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**Department of Curriculum and Teachers Professional
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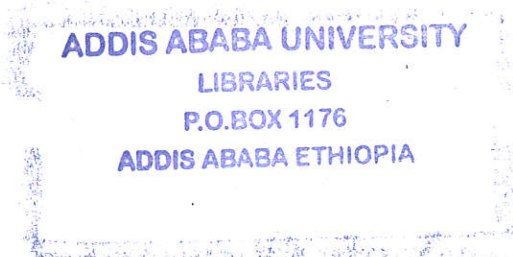
**Women Cultural Role Expectations and their Participation in
Functional Adult Literacy Programs**

**(A Comparative study of Awra Amba and Ater Midir Communities,
South Gonder Zone)**

**By
Genet Gelana**



**July 2009
Addis Ababa**



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**A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of Addis
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for the Degree of Masters of Arts in Adult and Lifelong
Learning**

By

Genet Gelana

**July 2009
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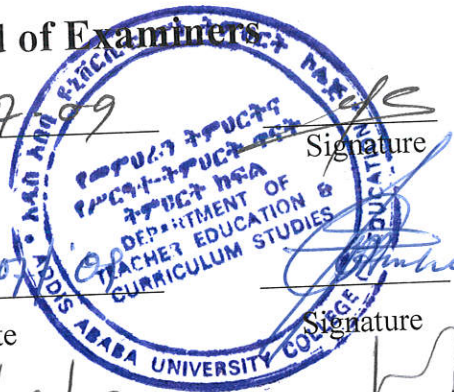
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Table of Contents

Content	Page
Table of contents -----	i
List of Pictures -----	iv
Acknowledgement -----	v
Set-Up -----	vi
Abstract -----	vii
Acronyms -----	viii
CHAPTER ONE -----	1
Introduction -----	1
1.1 Background of the Study -----	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem-----	4
1.3 Objectives of the Study -----	6
1.4 Significance of the Study-----	7
1.5 Delimitation of the Study-----	7
1.6 Limitation of the Study -----	8
1.7 Operational definition of Terms -----	8
CHAPTER TWO -----	9
Review of Related Literature -----	9
2.1 Culture and Gender Roles-----	9
2.2 Women Cultural Roles -----	11
2.3 The Basic Socialization Agents Behind Women Cultural Roles -----	12
2.4 Women Perceptions of their Cultural Roles -----	23
2.5 The Impact of Women Cultural Roles on their Education -----	24
2.5.1 Enrollment, Absenteeism and Dropout -----	25
2.5.2 Achievement and Classroom Participation -----	26

2.5.3 Subject Choice -----27

CHAPTER THREE-----29

Research Design and Methodology -----29

3.1 Research Design -----29

3.2 Research Setting -----30

3.3 Selection of Research participants -----31

 3.3.1 Community Elders -----31

 3.3.2. Women not yet enrolled in FAL centers -----31

 3.3.3. Women in FAL centers -----32

 3.3.4. FAL Facilitators -----32

 3.3.5. Key Informants -----32

3.4. Instruments and Procedures of Data Collection -----33

 3.4.1 In-depth Interview -----33

 3.4.2 Participant Observation -----33

 3.4.3 Focus Group Discussion -----34

3.5. The Researcher’s Role -----36

3.6. Procedures of Data Analysis -----37

3.7 Strategies for Validation -----38

3.8 Ethical Considerations -----39

CHAPTER FOUR-----41

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation -----41

4.1 Arrival and Reception in the Research Sites -----41

4.2 Names and Foundations of the Communities -----43

4.3 Women Cultural Roles -----46

4.4 Women's Socialization to the Culturally Ascribed Roles -----53

4.5 Women Perceptions of their roles -----59

4.6 Education -----60

 4.6.1. What is Education for Awra Amba Community? -----60

 4.6.2. What is Education for Ater Midir Community? -----61

4.7 Education for whom? (Education and women -----62

4.7.1. Women and Education in Awra Amba Community -----	62
4.7.2. Women and Education in Ater Midir Community -----	63
4.8 Functional Adult Literacy program -----	66
4.8.1 FAL in Awra Amba -----	66
4.8.2 FAL in Ater Midir-----	69
4.9 Women and Functional Adult Literacy -----	70
4.9.1 Enrollment, Absenteeism and Dropout -----	70
4.9.2 Classroom Participation-----	73
4.9.3 Achievement-----	75
4.9.4 Subject Choice -----	77
CHAPTER FIVE -----	79
Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations-----	79
5.1. Summary-----	79
5.2. Conclusions-----	82
5.3 Recommendations-----	83
References-----	84
Appendices	
Declaration	

List of Pictures

Picture 1	The Awra Amba man baking "injera" -----	48
Picture 2	The Awra Amba woman ploughing land -----	48
Picture 3	The Awra Amba males and Females in spinning activity -----	49

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Set-Up

This Thesis was organized in such a ways that apart from preliminary, reference, appendix and declaration sections, it consisted of five chapters which are interdependent; introduction, review of related literature, research design and methodology and summary, conclusions and recommendations part.

In the introduction part, the background of the problem showing the gap in the area and the problem itself were dealt. In this section, objectives, significance as well as limitation and delimitation of the research were mentioned.

In order to show the background of the problem and evidences for what was said, I reviewed related literature.

To address the problem raised, it was important to consult appropriate methodology, hence, in chapter three, qualitative design with ethnographic approach and relevant methods were used to gather data about women cultural role expectations and their implications for their participation in the FALP.

In chapter four, the data obtained through different means were thematically analyzed and interpreted based on my observation and larger literature and reported in narration form with extensive quotes.

Then, in chapter five, the findings of the study were summarized and then conclusions were made. Lastly, attention by concerned bodies and those researchers interested in the area were sought to minimize problems related to women cultural roles and related behavioral expectations.

Abstract

This study was planned to examine the women cultural roles in Awra Amba and Ater Midir communities. In doing so, it investigated how they shape women feelings and affect their participation in Functional Adult Literacy Programs of the two communities. For this purpose, it employed ethnographic method in which a total of 51 participants (community elders, Women in the functional Adult Literacy centers, those not yet enrolled, Facilitators and Key informants of both communities) were purposely selected for interview and Focus Group Discussion. In addition to these, participant observation, as an important data collection method in this kind of Approach was used to collect data. The study revealed that there is difference in women cultural roles and behavioral expectations between Awra Amba and Ater Midir communities. Family, peers and schools and teachers are the major agents that socialize women towards differential as well as similar gender roles. In Ater Midir, the gender roles coupled with negative perception of the society towards women affects them in such a ways that they feel incapable and inadequate and resulted in lack of confidence on the part of women except in areas which are considered as theirs culturally. The cultural roles and expectations based on sex and internalizations of these by the women hamper their participation in Functional Adult Literacy Programs (enrollment, achievement, classroom participation and subject choice) (Ater Midir) than those with similar roles and equal statuses (Awra Amba). Finally, It is recommended that there is a need for urgent attention by concerned bodies on changing such roles and expectations in order to create gender fair society, like Awra Amba, all over the country. A need for further study on this and other aspects of the issue on larger scale has also been suggested.

Acronyms

ABE	Alternative Basic Education
ADA	Amhara Development Association
ANFEAE	Adult and Non-Formal Education Association in Ethiopia
FAL	Functional Adult Literacy
FALP	Functional Adult Literacy Program
FINNIDA	Finnish International Development Agency
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoE	Ministry of Education
NCTPE	National Committee on Traditional Practices of Ethiopia
NGO	Non- Governmental Organization
PASDEP	Program for Accelerated Sustainable Development to End Poverty
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations International Child Emergency Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Education is one of the most important factors that have a direct relation to development of a society and a country. It enhances all aspects of economic, social, political and cultural changes and developments (Rosser et al cited in Kenate, 2005: 34). Besides, it is considered as the ideal means of strengthening the problem solving capacities of individuals as well as societies. Education enables man/woman to identify harmful traditions and replace them with useful ones. It helps man/woman to improve, change as well as develop awareness to conserve his/her environment for the purpose of an all rounded development by diffusing science and technology into the society (MoE, 1994).

