beliefs, opinion and thinking through 'Hayye' poems. And so 'Hayye' poems give the real picture of Sidama women and their subordination and they help to learn about the women's thought.

Besides, when mothers prepare food, these poems are often used just to forget their worries, to express their feelings and dissatisfaction. Children in the meantime learn the cultural aspects and from all how women should act. Particularly the little girls are shaped by the words of their mothers in the lullabies.

The women express the abuse and the ill-treatment of their husbands in the 'Hayye' poems. The little boys notice the abuse of their father in home and the problem of their mothers. Since that is repeated in most of the cases, the young children learn as it is natural. Then they learn mothers need to be submissive and fathers to be violent and aggressive. So the young girls do behave as their mothers do and the boys start to act like their fathers. This is well depicted in the following poem.

Ooso hayye hayye

*Ooso hayye hayye*

*Hayyete dafira*

*Because of hayye*

*Mulla borore'e*

*He shouted at me*

*Kinneyya dafirra.*

*Though he did it is for my children.*

The women expresses the ill-treatment of her husband with the poem (line 3) 'borore'e' which is to mean despising and insulting her. She says he insults and despise her for no reason, but because she sings 'Hayye'- 'Hayyete dafira'(line 2). She expresses her suppression with in the poem.

Every mother though she is abused, she stays home because of her children- 'Kinneyya dafirra' which means it is because of you, (line 4). She cares much for her children and she experiences every pain unlike to father for her children. In

Sidama, fathers do not bother about the way their children grow since it is taken as mothers' business. All house chores, bearing children, farming are on the women's shoulder.

Ooso hayye hayye

*Ooso hayye hayye*

*Bu'la kalaalate*

*It is a 'bu'la' to care for a baby*

*Hayye hayyesiira*

*To make the lullaby*

Furma ba'raarate

It is really being blessed to be mother

*Ateyara yanni kokeyya moltino*

*For you, my voice becomes softer*

*Ateya agurre mammirra haremo*

*Where should I go leaving you*

*Hanqqatamu aniki akitta baaino* Your stupid father doesn't know what he should do

In fact, the theme is no matter how much she is dissatisfied, she stays at home for her children. In other words, though she is deprived and degraded, primarily she takes care for her children and pays every sacrifice. Secondly if she goes leaving out her children, she is strongly criticized by the community.

Of course, she doesn't care for what people say about but for her child. She does not obey herself to the world of abuse and subjugation. She is opposing the male centered culture and she creates a new world challenging the existing reality.

In the poem she uses the metaphor saying 'bu'la kalalate' (line 2) which is 'Bu'la' is the finest food when 'Wassa' is processed.' Wasa' is made of inset plant. Bu'la' is very white and it is eaten for luxury and she says 'kalalate' which means pure and white.

Besides, she says to make a lullaby for the child is something she likes but because of the father who is 'Hanqqatamu' (line 7) 'stupid'. She is suffering very much because of her husband's behavior and (line 7) 'Akitta baaino' he treats her very harshly. But she has no where to go leaving her child as she says 'Ateya agurre mammira harema, (line 6).

More over, the women express their problems in the poems as in the following saying:

<i>Woddanbichcho xuholle</i>	<i>He cut a stick and smoked it</i>
<i>Hiisse gashshano'e</i>	<i>He treated me in every act</i>
<i>Annu jeilla hool'e</i>	<i>Without allowing me to go nowhere</i>
	<i>Even for the death of my father</i>

The word 'Woddanbichcho' (line 1) is to mean stick and 'xuholle' means smoke it putting above the place where fire is lit. The husband uses to hit his wife when he thinks, she makes a mistake and the woman expresses the abuse saying 'Hiisse gashshano'e' which means 'how does he treat?' (line 2) The stick symbolizes the harsh treatment of the husband.

Mostly husbands do not allow their wives to go out of home. Women are expected to care for children, looking out the garden, cattle and herds; to prepare food, fetch water, and carry fire woods and to do other house chores.

However, the husbands often spend their time going to the nearest urban area and drink local alcoholic drinks 'Araqqe' or 'Katikala' (local alcohol), 'Farsho' or 'Tela' (local beer) or 'Tej' (alcohol made of honey). Then when he comes back home, he insulted her and bites her. She expresses all the abuses with the 'hayye' poems.

Women are usually preoccupied with all household activities and then that is depicted in the poem as:

<i>Ooso hayye hayye</i>	<i>Ooso hayye hayye</i>
<i>Hayye hawalomma</i>	<i>I make the lullaby</i>
<i>Gumma gundoonnita</i>	<i>Which flows like a river</i>
<i>Bulle dawaroomma</i>	<i>I ground the flour again</i>
<i>Buliichcho dawarre</i>	<i>I ground it again</i>
<i>Hogumma daware</i>	<i>I make it very fine</i>

*Ate'ya amaale*

*Your behavior annoyed me*

*Amaliille ooso*

*Restless children*

*Ama hawiisanno*

*Irritate mothers.*

*ate'ya karro*

*Your front teeth*

*Tunso xawiissanno*

*Make darkness bright.*

Still, women express their problems and sufferings using the lullaby. In the poem (line 11) 'Tunso' means darkness and it is a symbol for her abuse. The darkness shows the woman is surrounded by problems and it indicates the situation in which the women are in.

Besides, 'Karro'(line 10) is used as the image for good thing and happiness. When there is a space between the two front teeth it is called 'karro' and when the child smiles she forgets her worry and abuse since it avoids darkness or it makes her to forget her problems.

Therefore, this portrays the woman is refusing the ill-treatment of her husband. They sing the song and they get into the world of make believe escaping from the routine or mundane world of abuse, dissatisfaction and suffering.

As to the poem, the routines of all house chores are burdened on the shoulder of the women. The task of bearing the needs of her children and her husband is the responsibility that is carried out by her without any help. If there are girls, they help their mother doing all the house activities.