Being part of education, adult education is a means through which social as well as economic development can be achieved. It plays a vital role in the full dimension of development of a country. The National Adult Education Strategy of Ethiopia considers adult education, as a means of accelerating development and ending poverty thereby contributing to Ethiopia's PASDEP by enhancing human resource capacity (MoE, 2006). In this strategy, it was also noted that particularly in developing countries like Ethiopia, adult education helps people to alleviate poverty by encouraging lower fertility, better health and nutrition and by increasing their productivity through technology and other methods of production.

Functional Adult Literacy (FAL), an aspect of adult education, is also considered as a tool of Ethiopia's PASDEP. The National Strategy of Adult Education of Ethiopia (2006) identified two meanings of FAL: FAL as either "*practice of reading and writing put to some use*" or "*the acquisition and use of reading and writing to learn practical knowledge and skills useful for other aspects of life.*"(p.iii) As indicated in the National Strategy, adult education in general, Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) in particular can contribute to the overall development of the country by helping people to have modern attitudes and skills which assist them in getting

employment opportunity and employing themselves which in turn result in improving one's family income (MoE, 2006).

To bring about all the desired changes indicated above which can contribute to the overall development of a country, the participation of both sex in the program is vital. United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in its report of human development entitled *Human Development to Eradicate Poverty*, recognizing education as a pertinent tool for eradication of poverty, emphasized gender equality in education as an elementary part of poverty reduction and hence sustainable development (King and Mason(1987) in Tamale, 2004:43). Beyond this, as reported by Son (1994) if the development process is to gain momentum, education of women and girls must be prioritized. To some researchers, education of women plays a vital role in the overall development of the county, as social returns to investment in female education are high and exceeds the returns to male education (Teshome, 2002; Son, 1994). Son said, "*Literate women are not enriched as individuals, but are also enabled to make an enhanced contribution to the welfare of their families and to have an impact on the society as a whole*"(p. 114). That is, literacy among girls and women leads to a rise in their age at marriage, a reduction in infant mortality and prenatal death rates, strong desire for family planning and female employment, reduces the number of unwanted births and promote the education of succeeding (children).

However, in Ethiopia, literacy levels, enrollment rates and level of schooling completed are relatively low with marked gender gap i.e. the literacy rates for males exceed that for females (Genet, 1991). According to some researchers (Kasente, 2000; Teshome, 2002), the reasons behind this disparity are attributable to problems of family, schools and culture. Among these factors, the one which is prevalent and which exist in almost all societies is socio-cultural factor (Kalkidan, 2007).

Cultural values on education of women are influenced by a society's view of gender roles. Gender roles are the socially learned pattern of behavior that differentiates men from women in a given society (Desalegn, 1991). Formed during the socialization phases of childhood and

adolescence, gender roles influence people throughout their lives, leading to the development of real psychological and personality differences between males and females (Tizita, 2003).

Most cultures of Ethiopia, according to Alemmaya (2003) reinforce the ideology of gender inequality by perpetuating sexual division of labor. She said that the society assumes that women's place is in the house while that of men is at work, away from the house. As to Andromeda (1968), in most societies of Ethiopia, the inequality based on sex starts right after birth that if the new baby is a boy there would be firing of seven gun shots or five loud shouts and only three gun shots or loud shouts if the baby is a girl. Moreover, she wrote, the handling of placenta can be interpreted as indicating the different roles of men and women; the placenta of a boy is buried in front of the house signifying that he will be the master of the house while that of a girl is buried inside the house showing that her place is always in the home.

In our case, girls beginning from their childhood are brought up having roles and behaviors different from that of their brothers. From the researcher's own experience, for example, girls are not allowed to go out for playing, or sit down for reading like their brothers because the society/family assumes that they should not come out of the house as they have other roles to play and different behaviors to show. In relation to this, Kalkidan (2007) said that women are culturally assumed in terms of maternal and domestic roles and having hardly any role in public life. In other words, women are depicted as saddled with home and domesticity; men are portrayed as enjoying exhilaration of life in the outside world.

Started during early stages of development, as stated by Lind and Johnston (1990), the traditional sexual division of roles in the family, as well as in the society, excluded most girls from learning literacy through school in their later ages. In most societies of Africa, including Ethiopia, education of women is not considered as valuable. It is assumed that education of girls will disturb the social norm of what she is expected to be in the future which apparently imply education is not meant for women (Kalkidan, 2007; Genet, 1991). Moreover, there are behaviors the society expects from boys and girls. The society expects boys to be courageous, domineering and to show qualities of leadership while the girls are taught to be submissive, conservative, self-spoken and shy which by and by the girls accept as true and act accordingly

(Andromeda, 1968). This, as to Son (1994), not only affects girls' enrollment in adult education but also their class participation, achievement and choice of field by making them confined to domestic roles. Based on the cultural gender roles expectation, women, most of the time, 'prefer' to learn and be employed in low status fields/jobs that are assumed to be 'theirs' by the society (Yalew, 1997).

With regard to the participation of men and women in adult education, Lind and Johnston (1990), found out that women enrollment outnumbered that of men in some instances of adult literacy programs, paradoxically though, women lag behind in completing the programs. For these writers, "it takes longer for women to become literate" because of irregular attendance, high dropout rates and low results which stem from factors like cultural traditions. They also noted that the pass rate is lower for women than for men which also are the case in our country, Ethiopia. Although this is true of most countries in the world, a reasonable body of literature suggests a disparity in gender with regard to accessing adult and community education, especially in rural and isolated locations of developing countries because of cultural reasons (Butler and Ferrier, 1980; Franklin, 1987; Short and Teather, 1996 cited in Golding, 2003:38). Hence, one can ask how these assumptions of the society about the roles of females affect women participation in adult education, in this case, Functional Adult Literacy (FAL).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Ethiopia, being one of the developing countries and home of different nations and nationalities, is the owner of diverse cultures and traditions that reflect the status of woman. In a study by Tizita (2003) most cultures reinforce the ideology of gender inequality by perpetuating sexual divisions of labor, for instance, the society assumes that women's place is in the house while that of men's is at work, outside the house. Hence, there are jobs which are considered by the society as appropriate for one's sex and inappropriate for the other. The National Committee on Traditional Practices of Ethiopia, NCTPE (1989) based on the study conducted all over the country found out that in almost all regions, women holding public positions or participating in public discussions are frowned upon. According to the finding of this committee, women are

not expected to be judges, should not hold jobs outside the house, be religious leaders or teachers or act as imams.

Although the degree of subordination varies from culture to culture or community to community, in most societies of the country, gender relations are patriarchal where power over economic, political, and educational aspects is given to men and women are subordinated (Kalkidan, 2007). It is not uncommon to see that this patriarchal system and the cultural views about gender roles results in gender disparities in educational participation including adult education. The lack of access to education for women in turn brings about lack of participation in political, economic and social matters.

The society expresses its views, expectations and negative attitudes towards women through folk tales, legends, proverbs, and myths. Tadesse listing Amharic proverbs that show women's secondary position in the Ethiopian society said that these proverbs tell about women's limited participation in social and political activities (cited in Mulumebet, 1996:21). Similarly, stating the Amaharic proverbs;

ምን ሴት ብታወቅ፤ በወንድ ያልቅ

(Whatever knowledge the woman may have, the decision rests with the man)

ሴት ልጅ በማጀት፤ ወንድ በችሎት

(Woman's place is in the kitchen while that of man is in the court of law)

ሴት ከተማረች፤ በቅሎ ከጠገበች፤ አመል ታወጣለች

(If a woman is educated and a mule is well-fed, she will develop bad habit), Negessu (2000) reported that these proverbs show the society's contempt for women education asserting their roles limited in the house. Molla (1994) also, after analyzing images of women in Amharic jokes, identified love and marriage as main themes and witnessed that women are negatively depicted in these jokes.

Even though these sayings and expressions may represent the traditionally dominant view of female's subordination and subservient role, it is very difficult to conclude that each and every community in Ethiopia holds the same view. For instance, as reported by Solomon (2005), in the Awra Amba community, females are equally valued as males, and hence are equal to them. According to him, in the community, women and men do all kinds of works

that there is no different expectation of behavior and roles based on gender which makes the community unique not only in the country but also all over the world. That is, in their culture, women do whatever men do and vice versa. The researcher was curious if this similar gender role of women with men in the community's culture has any effect on their education. In doing so, the case of Awra Amba was compared to the case of Ater midir which reflect different gender roles between men and women. This study is, therefore, intended to examine the female/women cultural roles of two communities in Amhara region, South Gonder zone; Awra Amba and Ater Midir and whether these affect their participation in functional adult literacy programs. To this end, the basic research questions formulated by the researcher were:

1. What are the cultural roles of women in Awra Amba and Ater Midir communities?
2. What are the socialization agents in the two communities that make women to have such roles?
3. How do women in both communities feel about these cultural roles?
4. How do these cultural roles of women affect their participation in Functional Adult Literacy Programs (FALP)?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study is intended to examine women cultural roles in Awra Amba and Ater Midir communities and their implications for their participation in functional adult literacy programs. Accordingly, the objectives of the study were to:

- ❖ Understand women cultural role in the two communities.
- ❖ Single out the possible determinants for such role expectation of women.
- ❖ Analyze how different cultural roles of women affect their participation in functional adult literacy programs.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to have a number of significances. Among these are:

- ❖ It may give the readers awareness on how cultural roles affect women participation in educational matters.
- ❖ It may encourage the governmental, non governmental organizations and institutions working on women's affairs to intervene through community elders and religious leaders by showing the advantages of educating women to increase women participants in literacy classes thereby minimizing the traditional and backward attitude of the society towards women and contributing to the overall advancement of the country.
- ❖ It may draw best lessons and practices, particularly related to women equality in all aspects from Awra Amba which can basically serve the region and the country as a whole.
- ❖ It may identify problems related to women cultural role expectations (Ater Midir) and their implications for their participation in educational matters and hence, inform the educators and policy makers on what should be done.
- ❖ It can identify areas for further research that may guide a broader nation-wide intervention.

1.5 Delimitation of the Study

This study was delimited both geographically and conceptually. Concerning geographical delimitation; it was restricted to Awra Amba and Ater Midir communities which are found in Amhara Regional State. Awra Amba was selected because of its unique culture as far as the topic of this research is concerned and the other research site, Ater Midir, was chosen because it has different culture compared to Awra Amba and was the nearest area to Awra Amba among places where functional adult literacy was running. Hence, it reduced the cost and time that would be spent if the site had been otherwise.

Conceptually, the study was limited to investigation of roles and behaviors the society culturally or traditionally expects/gives to women and its effect on women's participation in educational activities, especially functional adult literacy programs.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

The first problem the researcher faced was lack of facilities which could have enabled the researcher to stay for longer time. Particularly in the case of Ater Midir, as there was no hotel or any rest room to rent, I stayed in one of the community member's house. It was difficult for me to freely stay for long so I used the whole day to wander in the community and ask informally anything which is related to the issue under investigation. The other problem was wastage of the research time in search for the community wherein adult literacy center was functioning. It was after search for six days that I got the place where FAL was running-Titira. Thirdly, I couldn't observe the participants who were learning in the FAL center of Ater Midir since they were given a month time for harvest. In order to ease the impact of this problem on the research result, I presented some questions for facilitators and women in the literacy center.

1.7 Operational Definitions of Terms

Cultural roles- the tasks and behaviors that a community customarily gives/expects from its members based on sex (culture specific).

Participation- in this case the term participation includes enrollment with absenteeism and dropout, achievement, classroom participation and subject choice.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature

2.1 Culture and Gender Roles

Recently, a number of researches are being written on women education of which most focus on barriers to their attendance and success in their education. But among these researches I came across, beyond treating it as a topic, those conducted on purely culture as a barrier of women education were hard to find.

Culture is a means through which guidelines for appropriate behaviors, social norms including those related to gender are reflected. It is through one's culture that gender relation within the society and activities carried out by men and women are determined. That is, it plays a significant role in the construction of gender. Researches indicate that there is close relationship between culture and gender. According to Sweetman(1995), for example, "*culture and gender are entwined, interdependent and mutually defining to a certain extent.*" For Coplan (1996) culture and gender are not only related but they have a strong relationship that gender is a "*cultural construct.*"

Culture determines what women and men should do, the resources women and men should get including education. Culture plays a significant role in the construction of gender inequality in such a ways that men have dominating position in different spheres (Kalkidan, 2007). Culturally, men are expected to be courageous, competent, domineering and to show qualities of leadership while women to be submissive, conservative, self-spoken and shy. Cultural assumptions in most societies expect men to seek achievement and dominance and women to be compliant and supportive. The differential perceptions and expectations of behaviors and roles of the society based on sex is what we call gender.

Gender is a "culturally constructed" meaning attached to sexes (Coplan, 1996). It is the extension of biological sexuality into products of human activity. It is the means through which an individual is viewed as masculine or feminine. Based on sex, there are behaviors and roles

expected from an individual called gender roles. Gender role is a set of perceived behavioral norms associated with males and females (Sweetman, 1995). Gender roles are not determined biologically rather they are constructed socially. People, beginning from their childhood, learn what is regarded in their cultural context as appropriate for their sex.

Different researchers in our country claim that culture influences the education of women that it result in gender division of labor where women are denied of important opportunities like educational access and burdened by heavy works which is hardly acknowledged (Emebet, 1998; Kalkidan, 2007). In most societies, women education is considered as of no value that they prefer men education. Regarding this, Ballara (1992) stressing the cultural patterns and customs as one of the obstacles to women literacy, said, "*parents believe that it is not worthwhile to invest in girl's education; instead they invest time and money to educate boys.*" In showing in which members of the society this negative attitude towards women is prevalent, Ballara wrote that husbands, fathers and men in general have such attitudes towards women education mainly because they are afraid that it may reverse the traditional women roles by providing them with new roles.

However, many studies have demonstrated the benefits of women literacy and education for a country's overall advancement (Sullerot, 1974; Ballara, 1992). For instance, Sullerot (1974) wrote, "*Without female education progress can be transmitted to each generation either not at all or very slowly, since it cannot be passed on in the home.*" Asserting the importance of women education in predicting the educated generation of the future, Bown (1990) said, "*Women bear and raise the children, so women prepare the future, how can a future be good if women are ignored?*" Similarly, Ballara (1992) indicated the importance of educating women for wellbeing of the family since they play a significant role as educators of future generation, fulfill economic functions and are vital for the survival of the family. According to him, women education, moreover, has fundamental importance in enhancing their role and active participation in environmental protection and the conservation of natural resources. Ballara (1992) adds that women education is also vital for their personal development as acquiring it enable women to increase their self-esteem, improve their income earning capabilities and to play active role in the family and community decision-making.

2.2 Women Cultural Roles

Culture, among other factors, plays a vital role in shaping the lives of men and women. Cultural values, beliefs, and traditions significantly affect family life. Children from their childhood are brought up by their families according to the culture and customs in the area (Terera, 1994). Our country, Ethiopia, is a culture-oriented country that fathers and mothers are responsible in passing on what is appropriate to their children. Accordingly, as to Tefera, girls learn cultural roles from their mothers and boys do from their fathers. Particularly, after age nine or ten, more attention is paid to training the daughters in not only domestic arts but also the art of womanhood.