*Ooso hayye hayye*

*Ooso hayye hayye*

*Qanne unnunna*

*Let me feed you my breast*

*Unnunna do'otte*

*Which makes you healthy and fat*

*Do'o qnnanette*

*But when you grow up*

*Ani shallanite*

*You despise me all the way out*

The woman is telling us about her male baby what he does when he grows up. Metaphorically speaking she is referring to all males. The word 'shallante'(line 5)

which is to say 'despising' is used to show the abuse of the wife by her husband. She feeds the breast, but when he grows he forgets what she has done for him.

In other words, though all males are born and cared by their mothers, they make their wives to suffer. Hence, this mother is criticizing the existing structure that favors male monotheism and depresses women. There are lots of suppressions of women and every women from early childhood to old age pass through this painful experience.

As it is in the culture when a man seeks to marry a girl, he promises to do everything and to care for her. However, after he marries her, he doesn't keep his words. And a woman who has felt the pain states it as:

Korre ka'ieta assirito worre	When he takes me home
<i>Worre asi bacca</i>	<i>His behavior has been changed</i>
<i>Baccatte yommatta</i>	<i>When I expect it gets better in time</i>
<i>Gane hinko wat'a</i>	<i>He broke my teeth all</i>
<i>Amartichcha Lamma</i>	<i>The Amhara Lemma</i>
<i>Lakkote Tassamma</i>	<i>Tessema of Leku</i>
<i>Rorsirema ye' fulle</i>	<i>The one who I think becomes my ally</i>
<i>Tassala ba'omma</i>	<i>Has really become my enemy</i>

The theme of the poem is about the person who is called Lemma Tessema from Leku has married her. First she thought he really loves her. But after their marriage things have changed and he started to bite her, break her teeth. The one she loves him becomes her enemy. She has been with patience if his behavior changes, however, it got worse.

The phrase 'assiritto worre' (line 1) is used to show the husband acts bad where she says when she thinks things get better 'Baccatte yommatta(line 3)'he broke her teeth –'Gane hiko wat'a'(line 4). Besides, she expresses her disappointment by saying 'Tassala ba'omma' (line 7) she loses every thing where he abuses her.

On the other hand, she lost her beauty (physical appearance) because things are not suitable to her. She is preoccupied with all household activities, bearing

children, the ill-treatment of her husband and every pressure. She lost her beauty and health, as a result she goes on saying:

<i>Ooso hayye hayye</i>	<i>Ooso hayye hayye</i>
<i>Ooso hayye hayye</i>	<i>Osso hayye hayye</i>
<i>Hayye asirrani</i>	<i>While I make luallaby</i>
<i>Ba'ommo kassare</i>	<i>I lose so many things</i>
<i>Eile qannsirrani</i>	<i>When you bear a child and feed breast</i>
<i>Eiliiro dannbanni</i>	<i>Your beauty and everything are lost</i>
<i>Kassassa lanbanni</i>	<i>You seem ugly</i>
<i>Darrawo daggurro</i>	<i>When my friends come</i>
<i>Yinayire hannbanni</i>	<i>I become totally ignored</i>
	<i>Where I am all weird</i>

In the poem she describes about herself that if a woman gives birth she looks ugly. She is expressing her regret that her beauty is lost saying 'kassare' (line 4) which is literally to mean 'bankrupted' because she gives birth to a child.

In the poem she portrays herself as she looks like dirtier-'Kassassa lanbani', (line 8). The respect given to her beauty has gone forever and now she has no one who asks her for love. Her husband looks for concubines who are beautiful and attractive just ignoring her. She knows no one wants her because her beauty has gone and she is forgotten by her friends.

On the other hand, her husband marries to another wife ('Gina') while she is at home. She describes it like this.

<i>Ooso hayye ooso hayye</i>	<i>Ooso hayye ooso hayye</i>
<i>Ginanna deleqqe sekaninno hosse</i>	<i>Nomatter how good 'gina and' deleqqe'</i>
	<i>become</i>
<i>Diyitanno co'o</i>	<i>Would not become clean</i>
<i>Illella kasaroomana</i>	<i>I lost things because I bear child</i>

<i>Moshe ka'umarro ani wolunite</i>	<i>If I seek for men</i>
<i>Lalu laddette no</i>	<i>Cows are in the plot</i>
<i>Laluna labbalu deye qarrete no</i>	<i>Men and cows go out</i>
	<i>Where they got what they eat</i>

The lullaby here stresses on the idea that males can marry more than a wife. If a Sidama man has "enough" wealth, he could marry as many wives as possible. As a result of that the women are subjugated and they are always mistreated by their husbands.

Most of the time when the ex-wife loses her beauty and when she becomes busier growing her children, the husband marries a new wife and he stops to come to her home. In the poem (line 2) 'Ginna' is compared to 'deleqqe'. 'Deleqqe' something comes out in the processes of preparing 'Wassa' and it is not consumed for food. In the simile the woman presents her husband through the description of 'deleqqe' where he has a bad quality.

Though he gets everything from her he looks for another wife and it is because she doesn't keep herself while she is bearing children. Further more she uses simile in the poem 'Laluna labbalu' (line 7) as both have the same quality. As the cows get something to eat they go any places, men do also go with many women.

The ex-wife then is expected to care for children, to perform household activities, and to watch out the garden. She is trapped by all these responsibilities when her husband acts as he likes. Hence, wives insulted their husbands in their lullabies as

<i>Lowowhu lophanno</i>	<i>The adult do grow</i>
<i>Lophonke xaa aji</i>	<i>Let the young not grow</i>
<i>Losseemmo yee haa're</i>	<i>They promise to care for their wives</i>

*Boroorshshu sossanno*

*And to do everything better*

*But they despise and insult*

*And make their wives suffer*

Then the women curse their husbands for their bad deeds where they mistreat their wives and take them as objects. When they make marriage proposal, they promise to do everything good to their wives, however, they never keep it.

*Ooso hayye hayye*

*Ooso hayye hayye*

*Siqqiichcho' ya Baabbe*

*'Babae' is my stick*

*Ha'roommati dawoomma*

*I came back after I had gone*

*Ooso'yata gaabbe*

*That is for my children*

Whatever she is abused, she couldn't go out of her home. Every mother always worries for her children and she doesn't want to leave them with their father. She knows her husband doesn't bother for his children, that is, he doesn't worry what they eat, where they sleep, what they wear, etc. The reason is that mothers are more kind hearted and takes more responsibility than fathers. And in the lullaby the mother sings by raising her voice expresses her true love she has for her children.

Any woman doesn't allow her husband to marry another wife. But because of the cultural conditions men are allowed to marry more than a wife since that is the way they are socialized. That is a man can marry four /five wives based on his wealth but the women do not have the right to oppose or revolt against the tradition. However, the women express their dislikes with the lullabies as it is below.

*Ginna girra kat'i*

*Let the fire burn you 'Gina'*

*Saatta ikkotta*

*You think you make him your husband*

*Doobiiye labballo, woro Faqisra*

*The courageous lions*

*Argata Naareha*

*Aregata Nare*

*Hushula xaaddeha*

*Hushula Kadela*

*Irbe Kaleessiha*

*Irbe Kaleessiha*

*Bushshu iti manna labballootu sanna*

*They are dead and stayed in dark.*

The poem praises these courageous men. The word 'Labbalo'(line 2)has two meanings: male and brave. This association has a negative image for women as she can not be brave. Moreover, the men are compared to lion( 'Doobiiye') for their braveness (line 3).The braves are found in 'Faqisa' land. The people though they are courageous now are lost forever; and in the mourning ceremony their deeds are commemorated by the mourners and made others to weep. This is of course it is a kind of socializing the young.

Such poems have a very significant place by the society and they are told by the mourners and that shows the mourning is very comemorable. The young is expected to follow the same line in lifetime. In other words, it is just told to educate young to pass in a similar way.

The courage of males is taken in terms of killing enemies, lions, tigers, rhions, etc. And that is well praised by the mourners. If the dead person killed animals, the wife wears the skin and mourns telling his courage. If he kills enemies that are also spoken in the mourning ceremony and every body in the village then praises his greatness.

'Faqisa' is the most respected group in Sidama who are courgeous. The people Aregata Nare,Husula Kadela and Irbe Kalessila are those of brave people died. Hence, this shows the existing structure, that is, the braveness of males.

*Worba washe Turce*

*Call to the courageous Turche*

*Makeennu xagarro*

*Though he tried to save his life*

<i>Siito haa'rara sa'nona,</i>	<i>He went to take the new born calf.</i>
<i>Adde mudukku qassuna</i>	<i>The young cow pierced his navel</i>
<i>Qasse dargaho kartuna</i>	<i>And killed him at the moment</i>
<i>"Halaalu konneeti "yitu</i>	<i>"This is truth" she said.</i>
<i>"Mudukku konneti"yitu,</i>	<i>"The navel (love) is this" she said...</i>

This poem is more of a deductive poem in socializing children. It is just to educate the young. It states about a mother who grew up children after the death of the father. She grew up them all and then she brought a wife to her eldest son.

'Lossite lowoha assitu' (line 4) she grew up her sons and brought him a wife as her husband 'ayiddanna' (line 2) died. 'Ayiddanna' means the father of the house. It shows the place of man in the society contrary to women.

But the wife of her son told to her husband that she doesn't want his mother. Then he threatened to kill his mother, but she was saved by her husband's brother who wants marry her which is called 'Ragge' (line 22) - to replace one's brother. In the culture this is an acceptable tradition.

Then, the uncle asked her to kill her son, but she said truth (line 42) 'Halaalu' and love/navel (line 43) would pay him the price. The navel a representation of love in Sidama. Of course, finally, he was killed by a young cow as he was cursed by his mother (line 35) 'Halaalu shoosi', let truth kills him and 'Muduku shoosi', which means, let truth kills him.

Therefore, this poem is composed by mourners and even it has moral lessons. In the poem the narration teaches the young to take truth into action and not to change love with hate. The tradition of marrying the wife of one's brother is common without the will of the widow and that highly affects the life of the women and her children. That is really a bad practice which has a negative effect in the psychological make up of the women and that dictates the life of the women and the growing children.

Borojjchcho Yuutteessona	Yuteso is a captive killing a woman
Yaane gobba borojjina	And other do the same thing
Aree shiino Humessonna	Though they criticized his doing
Shii'ra nooni baadohona?	Does killing of ones beloved do happen
Shiimo isi gaadohona	In this land of man and woman
	Humeso also killed his wife
	Let him diminish in war and stay in grief

In the poem it is stated that killing woman has become a common practice among the people in the land. And in the 'harrokisse' they curse these who killed their wives. And it is just to criticize those who do such crimes and it is to banish them from their social participation. This poem mainly stresses on the view to maintain the social value and to avoid injustice and crimes that are targeted on women. There are praise poems for women as it can be seen below.

<i>Worba mancho gorteennonna</i>	<i>The courageous woman died</i>
<i>Labballu doore yinona</i>	<i>Where courageous made</i>
<i>Doore diqansoonnisena</i>	<i>A monument for her good deed</i>
<i>Qansoonnise sagarana</i>	<i>A monument is erected for her</i>
<i>Sagara qansoonitena</i>	<i>They erected a monument</i>
<i>Sanga massangonitena</i>	<i>She is the one who sat on the fiercest horse</i>
<i>Nooni wolle dagarana?</i>	<i>So, is there such woman in other place?</i>

This is a praise poem and it is for a woman where her works are witnessed in public. If a woman is courageous she is compared to males for her braveness. The women in their mourning express their appreciation to the dead women saying 'Worba mancho gorteennonna'(line 1) a courageous women died.