The cultural process a person passes through determines the gender role expected from him/her. Girls culturally are given different roles from that of their brothers. In other words, there are roles only appropriate to men and not to women and vice versa, for which culture is the reason. Most cultures, as to Alemmaya (2003), reinforce the gender division of labor by assuming different roles for men and women. Although it varies considerably from region to region and community to community, usually men take roles such as ploughing fields and earning money for the family whereas women are responsible for all of domestic works like baking 'enjera', cooking 'wot', fetching water, rearing children, etc. For that reason, women spend most of their time in repetitive daily domestic chores in the house while men are involved in sporadic tasks out side the house. Due to gender roles, women are perceived as having the primary responsibility for taking care of the home and family.

However, this does not mean that they are playing no roles other than maternal and domestic ones. Actually, Arkutu (1995) said, "*they work more hours than men, but their work remain unrecognized and undervalued (p. 49).*" According to him, women are responsible for tasks in the family such as fetching water, shopping for food, preparing meals, washing clothes and looking after children and aging parents. In addition, they, together with their husbands, are involved in agricultural activities. The data taken from UNICEF, for example, showed that 87% of women in Ethiopia are engaged in agriculture, contributing 50% of income based on subsistence agriculture (cited in Feleke, 1999). Moreover, Dolphyne (1991) confirmed that women in Africa and Asia work about 13 hours more than men each week and in Africa,

90 percent of the work of gathering wood and fetching water for the household and for food preparation is done by women.

These gender cultural divisions of labor at home make the girl or later a woman overburdened by routine house works which leave them little time for other tasks outside the house and force them to believe that other tasks are inappropriate for them that they will refrain from participating in such activities including education. In supporting this idea and in expressing the dual effect culture has on women education, Measor and Sikes (1992) said that since women, culturally, are given a subordinate position, they lose their self-confidence to participate in academic areas and hence retreat into marriage and domesticity.

Educating women is assumed not only inappropriate but is also worthless. With regard to this, different researchers cited in Karlekar reported that sending women to school which doesn't have any visible benefits, is often regarded as a waste of time for culturally, they are viewed as 'natural care givers' (Amin, Bhatta, Dumra, Khan, King and Hill and Sinha in Karlekar, 2000:90). In some societies, as to the other researchers, these cultural-social norms and traditions create "*almost insuperable obstacles to women participation in education*"(Evans and King, 1991).

So far, it was indicated that, women, traditionally, have distinct roles to play in contrast to their sex counters, which most of the time are called gender roles. As nothing is without cause, now let us discuss agents which socialize women towards their cultural/gender roles.

2.3 The Basic Socialization Agents behind Women Cultural Roles

In talking about men and women, whether one likes it or not, he/she is dealing with either sex or gender. While the former is natural, the latter come as a result of a variety of social influences. In most cultures, how men and women behave and think and what they look like is different. As said by Measor and Sikes (1992), for this difference, there are four- biological, bio-sociological, psychoanalytic and sociological explanations. The biologists say difference in chromosomes and secretion of hormones are responsible for the difference observed in thinking and behavior of the two sexes. Holding intermediate position between biologists and

sociologists, the bio-sociologists, assume that the difference between man and woman first and foremost is due to reproductive role and hence the society's failure to violate this manly and womanly behaviors and tasks. So, to these theorists, the difference between men and women are the result of nature and nurture. Psychoanalysts argue that the differences occur because of Oedipus conflict where the boy develops different skill while the girl does not. As a child, the boy has strong attachment to his mother, but because of his father he is separated from his mother thereby learns to control his desire, impulses and self-conscience. For these theorists, the girl never passes through this process which shows that she has no opportunity to fully mature in psychological terms. According to the above scholars, Measor and Sikes (1992), the fourth explanation is the sociological aspect. As the name indicates, aptitude and behavior difference observed in men and women are shaped by socialization from first few years of age onwards. As the focus of this research is the women cultural roles and these cultural roles are mainly transferred from generation to generation through socialization, the fourth explanation would be our area of concern.

Socialization

The society wants its children to act and behave in some way desirable according to the common values and norms reflected in its culture. The society, under the umbrella of its culture, passes on whatever behavior, norm and values to be respected and protected to the next generation by teaching children from early years of age. The means through which each generation transmits essential cultural elements to the next generation is called socialization. It is a process through which a person acquires or constructs a personal and social identity as part of the social group in which he/she belongs. For Weinreich (1997), it is concerned with the transmission of behavior, roles, attributes and beliefs to the next generation (cited in Liz and Sue, 2002:41).

Regarding when socialization starts and ends, different scholars put different period. For some, it starts when children are born and ends when one die, others say that it commences in early years after birth and don't know when it ends and still some others argue that it starts in early years and end in adolescence. For Ballantine (1997) there are definite start and end dates for the socialization process. According to him, "*the socialization process begins the day we are*

born and ends the day we die." Taking the middle position, Measor and Sikes argue that it starts in the early years of age and ends or there hardly is any socialization after adolescence (1992). On the other hand, for Alfaro (2000), socialization starts right from age three afterwards. Socialization, as a means of transmitting the basic identity of one's culture and way of life, can be used as a way of acquainting children with different issues acceptable in that society, of which gender socialization is one.

Gender socialization is the way one, as a boy or a girl, learns sex-appropriate patterns of thought and behavior considered acceptable in ones society (Measor and Sikes, 1992). Similarly, Tizita said what men and/or women are expected to carryout which is originally determined by the existing culture is acquired through the socialization process (2003). In doing so, the society teaches its children the appropriate roles of men and women, gender socialization. For Lindsey gender socialization is the process by which the individuals learn the cultural behavior of 'femininity' and 'masculinity' that is associated with the biological sex of the female or male (2005). Boys and girls, based on their sex, have distinct tasks and behaviors appropriate to them and hence have different socialization experiences from birth (Ballantine, 1997).

During the process of socialization, the society passes on what behaviors are appropriate for males and females. In this process, boys are brought up being superior and more favored than girls through the system of patriarchy. Patriarchy, according to Alfaro, is a power or mode of domination for men (2000). As to him, in this system, men are given the power and hence have the right to subordinate women. It is the bases for most societies to consider men as the head of the family and women as 'carers' and 'nurturers' giving social, economic and political power to men. What is reflected in this system is taken for granted that the society passes it on to the next generation as appropriate through the process of socialization thereby causing inequality and division of roles between men and women.

Although the timing of socialization process is different for different scholars, the agents of socialization are found to be similar across researches. Alfaro, stressing the socialization process starts from age three, listed family, peer group, mass media, school, religion and social institutions as agents of socialization (2000). For other scholars, women and men differentiation starts in early infancy in first days of life when hospitals give dissimilar colors of bracelet to each sex and continue through the family, peers and schools (Lever, Keating, Fagot and Lawson cited in Levine and Havighurst, 1992:420). To Ballantine(1997), the most important agents of socialization are schools, parents, siblings and television. Concerning the formation of women cultural roles and most significant agents for these, Ballara (1992) said more than others, religion plays a significant role in socializing women towards some cultural roles. Other researchers like Measor and Sikes, on the other hand, argue home, community and mass media are mainly responsible for the construction of women roles (1992).

Here under, we will briefly discuss some of the agents of socialization that are 'responsible' for women cultural roles.

1. Family

The first and one of the strongest influences on a person's perceived gender role is his or her parents. Parents are the first teachers--not only of such basic skills as talking and walking, but also of attitudes and behavior. Some parents still hold traditional definitions of maleness and femaleness and what kinds of activities are appropriate for each. Parents start early in treating their baby boys and baby girls differently. According to Fagot, in most families their parents treat boys and girls differently from their early days of life (cited in Levine and Havighurst, 1992:420). To the contrary, Lytton and Romney (1991), from the analysis of 172 studies, reported that on the whole, differences on the way parents socialize boys and girls are 'not large' (cited in Berk, 2003:531).