She is compared to male as she is courageous. As a symbol for her courage a monument is erected to her (line 6). Besides, sitting on the fiercest horse is an indication of courage and it is stated in the poem (line 7) saying 'Sanga

massangonitena' which means she sit on the fiercest horse back. Horses are taken as a symbol for courage.

### 3.2.6 Work Poems

Work poetry is mainly composed in work songs. Here, for example, males describe the women giving her a bad image and they describe her with prejudices and stereotypical ways

Meyaatinna woshichchu,	<i>A woman and a dog</i>
Dihabbanno koma	<i>Never forget a menace</i>
Ko'mituro meyaati,	<i>If a woman become defiant</i>
Diwortano dona	<i>She never keeps treasure</i>
Worano bogguro,	<i>If she doesn't it's up to her</i>
Cubbu isehona	<i>For the sin she commits</i>
Hoo'li mine ona	<i>But keep her to decorate your house.</i>

Then women are taken as objects and she is totally taken a mis-behaving creature. In the poem the women is compared to dog saying 'Meyaatinna woshichchu' (line 1). 'Meyaati' means a women and 'woshichchu' means dog. The women are given bad image where they are always nagging to their husbands as a dog does bark if it does hate someone.

Furthermore, 'dona' (line 4) is a treasure and the women are expected to keep some treasure at home. Again, in (line 7) it says'Hoo'li mine ona' which means keep her at home to clean the house. The idea here boils down them to one thing as if they are needed only to decorate houses.

In the poem women are depicted as if they are not important. This is the belief by most males, (line7) and males; and it is strengthened by the poem that follows. Males are opposing the women who come out of the patriarchal world.

Ka'ano bushino	<i>It is bad in that village</i>
Hakkano bushshino	<i>It is also bad in this village</i>

<i>Xaaleyaanu dayinkunni</i>	<i>Since the Italian came here</i>
<i>Meyaati nugussuta,</i>	<i>Women have started to lead</i>
<i>Mitu dixunsino</i>	<i>Nobody noticed it</i>
<i>Xunsibo mannira</i>	<i>For those who visualized it,</i>
<i>Boosaalu tunsiiino</i>	<i>The house became dark.</i>

Then the males don't become comfortable for women to have equal rights to males and to do whatever males can do. Leadership is given to males as it is believed by most members of the society as it is abnormal to put women in leadership.

Since the Italian came (line 3) 'xaaliyyaanu dayinkunni' the land, women have started to lead people and that is of course unacceptable. And males strongly oppose this where it is out of "Buddea" (Culture). If a woman comes out of home and stays in public, all house works are left undone and that is a great problem for males.

In the poem (line 7) 'Boosalu' symbolizes the place of women in the society. 'Boosalu' it is just like to say kitchen and it conforms that women should not come out of kitchen. But since the Italian came here, women has started to lead- 'Meyatti nugussutta' (line 4) the women have started. And even males criticize women who go to market and enter into local hotels to be served food or drinks.

<i>Agittani farsho ?</i>	<i>Have you drunk ' Farsho'?</i>
<i>Agi ati gansho</i>	<i>You must drink ' Gansho'</i>
<i>Katamaho e'e</i>	<i>You went to town</i>
<i>labbalu loonsota</i>	<i>You eat something cooked by males</i>
<i>Itittani timma</i>	<i>Have you eaten bread</i>
<i>Iti ati kina</i>	<i>You must have eaten stone</i>

'Farsho' is local beer and sold in market and in the poem males insulted those women who went to market and drink it. "Gansho" is the mucous comes through

the nose and they are insulting them wishing them to drink it. And the males don't allow their wives to do so. If a woman wants to do this, she doesn't do it openly respecting the culture. If she is seen doing this, she is out casted by the society though it has been somehow changed in these days.

### 3.3 Self Confirmation

These are poems that are composed in deconstructing the existing gender relationship that favors males over females. The women express their internal feelings and dissatisfactions with the poems. Then use the oral songs as means of escaping from their suppression and deprivation. The women in Sidama are depressed and they are treated really not as human beings. The males though they are born from women, they subjugate them. The woman has no right to talk about her own propriety and to decide on the wealth she has produced. She is always treated not as a human being but just like an object.

Though the culture allows for males to act in the way they like, it does restrain women to act in the way males do. As a result, women protest on the injustice and the social pressure that is shouldered by them. Women are treated just like slaves and they object this stereotypical assumption as in this poem.

Borjichch isootina	<i>He is a slave</i>
Borjichcho yaannoena	<i>He says I am a slave</i>
Qarraaweenna qaamoommana	<i>I drink milk since I reared</i>
Looseennalla itoommana	<i>I eat since I worked</i>
Mineennalla galoommana	<i>I sheltered since I built</i>
Dikoomma borjichchona	<i>I am not slave</i>
Borjichchu isootina	<i>Rather he is a slave.</i>

In the poem it is stated that women are discriminated by males and they are treated like slaves. Then in this folk poem the women are denying males superiority and constructing a world of equality and self confirmation. It is a kind of make belief in denying the patriarchal world. Women are subject to

subjugation and also the mass culture confirms this reality. But the women protest from this life using the poems and they express their anger and dissatisfaction. The woman is narrating that her husband insulted her saying she is a slave 'Borjichcho yaannoena' (line 2); which means he called me slave. Borjichcho means slave and she objects this by insulting him in the poem by saying it is he who is slave- 'Borjichch isootina' (line 1)

If a married woman does not have children, the society out casts her and she would be despised and insulted for her infertility. And she narrates what other people say about her. She neglects what people say about her just as in the following poem.