Parents, in treating boys and girls differently, are also more likely to allow boys to try new things and activities--such as learning to walk and explore--than they do in girls. This can be illustrated from the materials given to the children to play with. For example, toys, provided by parents to the children, play a major role in sex socialization. This seems why

Ballantine said, "*parents are generally very conscious of buying sex-appropriate toys for children*"(1997). On what kinds of toys parents buy for boys and girls, Lawson (cited in Levine and Havighurst, 1992:420) and Spender (1979) wrote that when girls are allowed to play with nurture dolls which show cleaning and grooming; boys, on the other hand, are playing with adventurous and action toys and war games. Berk (2003) also said toys that emphasize nurturance, cooperation and physical attractiveness are given to females and those stressing at action and competition such as trucks and cars are to males. Moreover, Richmond-Abbott reported materials like chemistry sets, doctor kits, and microscopes are considered as 'boy's toys' and when compared to girl's toys, they encourage manipulation of environment and are career oriented than that of girl's (cited in Ballantine, 1997:87).

In relation to the behaviors reinforced by parents, cited by Levine and Havighurst, Constantina Safilios, summarizing studies about what behaviors are expected from children by the family, said that mothers expect girls to be dependent and obedient while boys are connoted with independence, intellectual curiosity and are rewarded for aggressive behavior (1992:421). Similarly Leaper(1994), affirming that children, in their early ages, are influenced by the experience provided from parents said that parents encourage assertiveness, exploration, and engagement with physical world in boys and promote imitation, reliance on others and emotional sensitivity in girls (cited in Berk, 2003:532). Ballantine (1997) also said that their fathers and mothers reinforce male and female children for different types of behaviors. The writer added, fathers typically discourage 'feminine' behaviors in boys and expect them to show tenacity, aggressiveness and curiosity while expecting behaviors such as kindness, obedience and cheerfulness from girls.

Moreover things like, naming and clothing by the families are bases of socialization and are indicators of roles expected from boys and girls in their later life (Ballantine, 1997). As to Spender (1979), while boys are given names, which are short and hard-hitting, the fussy and 'pert' ones are given to girls. In relation to clothing, too, the above writer assumed boys are provided with clothes that allow them to easily and freely move and play while those which do not encourage activity and freedom of movement for girls.

In addition, children look for their parents for examples and role models. If a girl sees her mother taking part in physical activities, for example, she will grow up with the idea that it's okay for girls to play sports. If a boy sees his father helping to take care of the new baby, he will integrate this image of "daddy as care giver" into his developing definition of masculinity. So, Ballantine argues, the family plays a great role in socializing its children towards sex appropriate roles and behaviors (Ballantine, 1997).

Roles of women expected in the larger society influence the parental attitude toward the importance of girl's education. In our culture, girls are expected to stay at home and help their mothers in all tasks rather than pursuing education. Even it is not taken by the family that educating women is worthwhile as her appropriate place is thought to be in the house.

2. Peers

The influence of Peers is another factor that reinforce a culture's traditional gender roles. By the help of the family, children, before coming to school, are socialized to their sex-role. Research by feminists, as to Liewellyn, 1980; Measor and Woods, 1984; Lee, 1986; Nilan, 1991 proved that peer pressure acts as an important agent of gender socialization (cited in Measor and Sikes, 1992:93). Although family plays greater part, each other socialization of peers has also a part to play in the pre school socialization process (Spender, 1979; Measor and Sikes, 1992).

Children learn the appropriate roles they should play from their age groups they play with in the neighborhood. A girl who does not fit the traditional gender roles of that society will be ridiculed and even excluded from the group as peers react more positively to girls who fit traditional gender roles. Regarding girls socialization, Measor and Sikes said that peers play an important role in "*communicating messages about what it means to be appropriate girl and enforcing that code*"(1992: 94). In later ages one, as a woman, has to behave in accordance with the culture and norm of the society she lives in or she will not be respected and even considered as a member of that society. In confirming peer pressure significance

in later ages, in addition to that of children, Khera, said peer pressure affects not only children and teenagers but also is prevalent in adults (2007). Peer pressure across age, hence, is the other reason behind women cultural roles.

3. Schools and Teachers

Gender related socialization of children beginning in the home, family and neighborhood extends to the school. Most schools perpetuate traditional gender roles. There is huge evidence that, as to Measor and Sikes, schools are involved in reproducing traditional gender roles (1992). In relation to the school socialization of girls, Karlekar (2000) reported, "*the number of schools concentrated on hidden agenda of appropriate socialization for girls is not few.*" The schools, either directly or indirectly, reflects gender roles in such a way that while some tasks are given to and expected from girls, the others are from boys. Among the three curricula that the students learn at school, Best affirmed that the one that teaches children the traditional role behavior for their sex is one (cited in Levine and Havighurst, 1992:425).

As one of the role models of the children in the school, teachers play a significant role in shaping students towards gender roles. According to Berk, teachers maintain and even extend gender roles children are taught at home (2003). As to Levine and Havighurst (1992), teachers also help students understand how traditional concepts and practices regarding gender limit opportunities available to girls and women. Furthermore, as said by the above scholars, the ways teachers deal with boys and girls is different that they train boys to be assertive while leave the girls to be passive by interacting more with boys than with girls in the classroom which in turn has a direct bearing on the performance and further enrollment of women in educational systems.

Moreover, difference in attitude and expectation of the teachers to their male and female students can be observed in schools. Teachers, both male and female, believe that boys are academically better than girls and this influences the capacity and further efforts to be made by female students. According to Good and Bruphy (1996), they encourage girls in grooming and manners but boys in academic striking and accomplishment (cited in Woldu, 1999:17).

Regarding the source of this teacher's attitude and differential treatment, Genet (1991) said that they are the reflections of the broader societal bases about the role of women in the society.

Hence, female students, starting from early childhood learn and internalize these and act accordingly which affects their academic performance and their motivation to try further education. Schools, through teachers and other workers in them, play a significant role in creating and perpetuating gender roles and educational disparities between boys and girls and women underachievement for education is considered as not valuable for girls (Measor and Sikes, 1992). In addition to the above indicated effects, experiences in the schools, bringing about gender role, make women to be funneled into traditionally female occupations after school. In the schools, Berk (2003) said, children learn gender roles and statuses by observing that women most of the time are elementary teachers and secretaries whereas men hold higher positions like head teachers, unit leaders and administrative positions. Ballantine also said that teachers and schools provide information on sex appropriate behavior that children learn by observing and imitating adult roles of teachers and administrators they often see in the school (1997).

4. Mass Media

Medias, too, can be one of the means through which boys and girls learn sex appropriate tasks and behaviors. For example, Lavie (2004) said that children, as they get older, are influenced in their choice of toys by television. As to this writer, while remote-controlled vehicles, although they can be equally enjoyed by males or females, are generally targeted at boys by advertisers and boys also are connoted with action figures in media, girls are the advertising targets of the manufacturers of dolls, craft kits, and so on. Again and again, one can see toys and toy advertisement reinforcing the traditional gender roles: boys are active and adventurous, while girls are passive and mothering. Regarding the behaviors of girls and women usually transmitted in TV programs, Berk said that the women gender roles revealed through TV are negative as they are pictured as passive and dependent (2003).

The societal attitude and what is transmitted in the media support each other. Although the position men and women hold and interaction among them in the media is inline with what is defined culturally by the society, media can also influence the attitude of the society towards gender roles. Media can make the society believe what is appropriate for men and women in such away that they play a crucial role in confirming what the society already thinks appropriate for men and women. According to Opoku-Mensah, the pervasive natures of media have a far-reaching effect in sustaining or undermining women's status in the society (2004).