<i>Amaartitte</i>	<i>An Amhara woman</i>
<i>Dhaante woshshitue</i>	<i>She called to someone</i>
<i>Tiolomiti Jaartera,</i>	<i>Jarte the wife of Tiolomi</i>
<i>Tole intaayyera</i>	<i>She doesn't have children</i>
<i>Il'a ho'le kae</i>	<i>But he gave her wealth</i>
<i>Ikkino qalaante</i>	<i>Though she got many cattle</i>
<i>Godowase laante</i>	<i>And she becomes fatter,</i>
<i>Godowase sooyyante,</i>	<i>Her belly increases more</i>
<i>Ba'u ila gaante</i>	<i>Her womb is closed</i>
<i>Mullaho qalaantu</i>	<i>She breeds but not consumed</i>
<i>Hanso ila jante</i>	<i>Let's search her a baby</i>

This is composed by a woman who is suffered by people who treat her with discourtesy about her infertility. Fertility is an indication for love to a woman. If she doesn't have a baby she is insulted as her womb is closed, (line 9) 'Il'a hole kae'.

The cows are breed 'Ikkino qalaante' (line 6) and they become many which is a symbol for wealth, but there is no baby. Her ears get tired of listening what others

she speak about her, her wealth and her beauty. Therefore, if a woman doesn't have children, she never be taken as a woman and that irritates her. She expresses her complaints as

<i>Dagaagichchu daanyi,</i>	<i>For the judge of the village</i>
<i>Daafursie mannu</i>	<i>I am tired, they speak about me</i>
<i>Godowiino yaanni</i>	<i>They said she is pregnant because I eat</i>
<i>Ita aguroni?</i>	<i>Should I stop eating to live with out it?</i>
<i>Kokke qatumonni?</i>	<i>Should I make myself hungry or kill?</i>
<i>Boqichcho ikkeenna</i>	<i>It is not like dough to roll</i>
<i>Sissille reemmani</i>	<i>I get thinner till death</i>
<i>Qahe hol'moha</i>	<i>God doesn't give me to be a mother</i>
<i>Birru hiireemmani?</i>	<i>Money can't buy it If I wander for.</i>

It is really a serious psychological problem for women who can't be mothers in the society. If she doesn't deliver baby, it is belived that the woman might be cursed. 'Boqichcho' (line 6) means something going to be cooked and it is not like that to get a baby. She expresses her sufferage by saying 'Sissille' (line 7) to say become skinny with out eating,'qatumonni?' which means should I hunger myself?

On the other hand, when a woman give birth her physical and mental strength decreases and every sort of her life is affected because of marriage and other things. Women are the victims of the culture and they are subordinated to males and they oppose this reality since it undermines the place of women in the society. And as a result, even women don't want to have children where that weakens her and it takes away her beauty.

<i>Qadeelanna Hemma</i>	<i>Kadela and Hemma</i>
<i>Hemma saoommaro</i>	<i>If I went beyond Hemma</i>

<i>Uddi' reemma seema.</i>	<i>I wear ' Semma'</i>
<i>lItannote aja</i>	<i>For young woman who gives birth</i>
<i>Lamere misheemma,</i>	<i>I don't like two things</i>
<i>Ani iloommaro</i>	<i>If I give birth</i>
<i>Waasa diqiishshemma</i>	<i>I don't want to prepare food</i>
<i>Qnshshenna iteemma</i>	<i>I only eat what is prepared</i>

In the villages called Kadela and Hemma people wear 'Semma' (blanket) women are expected to perform all the house activities even during the time when they deliver a baby. The narrator of the poem presents this is not good for a woman. And she advises other women by saying when they give birth, they shouldn't prepare food and eat only what others have done. Then it is in fact out of the tradition in Sidama society. A woman in Sidama do all the house hold activities and even they prepare food soon after she delivers a baby. But in the poem she is refusing this saying 'diqiishshemma' (line 7) which means I never cook.

A woman works all house activities alone. She bears every responsibility in the house. She has no rest at all. And the narrator of the poem is moving against the common belief in the society. Let's see the common belief as the structure confirms it in the following poem.

<i>Biliqichi tummanno ba'ati</i>	<i>It is the place of black smith</i>
<i>Danchchu kinchchi ani waati</i>	<i>Spring water is all better.</i>
<i>Furfuramete miyati hurbati</i>	<i>Wives food is the left over</i>
<i>Hakkunno naffarra cufu kirati</i>	<i>That is even since she close door</i>
<i>Ikisseena baqqa maati</i>	<i>That is enough for her.</i>

This is a patriarchal notion that dwarfs the place of women in a family, in the society in a tribe or a country. Women here then assumed to be not equal to their masters. The good food is given to the husband and she eats what is left from the husband or to eat the less eatable food. In Sidama, women often do not eat

## 4. CONCLUSION

The gender difference is built upon the reality that confirms men are privileged over women. Like any society the Sidama people have their own socio-cultural and political traditions that mark their identity. They have their own traditions and language. The people preserve their traditions in their folklore - folk medicine, folk art, material culture and oral literature which help to learn about the people.

Particularly, the oral poetry as a sub genre of folklore shows all aspects of Sidama culture and gender relationship. According to the oral poetry it is found out that the Sidama have very old cultural aspects. The cultural aspects show the marriage, the mourning ceremony, circumcision, and social administration etc.

In the cultural traditions the women are subordinated to males in all areas of life and that is of course stated in most of their oral poetry. They, however, refuse their subordination, and they protest in their songs. Mainly, the women do express their protest in the haye poetry (song). While they make the poetry in the meantime they are socializing their children who grow listening the poems. The poems are easy to be memorized since they appeal to the senses. And so they are easily learnt.

The girls and the boys then listen to the poems and they understand the poems as they are culturally defined, in other words, they take the message as they are naturally granted. That means the children when they grow looking at their mothers being abused, they take it as it is normal and the growing girls do shape themselves to act like their mothers and the boys as their fathers.

Therefore, oral poetry mirrors the people's way of life and their identity. The social thought of the Sidama mainly the relationship between the sexes is clearly seen in the poems as one is privileged over the other. That's again the result of the socialization process in childhood. The socialization process also dictates the existing structure that confirms males' superiority and females' subordination. Hence, culture is the guiding force to the gender differences and the inequality of both sexes emerge from it. As a result, now this tradition that subordinates women should be deconstructed since it does dwarf the role of women in the

society though they have the highest responsibility. As women are the base in any society the discrimination of women affects the society at large.

Now the women start to question the patriarchal world that favours males over females. The male centered reality has been challenged by the new consciousness emerging from females. We learn the common beliefs through the oral forms and especially in the oral poetry that creates our collective consciousness. There are points that all accept and we are made to accept these 'facts' through the narratives that they make us to share common beliefs and thought.

However, these creations have been challenged by women in their oral poetry. The women insult and criticize males who abuse them. On the other hand, the women do praise those men who have good qualities and who are true lovers. The songs (the poems) that are composed in various occasions do indicate the new consciousness of women. They protest of males subjugation and their confinement in household activities bearing children, preparing food, and others.

Therefore, oral poetry as it is a sub genre under the folkloristic study would help us to mirror out the reality /the existing structure/ and it helps to learn the society in a very comprehensive way. Besides, it carries the life philosophy of the people and that can help us to make a better policy. In other words, for the appropriate policy implementations the study of the oral poetry would help to take policy measures.

Finally, in the research it is learnt that culture is the socialization power and everything is built upon the way how children are socialized. Therefore, the gender differences though it is dictated by culture has been questioned, that means males' reality has been challenged by females' reality that assures their are different realities. And that shows the pluralities of meaning and reality. That of course, helps the women to be treated like humans; respected by their compatriots and life partners.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Sidama people have their own cultural, social, economical, and political institutions. The institutions work through the elderly men - 'Chemessa.' The chemessa are very much responsible to whatever is being done in the 'Gare' /social sub ethnic group. Thence, these people govern every move in the society in keeping the customs and traditions that show who they are. Different from any people in Ethiopia, though there are some similarities, the Sidama people have different socio-cultural and political settings.

As it was discussed earlier, the 'chemessa' are the very important people /VIP and they got that through the 'Luwa' system. The Luwa system is the base for the establishment of the Sidama culture. The marriage system, the mourning, the social administration, etc are governed by the 'Luwa' system. Therefore the identity of the Sidama people is built upon their cultural ways and their culture has a very pivotal role to maintain the socio political establishments. But these socio-cultural and political institutions are disappearing from time to time because of different factors. Therefore some measures should be taken in keeping the identity of the people.

First, the 'Luwa' System which is the binding social establishment is disappearing where the native are influenced by other's culture. The fact is because of modern education and the protestant teachings and the pressure from the previous governments the dressing style and the Luwa system and others have been almost vanshing except in the highland areas. Even the society either from neglect or from the so called 'modernization' has left their culture and that has to be considered by policy makers and any concerned body including researchers.

Second, the different cultural rites - marriage, mourning ceremony and circumcision have been replaced by others borrowed culture. As the identity and culture of a people are maintained in its folklore, I think all the concerned bodies should do something of good worth to preserve their culture.

Thirdly, oral poetry is a very good area to study the Sidama people. However, I fear that the oral forms are not preserved where the people pass their customs

and traditions mostly in oral forms, and particularly the oral poetry. As oral poetry entails to the various social, political, cultural conditions, I believe it is a better area to study the culture and gender notions. My fear is that most of the oral poetry or oral songs have been forgotten where most of them are not recorded in electronic and print forms. Of course, I have attempted to record the oral poetry in tape recording and taking note. However, they are not enough since I have collected them in short time and most of them are related to my area of study.

Infact, I have come up with my readings of senior essay for the partial fulfillment of bachelor's degree in Literature, Language and Sociology. But a very detailed study at the post graduate to the level of my knowledge has not been done. So that is an area invites researchers to conduct a study. Particularly, I believe folk poetry is an area that helps to learn an accumulated knowledge. So I recommend researchers to conduct their study in the area because it helps them to find out the social and political philosophy of the Sidama.

Fourthly, oral poetry is a very helpful gener to study about gender difference in Sidama society. The women express their feelings happiness and dissatisfaction through the oral songs. As oral poetry (goes together with oral songs) helps to study about the structure of a society and the gender relationship, helps it is an area that gives a clear picture. It helps us to find out the social thought of both sexes and again it helps to understand the problems in Sidama society. Therefore, I hope any researcher who wants to conduct a study on Sidama people oral poetry would help him/her to come up with a concrete image of the people.

Fifth, folkloristic study as it binds cultural studies and literary study is an area that is untouched by for researchers. Some attempts have been made as I mentioned before, but that is not enough.

Finally, since the oral forms in general and oral poetry in particular are disappearing and they are needed to be recorded and preserved for generations. Besides, to keep the identity of Sidama people, the government and non governmental organizations should teach the society using community radio,

school books, etc. As Sidama people preserve their cultural rites through a word of mouth, it can be forgotten or totally changed as oral forms are adaptable and personal creative act could be added. Hence, to know the exact changes in belief, thinking and value, oral poetry gives us unlimited opportunity to study the Sidama people. And so they must be recorded since I believe oral poetry plays a good worth for any kind of research. In addition, the cultural bureaus of the region and the Sidama cultural center should exert their effort in collecting and recording these social traditions to the coming generations and to those researches who are interested in the area.