On the other hand, media perpetuate traditional gender stereotypes because it reflects dominant social values. In reflecting them media also reinforces them, presenting the domination of men over women as 'natural'. Regarding the reproduction of gender and patriarchal values of media, Imam (1980) said that media reflect stereotypes and underrepresented women that they present dominantly negative image of women sanctioning women's control and subordination (cited in Opoku-Mensah, 2004:105). As one might expect in a society still dominated by men, men dominate TV production and, influenced by these stereotypes, unconsciously reproduce a traditional 'masculine' perspective, perpetuating dominant gender stereotypes. As to Lavie (2004), in newsrooms the position women and men hold and interaction among them is shaped by the society and culturally defined roles that men dominate and are almost always in positions of authority as editors, managers, specialists and staff reporters.

Moreover, according to Lavie, the issues male and female journalists cover in the media is different that what is presented by women journalists reflect the traditional roles of women in the society (2004). This writer further said that men most of the time cover issues like politics, economy, sport, agriculture and any "specialized area, *"while women are given issues such as health, education, life styles (social issues) which are not considered as "hard hitting"*.

Furthermore, because of patriarchal ideology and the position they are grown up with in the society, men most of the time despise triumphant women working with them. In relation to

this, Levie said, in the media, women even if successful are not respected but rather ignored by their men colleagues as it is not considered as their 'place' (2004). This writer continued, men journalists reflect oppressive attitudes towards their sex counter colleagues which undermine the self-confidence of the latter. And many narratives on TV are still implicitly designed and interpreted from a masculine perspective. Since most of the time it is men who work in the media and there are hardly any women, Lavie (2004), for example, said that girls (aged 8-12) themselves may tend to find a male newsreader more believable than a woman newsreader, whereas the newsreader's sex does not seem to influence boys' ideas of their believability. Girls may grow used to being presented with male on TV in general as more powerful and knowledgeable.

5. Religion

Religion which for some is the source of culture and tradition (Alemmaya, 2003) and considered as cultural factor for others (Emebet, 2003; Kalkidan, 2007) plays a paramount role in bringing about gender roles. It is a significant means through which women roles and statuses in the society are perpetuated. According to Carroll (1983), however, when the roles and status of women are discussed, the issue of "*religion and its impact on women traditional position is typically sidestepped.*" In almost all religions in the world although the degree varies as one goes from one to the other, women and men are not considered as equal and accordingly given different roles (Carroll, 1983). Similar to the case of culture and tradition, women in most religions have a subordinate position (Emebet, 1998). In explaining the subordinate status of women across religion and their strong influence on the attitude of the society, Alemmaya said that in major religions; Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc., women have secondary roles which the society takes it as if it is from God and "*is afraid to violate it*"(2003). Religion is an influential agent of socialization as people think that whatever passed on to them through religious institutions as 'words of God' and hence respect it more than others.

Regarding the reason behind the subordination of women in most religions of the world, Carroll said, in Christianity for example, it is assumed that women have an inferior status as

she was created from Adam's rib after him, not made as a whole entity by God (1983). This writer, further noted, the reason behind the subordination of women in Muslims. Citing the saying of Mohammed from Koran, 'men have authority over women because Allah has made the one superior to the other' he wrote that Mohammed's practice of polygamy as indication of the low esteem he has for women (p.194). Similarly, as to Brijbhushan(1980) there is distinction between men and women in all matters, including education.

Religious institutions are taken as one of the reasons for under representation of women in education. As to Emebet, in our country, the most influential factors as barriers of women education are religious institutions (1998). Although they are pioneers of education in the country's history, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and Mosques are criticized for favoring men and neglecting women in their provision of education (Seyoum, 1986). According to this writer, since the purpose of education in religious institution is to produce servants (priest, Imams,etc) and believers and women are forbidden from 'higher' services of the Church and Mosque, they were not made to participate in educational programs of the church. Likewise, Coasts (1994) notes that since women were not allowed to assume responsibilities in the church as well as in the mosque, the education of those days has apparently ignored girls. As to Brijbhushan, to the contrary, exceptional to other things, Koran makes it clear that women and men to be equal in education. However, as this writer said, in Muslim society, the girl is expected to be submissive and homemaker that education is not for her as it results in 'undesirable' behavior. And even if women are allowed to learn, they are restricted to reading lest they would write love letter that spoil their own virtue and the honor of the family (1980).

According to Carroll, the direct and indirect subordinate position women have in the eyes of religion not only deprived them of 'enough' education but result in the differentiation of courses they are taught (1983). As to him, while boys learn "potentially rewarding" and useful subjects in the vocational mechanical and scientific spheres, girls are taught domesticity and are forbidden from higher level of services in the church. Similarly, Emebet (1998) said, religious institutions are responsible for gender division of labor as boys are taught to read, write and do arithmetic while girls are given instruction in cooking and cleaning.

2.4 Women Perceptions of their Cultural Roles

In most societies, in contrast to boys, girls are expected to be submissive, shy and self-spoken which by and by the girls accept as true and act accordingly. The 'appropriate' behavior the girls have to show is told to her from childhood onwards through diverse means bringing about difference in the behavior and performance of both boys and themselves. Such differences strengthened, Hoffman and Fagot said, as the child meets the expectation of parent, teachers and peers and as these expectations become internalized (cited in Levine and Havighurst, 1992:420).

Since children from their early years are brought up having in mind what is culturally believed as normal for boys and girls, they tend to act the way they are expected to. Accordingly, women are more confident to do what is expected from them as women and are less confident to try others, which are considered as only men's. As to Measor and Sikes, girls, taking the message that women are restricted to home based role from home, schools, mass media, etc., refrain from participating in other works outside the house (1992). Women feel that they are important only at home and confident in works that are meant traditionally for them. Regarding this idea and women acceptance of their role at home, Zena Abkut (1991) stated that women "አራሾችም ነጋዴዎች አይሆኑም እነሱ ሰርተው ገንዘብ አያስገኙም ቢያስገኙም በረከት የለውም" "(women cannot be farmers or merchants; they cannot work and get money and even if they do, the money will not last long)" said the men, internalizing this," እኛ ሴቶች ማብሰል፣ መስፋት፣ መፍተል፣ መውቀጥ ማንፈስ እንጂ የውጪ ስራዎች ላይ ጥሩዎች አይደለንም" "(we, women are not good at jobs outside the house, except for domestic roles) affirm the older women, and also young girls taking what the older ones said, believe that" ወይ እቴ ከቤት ሥራ ውጪ የገቢ ማስገኛ ማንኛውም ስራ የመስራት ልምዱና ችሎታው የለንም" by saying these the women can be heard darkening their initiation and motivation to participate in tasks other than what is culturally defined to be theirs.

They grow up thinking that tasks outside the home, like education is not meant for them but for men. In any areas, outside the house, girls are found to be less confident and have low self esteem as whatever knowledge they may have, they rely on what is witnessed by the boys. Measor and Sikes said that these feelings of women emanate from the internalization of their

position as subordinate to boys (1992). Hence, they, most of the time, are not 'good performers' in tasks that are considered to be men's. In schools, they do not perform well like their sex counterparts as they enter half heartedly and with low self-esteem. Hence, as to Carroll (1983), when a female enters a situation having internalized the belief that "most people" expect more competent performances from men even if she doesn't personally endorse the stereotypic belief she may still leave the situation with a lower assessment of her ability and come to personally believe that boys are better than girls.

In the case of the feelings of women in the world of work, evidences show that they prefer to be bossed by men than to be a boss, as they are not used to it since childhood. With regard to this, Berk (2003) said, from early years, men are given leadership post because they are conceptualized as powerful authority figures and women, to the contrary, as physically weak and not fit to leadership. Because of this and other reasons, women "doubt their ability, aptitude and suitability for senior posts" (Measor and Sikes, 1992). Hence, according to these researchers, in relation to initiation for work promotion, women were found to be less confident and persistent to apply for senior posts than men.

Girls, later women, influenced by the societal outlooks, are afraid to participate in social, economic and political affairs outside the house. Feminists, as to Measor and Sikes, also agree with the difference in self confidence and self perception of men and women that they owe the criticism to socialization difference in boys and girls (1992).

2.5 The Impact of these Women Cultural Roles on their Education

Every society has its own cultural behavior patterns which the males and females in the society are expected to follow which in turn influence the behavioral and personality development of individuals from early years of life. What we call culture affect women in various ways, one of which is their education. In the case of the situation of our country, Ethiopia, Feleke said, gender inequality in general and gender inequality in education in particular, are mostly the result of the norms and values with which our society defines the roles and responsibilities of women and men (1999). Although the importance of giving priority for educating girls than

boys is stressed by different researchers (King and Hill, 1993; Sweetman, 1995), in most societies, customarily, educating boys is assumed more benefiting than educating the girls and hence girls should stay at home and help their mothers rather than going to school. Based on what is appropriate for men and women, the latter is expected to stay at home and carry out their 'natural' roles. Since this assumption of the larger society is taken by women as true, it affects their confidence to participate in tasks outside the house, of which education is no exception. In education, too, even if they participate, because of their achievement and subject choices one can tell that they are inline with their cultural roles.

In general, cultural influences on education of women are manifold that it has an effect on their enrollment, classroom participation, achievement and career/subject choice.

2.5.1 Enrollment, Absenteeism and Dropout

The ways male and females are treated and brought up and the labels they receive from the society, color their conceptions and perceptions they have of themselves. In most societies, Frieze (1979) said, men are considered efficient, competent, and successful while women are perceived as inadequate, incompetent and inefficient in some situations. Accordingly, he believed, men tend to overestimate their abilities, while females tend to underestimate their abilities (cited in Derlega and Janda, 1986:56). This tendency of being exactly what others expect one to be has been named by different researchers as self-fulfilling prophecy (Meighan, 1986; Berk, 2003). It, as to Berk, emanates from what others think of us which by and by affect the way we behave and lastly be what others expect us to be (2003). For example, most of the time people may tell us that we are good at something and we will be and at other time they may tell us that we are not good at others and still we conform to it. So, the way we are labeled by the society affects our behavior and efforts we make to performance that we become what we are expected to be.

In relation to women education, it is not, therefore, surprising to see that women influenced by others' expectation, conform to what the society thinks-education is not for them. As Boocock (1972) said, '*...women end up where the society expects them to...*'(cited in Meighan,

1986:304). This, as to Kenate (2005), can directly or indirectly affect educational process. Women, complying with what the society assumes, are not interested to go to school for school is thought to be for men thereby limiting their enrollment rate. Genet, based on her finding, reported that girls because of societal outlooks are less motivated to enroll in schools (1991). However, the enrollment is not a problem for others like Lind and Johnston (1990) as women enrollment rate exceeds that of men in some instances. But it takes longer for women to finish some courses than men, as there is high rate of drop out and absenteeism, which indirectly affects the further enrollment of women in education.

2.5.2 Achievement and Classroom Participation

Even if they come to school, women/girls are not motivated to work hard and be high achievers as boys. For instance, fewer girls than boys: reach university, get excellent marks in subjects like physics, chemistry and mathematics, gain apprenticeships and get the opportunity to enroll in open universities (Meighan, 1986). According to Kenate, this is so because of their low self-concept and lack of confidence resulted from their cultural backgrounds. In explaining the effects of culture on women schooling, Bown (1990) said that culture, which ascribes schooling to males, can have negative effects on efforts at women literacy.

With regard to the reason behind low achievement, different scholars give different explanations; Khera (2007), for instance, noted that fear of success can be one. As to him, if one is afraid that he/she may or may not be successful, this will result in tension and bring about failure. On the other hand, fear of success was also given as a reason for low achievement of girls in the school by Spender and Sarah (1980) (cited in Measor and Sikes, 1992:103), but different from the explanation given by Khera. According to them, based on the gender role perception of the society, women success is considered as abnormal. Hence, women judge academic success as being 'unfeminine'. So, women opt, either for popularity or achievement. On one hand, their achievement, they fear, bring about disapproval from the larger society and on the other hand, they face 'a lonely' and 'unattached existence', if they become a successful women. Similarly, cited by Measor and Sikes, again, the findings of Measor and woods (1984) witnessed that academically successful girls in their research were

faced with difficulties that they were 'isolated' and had few friends (1992:103). Meighan (1986) also said, "*Girls who deviate from the expectation risk acquiring deviant label of dominating, talkative, or intellectual, and an accompanying set of penalties.*" Since, women most of the time, do not want to deviate from the norms and values of the society, as Measor and Sikes (1992) said, "*girls may well find it more threatening to be unfeminine than to be successful...*" they are afraid in case they become successful, fear of success.

The same is true in the case of women classroom participation. The culture which favors girls' stay at home, makes them feel that they are appropriate only at home and affects their classroom participation in the school. And when they go to school, whatever knowledge they may have, they are not confident enough to raise their hands to ask or answer questions. The girls do not participate in the class room as boys because they are afraid that if they make mistakes the boys would laugh at them which results from their low self confidence which in turn emanate from expectations of the society based on gender socialization (Eccles, 1986).

Therefore, the social attitude towards women education is strong that it forces women to devote their education in favor of the social norms and values.

2.5.3 Subject Choice

Customarily, male and females roles are different. In describing these roles, Lobban (1975) said, while those expected from males are 'active, instrumental and related to the outside world, females are depicted almost entirely in domestic roles' (cited in Meighan, 1986:308). Girls and boys brought up and used to these cultural beliefs about gender roles are influenced by these outlooks in the early subject decisions. There are careers which are considered to be appropriate only for boys or girls as learned from especially the family and schools. Kelly (1981) and Harding (1979) reported that in schools, based on childhood socialization, girls come to see some school subjects as being only suitable for one sex (cited in Measor and Sikes, 1992:98). In relation to school allocation of different subjects to boys and girls Meighan (1986) wrote, "*girls tend to be given timetables allocating them to domestic science rather than to metal work...they tend to be filtered to arts rather than science subjects and, if to science, usually to biology rather than chemistry or physics.*" (p.309)

Hand in hand with the subjects, culture also is found to have impact on career choice. According to Emebet (1998), girls are encouraged to choose careers which are linked to their 'natural' roles of nurturing and caring. As to her, some careers are considered as typically women's and if men choose them, they will be laughed at. Similarly, Genet (1991) based on the research conducted in the country and the data obtained from the students and teachers; found that, in Ethiopia, nurture service related jobs as nursing, secretarial and clerical careers appropriate to women. Based on cultural roles, women themselves, most of the time, 'prefer' to learn low status jobs that are assumed to be 'theirs' by the society. In relation to this, Kann (1990) stated that women, internalizing what the society assumes, choose low status jobs and end up in poorly paid ones without even applying for promotion.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Design and Methodology

This part deals with the research design, research context, the research participants and instruments used to collect data with their justification, procedures of data collection and data analysis. Moreover, it included strategies of validation and ethical considerations.

3.1. Research Design

This research was aimed at investigating the tasks/roles and expectations members of Awra Amba and Ater Midir communities have towards women and whether it affected the latter participation in FAL. For this purpose, it followed qualitative design because; first, conceptually it is assumed that it would allow in-depth investigation of the issue, secondly is an important method to study social and cultural phenomenon and to understand the people and the social and cultural context within which they live (Flick, 2002 and Hoepfl, 1997 cited in Abebaw, 2007:29).

In doing so, from the different approaches of qualitative design, ethnography was chosen as it is an important means of learning culture sharing behaviors of individuals or groups in the natural setting from the point of view of the people under investigation (Creswell, 2003). In addition to this, as the research was concerned with assessing the significance of nature of culture as a determinant of behavior, this approach is ideal (Sarantakos, 2006). This approach of qualitative research is particularly important in areas of feminism as it is "...a powerful methodological tool in understanding the experiences of women from their own point of view and conceptualizing women's behavior as an expression of social contexts" (Reinharz, 1992 cited in Sarantakos, 2005:208).