## Bibliography

- Abebe G/T. 1986. *Sidama Verb Phonology*. Addis Ababa : ILS, Addis Ababa University(unpublished).
- Abebe K. A. 1983. *በግርዛት ባህልና በአጋጣሚው የሚዘፈኑ ግጥሞች በሲዳማ ህብረተሰብ አዲስ አበባ: አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ*(unpublished).
- Amot, T. L. and Julie A.M. 1991.*Race, Gender and Work*. Boston South End Press.
- Anbesse Teffera 1984. *Sidama Verb Phonology*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University(unpublished).
- Anozie, S.1982. "Structurology: The Semiotics of the Yamp"(P.115-122)*Phenomenology in Modern African Studies* . S.O Anozie.( ed.) :Werri, London:Conch Magazine.
- Arewa ,O. and Shreve 1982. "Phenomenology and Ethnography of Speaking Folklore"(P.50-70) *Phenomenology in Modern African Studies* . S.O Anozie.( ed.) :Werri, London:Conch Magazine.
- Barker et al 2003. *Literature, Politics and Theory*. London and New York::Routledge.
- Barthes, R. 1992. *Myth Today*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Belsey, C. 1983.(ed.) *Critical Practice*. London and New York Methuen.
- Betena , W.1983. *የሲዳማ ህዝብና ባህሉ አዲስአበባ : ኢትዮጵያ*
- Bierstedt, 1963. *The Social Order*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed: New York . New York University Press
- Brown, I .C.1964. *Understanding Others Culture* .4<sup>th</sup> ed. Englewood Cliffs, USA Printice Hall.
- Brown, L. C. and K. Olson 1978.Feminist Criticism. Essays on Theory of Poetry and Prose :USA The Scare Crow Press.

- Catlin, C.E.G. 1989. "Systematic Politics" (P.162-197) *The Media and Politics*  
D.E.Alger(ed.) New Jersey: Printice Hall
- Coward,R. and J. Ellis 1977.*Language and Materialism*. Boston : Routledge.
- Chodorow, N.1993. "Family Structure and Feminine Personality" (P.43-46)  
*Women Culture and Society*. M.Z. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere:  
California: Stanford University Press.
- Davison W.P. and F.T.C. Yu 1975. *Mass Communication Research* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. :  
New York: Praeger Publishers.
- Desta G. 1987. *Mourning and Treatment Ceremony among the Sidama  
Nationality with Particular Refernce to the Shebedino District*. Addis  
Ababa: SOSA, Addis Ababa University
- Deigh,L. 1972. "Oral folklore: Folk Narrative"(P.53-97 ) *Folklore and Folk Life: an  
Introduction*. R.M.Dorson(ed.) Chicago and London:The Chicago  
University Press
- Dorson ,R. M.1972. *Folklore and Folk Life: an Introduction*. Chicago and London:  
Chicago University Press.
- Dube, L. 2001 *Anthropological Explorations in Gender: Intersecting Fields*: New  
Delhi Sage Publications.
- Erikson, E.H. 1974. *Identity: Youth and Crises*. London: Faber and Faber Ltd.
- Fekade, A. 1991. የስነ-ቃል መምሪያ አዲስ አበባ: ኢትዮጵያ
- Ferguson, M. A. 1977. *Images of Women in Litrature*.2<sup>nd</sup> ed. : Boston : Houghton  
Mifflin Company.
- Finnegan, R. 1970. *Oral Literature in Africa*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Frye, N. 1963. *Fables of Identity: Studies in Poetic Mythology*: New York:  
Harcourt, Brace and World Inc.

- Gashe, R. 1996 .”Infrastructure and Systematicity” Deconstruction and Philosophy: The Text of Jacques Derrida. J. Sallis (ed.) Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Gaspairno,A. 1983. *Sidamo English Dictionary*. Bologna, Italy: E.M.I.
- Gulelat , A. 1989. በሲዳማ ብሕረሰብ ሰቶች ላይ የተገጠሙ ሰነድ ቃላዊ ግጥሞች ይዘት ትንተና: አዲስ አበባ: አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ(unpublished).
- Haileyesus, S. 2001. “Living on the Edge” (P ): *Marginalized Minorities of Craft Workers and Hunters in Southern Ethiopia*. D. Freeman and A. Pankhurst (eds.): Addis Ababa : SOSA,Addis Ababa University.
- Hamer,J. H. 1970. *Sidamo Generational Class Cycle*. London:
- Heinge, D. P.1974.The Chronology of Oral Tradition: Quest for Chiamara. Oxford Clarendon Press.
- Hauser, S. T. 1971.Black and White IdentityFormation. New York:JohnWiley Qsons, Inc.
- Kennedy,G. A. 1993. *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Classical Criticism*. . vol. 1: New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Kidd,W. 2002. *Culture and Identity: Skills Based Sociology*. New York: Palgrave.
- King, U.1993. *Women and Spirituality: Voice of Protest and Promise*.2<sup>nd</sup> ed. : Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University.
- Knap, B. L. 1986. *Archetype, Architecture and the Writer*. Bloomington: India.
- Markos T. 2002. *National Oppression and Resistance of the Sidama and the Sidama Liberation Movement* .Addis Ababa : PSIR, Addis Ababa University
- Mengesha , M. 1972. ከጋብቻ ጋር የተያያዙ የሲዳማ ብሕረሰብ ሥነ-ቃሎች:: አዲስ አበባ: አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ(unpublished).
- Mesfine, M. 2000. *Abbawudde Oral Poetry in South Wollo: A Descriptive Analysis* : Addis Ababa : Addis Ababa university(unpublished)

- Moore, S. 1996. *Sociology Alive*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Musselburgh, UK: Stanley Thornes.
- Murdock, G.P. 1959. "Sidamo Peoples" (P. 187-192) *Africa: Its Peoples and their Culture, History*. New York: McGraw-Hill
- Ngara, I, 1990. *Form and Ideology in Poetry*. London: James Curry.
- Ong, J. W. 2000. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the World*. London: and London : Routledge
- Ortner, S.B. 1993. "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" *Woman, Culture and Society*. M. S. Rosaldo and L Lamphere(eds.): California: Stanford university Press
- Peck, J. and M. Coyle 1993. *Literary Terms and Criticism*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.: London Macmillan.
- Piaget, J. 1970. *Structuralism*. Translated by C. Mascher. New York: Basic Books, Inc.
- Pike, C. 1982. "Form and Memory in Oral Tradition" (P. 13-29) *Phenomenology in Modern African Studies*. S.O Anozie.( ed.) : Warri, London: Conch Magazine.
- Pinchin, 1992. *Issues in Philosophy*. London: The Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Plaskow, J. and C.P. Christ 1989. *Weaving the Visions: New Patterns in Feminist Spirituality*. San Francisco: Harpersan.
- Richmond, W.E. 1972. "Narrative Folk Poetry" (P.85-98) *Folklore and Folk Life: an Introduction*. R.M Dorso( ed.): Chicago and London: Chicago University Press.
- Robey, D.(ed.) 1972. *Structuralism: an introduction*: London: Oxford University Press.
- Rosaldo, M.Z 1993 "women culture and society: A theoretical overview" (P-17-42) *Women, Culture and Society* M.Z Rosaldo and L.Lamphere (eds.). California: Stanford University Press.

## Appendices

### *Other Collection of Poems*

#### **Hanno Poems**

1. Qaqqo qantanno  
Gadase komorro  
Betto galtannoto  
The baby feeds breast  
She is from the respected  
She is awoman for marriage
2. A maru garre amarru garre  
Lukuwwa itanao anfoniki garre  
Amarru saggale heyakko miteete  
Lukichu layinkiho  
Soolole sayikiho  
Ko'ne itannori gobbate noikiho  
The Amhara people, the Amhara people  
They eat the chicken which is an occaut  
The food they eat in cldes the fowl  
The chicken is the second  
The others poultry third  
Those who eat this never exist in our land
3. Ballo sodirrawe ikkaninno  
Ate leddo heyinenna  
Soddirono miikanno  
Now it is getting dawn  
With you I don't mind any how  
Let it be a day
4. Aje manni  
Kajju manni gallinno iseminne  
Caberri gaddinno manni  
Lamme laddinno manni  
Angaate qaltiino manni  
Anga wonqote manni  
Galinno isseminne  
A man from Aje  
Brave men live in her home  
Brave men were kept as guests  
Who marched to to war front  
They fought without weapons  
Hang and killed with their hand  
They always keeps armour  
In her home all this stayed
5. Hanno kanndenna da'furena daata  
Caassa Tulehu Tongoliho ba'adaa  
You come when I got tired singing Hanno  
With Caasa Tuleh and Tongolo Ba'ada

#### ***Farro poems***

1. Sirrbemohe te'shagga  
Comma fayita mattiinette  
I sing for you who is beautiful  
Who is white like salt and fat

Sirbemohe te' betto  
Follee yitanna  
Shshamma Shshitto

2. Borro gobbarra Bonji Marrasso  
Ate talaata gottu rarrasso
3. Harremo saadate  
Saadassi ba'uro  
Hawarro yaddate

I sing for you who is beautiful  
For you who have the odour of perfume

Bonjja Marrasso from Borro  
Heyna eats your enemy  
I'll go to the cattle  
If they disappear  
In the night it is I who worry

### ***Danbaryo Poems***

1. E' hayyo danbbary ayya  
Danbari kali kalu  
Kallotte allaleemma  
Ani ayya marri lalloo
2. Lanbbi lanbayyo ba'redu  
Kaja beticho baredu  
Finicho labiyyot ba'redu  
Worbu wodona itu barredu

E' hayyo danbbaryo ayya  
Danbari kept grazing land  
I keep cattle in grazing land  
Of my fathers  
Lanbii lanbayyo baredu  
A beautiful girl baredu  
Who is a small creature  
And won the heart of the brave

### ***Hayye poems***

1. Ati ane tiro  
Ti'rru Birra hirro  
Birru hirannoha  
Coyi're tirannoha  
Ma aninnio ilo  
Ate 'ya iloomma  
Kiritinnu diro
2. Ooso hayye hayye  
Ani diafoomma  
Anfo manni yino  
Goga uddisiise  
Fura geerchu shino

You are my treasure  
The treasure makes money  
Money buys  
Money speaks and solves problem  
I want to have a baby  
I then get you  
In the epiphany  
Ooso hayye hayye  
I don't know it  
It is people who speak about it  
They put her on girrafe  
They made her wear skin

- Fura geerchu shino  
 Furra shiihu shiimo
3. Hayye, hayye, hayye  
 Isira cubbaanno  
 Manchohu quniro,  
 Giirala gibbanno,  
 Meessihu meessiho,  
 Boosaallote fino
4. Hayi oosona hayye  
 Qeweenaho Qere  
 Qerehona Daayye,  
 Dalla agurie  
 Hoolloonnite hayye
5. Ooso hayye hayye  
 Amartite Bassu  
 Agareema Sassuu  
 Ba'inoke tassu  
 Amartite qorre  
 Qorrara dayinoke  
 Abe mine'e wore  
 Mageshshite Yonna  
 Ka'innonna korre .
6. Deyye Dello ooso  
 Tutayanna Tummatto  
 Bushshanno danchan no  
 Godowula matto  
 Godolle Alooha  
 Lamma anne asso  
 Lanakammo Lalcho

Fura is killed by an old man  
 Let him be little  
 Hayye, hayye, hayye,  
 If exhusband becomes greedy  
 It would be bad for him  
 If others husband refuses  
 Only the fire doesn't lit  
 As the one who is others  
 Never be a good lover  
 He has to be removed like ash  
 Hayi, oosona hayye  
 It is at Qewenat near Qerre  
 Qerre is at Daayye  
 Don't come here  
 Hayye belongs to Hollo.  
 Ooso hayye hayye  
 The Amhara woman Bassu  
 I keep for three  
 We are nowhere  
 He brought an Amhara woman  
 They came here taking her  
 The put her home  
 Let him ask her size  
 He is badly seeking her.  
 The children of Deyye Dello  
 Tutay a and Tumato  
 The good and the bad  
 Let keep in dark  
 He is good in playing  
 I want to be like Lamma  
 Lanqqammo the son of lala



## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my work and that all sources of material used for this thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name: **NIGUSSIE MESHEHSA**

Signature:  \_\_\_\_\_

Place : **ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**

Date of Submission: July 12, 2005