3.2. Research Setting

This research was based on the data collected from places called Awra Amba and Ater Midir. Awra Amba is found in Amhara regional state, south Gonder zone, Fogera Wereda, 62 kilometers away from Bahir Dar on the way to Debre Tabor. The community belongs to Amhara and the local language spoken is Amharic. According to my informants, Enaney and Zumra, it has 119 households with the total population of 403 (207 females and 196 males). It is a community which was established by Zumra, the community leader, 20 years back. It's a good example for other Ethiopian communities – and even beyond Ethiopia not only because of its gender equality but also of its work ethics, care for the helpless and the elderly, children rights and its social security system. In this community, women are equal to men and they, like men, participate in all kinds of works and take responsibilities in the community, as there are no cultural barriers that force them to be otherwise.

Ater Midir, is found in the Amhara region, South Gonder Zone, Lay Gayint Wereda 83 Kms and 146 Kms away from Awra Amba and Bahir Dar respectively. The community tribe is Amhara and the local language spoken is Amharic. Concerning its economic activity, almost all of the community members are agrarians. They grow different crops like peas, *barley*, *wheat* and vegetables especially potato. As to Emenashu, one of the key informants, the village consists of 46 households with the total population of 379 (187 females and 192 males). I learned from my observation that similar to most Amhara communities, women in this community are looked down on and given different roles in contrast to men beginning from their early childhood.

The basic rationale behind the selection of the above two communities, Awra Amba and Ater Midir, among others in Amhara region was that the former was assumed to be unique in its culture of gender roles and the latter reflects cultural roles different from that of Awra Amba and was the nearest community to Awra Amba with FAL center functioning.

3.3. Selection of Research Participants

The research participants were community elders, facilitators, women learning in literacy centers, women not yet enrolled and key informants.

As there was no other way I could select the community elders and women not yet enrolled in the literacy centers, I used the informants in both villages to select them. In the case of facilitators and women in literacy centers, the FAL center was used as the means of selecting them (in the case of Ater Midi the women in the center were selected based on information from the facilitators). Before selecting individual participants, I followed 'big net approach' (Fetterman, 1998 cited in Creswell, 2007:128)- where I "mingled with every one" in the research sites (Creswell, 2007), to have a general understanding of the people - their culture and value. Then I, by the help of key informants, facilitators and information from observation, chose individuals for detailed investigation through interview and FGD.

3.3.1. Community Elders

Since I was concerned with social and cultural issues regarding the role of women, community elders can be important inputs through which I can get deeper information about sources (roots) of such roles. In addition, these groups were approached because they have a significant role to play in the cultural and traditional practices of both communities. Moreover, I assumed, they can give important information on how they themselves and the community members bring up children. In doing so, I used criterion-sampling strategy (as recommended by Creswell, 2007) and selected 5 from Awra Amba and 5 as of Ater Midir. As it is important to make participants selected be homogeneous in order to make the discussion smooth, I used the representative role the participants have in the community and their knowledge as criteria for selection. The community elders were composed of three females and two males in both cases.

3.3.2. Women not yet Enrolled in FAL Centers

Women not yet enrolled in FAL centers were used as participants of this research as they, according to the expectation of the researcher, might have some reasons which held them back from learning. Snowball sampling technique was employed to select respondents for final data

collection. I asked my key informants in both centers to tell me two women not yet enrolled in FALP, as a starting point. Then, I asked these two people to recommend others who are volunteer and could meet the criteria and interviewed only 3(as these only were available) from Awra Amba and 10 from Ater Midir.

3.3.3. Women in Literacy Centers

Women in the literacy centers were taken as a focal points of this research because I assumed that they can, in a better way, explain whether the cultural roles and behavioral expectations within the society affected their education or not and if they compete with men in the classroom and the reason behind. Accordingly, purposive sampling was used to select 8 women from Awra Amba (as what they tell was almost similar) and 10 from the center in Ater Midir. The women selected were those who, according to my judgment, can at best explain their ideas concerning the research issue in the one to one interview, based on observation in the center of Awra Amba. However, in the case of Ater Midir, since I had no chance of observing the participants in the center (they were given a month leave for gathering crops in the field), I relied on the participants suggested by the facilitators.

3.3.4. FAL Facilitators

As they know what is there in the society and critically observe the condition of both women and men in the FAL centers, facilitators were taken as resourceful participants. As they were small in number in both cases (three each, one woman and two men), all of the facilitators were interviewed.

3.3.5. Key Informants

The known individuals (from the Awra Amba the founder and the receptionist and from Ater Midir the eldest community member and "receptionist") were taken for in-depth interview so that they can give background information about the communities that can be used as a stepping-stone for the information taken from others.

3.4. Instruments and Procedures of Data Collection

In-depth interviews, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and participant observation were used to gather relevant information from the respondents, as these are the methods of data collection appropriate for ethnographic research (Creswell, 2007; Sarantakos, 2005). Henn et al (2006) also said, ethnography, although basically concerned with observation, is not limited to it as it includes holding interviews which can be informal chats, in-depth individual interviews or in group situations, in this case Focused Group Discussion (FGD).

3.4.1 In-depth Interview

In-depth interviews were employed to collect data from key informants, women who are in the FAL centers, those not yet enrolled and from facilitators. This method allows interviewees to talk about the subject in terms of their own frame of reference thereby helping the researcher to understand the respondents' points of view (Creswell, 2003). There were about four stages of the interview; introduction of the interviewer, interviewee telling their background, the main question of research and lastly, the closing up of the interview. The interview was tape (audio) recorded on the willingness of the respondents.

3.4.2 Participant Observation

In order to deepen the understanding of the issue under investigation, the researcher used participant observation. Accordingly, the researcher resided in Awra Amba community for a month and in Ater Midir for only 19 days as the air condition was very harsh and there was no hotel to rest in and buy food from.

The observation in both communities had two stages; one and the first was to passively watch and listen to what they do and say, for acquiring acceptance, building trust among the community members and becoming "fully conversant" with the culture of both communities and the next was to actively participate in what they do, interact with them and ask for clarification (Henn et al, 2006). It has helped the researcher from "being complete outsider to being a complete insider"(Creswell, 2007). Hence, when I was in Awra Amba, during my first days in the community, I was staying in their "cafeteria" and passively observing whatever

they were doing and saying to more effectively interact with them later. As I come to be familiar with their culture, I used to go to their work places and observe them by taking part in what they do, for instance, harvesting peanuts and threading cotton with the community members. I also went to their houses for observation during which I was helping the children with their study while collecting data.

Similarly, in my first days in Ater Midir, as there was no place where people can gather together, I was wandering around the village and took part in thereby to observe what their culture and way of life generally looks like before directly interacting with them. But later on, I was able to go to field where I observed them participating in what they were doing there, especially gathering crops and in their houses, I used to observe them while assisting them in sorting out dirt from crops and helping their children with their study. During participant observation, I was collecting whatever data were available to "throw light on" the issues with which I was concerned (Creswell, 2007). And to minimize the bias, during both stages of observation, I was referring to what was listed out previously about what should be observed and focused and whenever necessary, I was taking short field notes using key words to be explained when convenient. In both cases, my observation focused on issues like: the cultural role of both sexes, their communication, their way of treating their children (socialization), their attitude towards women, etc.

3.4.3 Focus Group Discussion

The Focus Group Discussion was used to stimulate discussion among community elders. The main reason behind the selection of this method was because it allows new and valuable thoughts and ideas to come to the surface and it can enable the participants to clarify their views and opinion positions (Henn et al, 2006). Moreover, it enables the non-talkers involved in the discussion to speak. In selecting the participants for FGD, I tried my level best to keep the FGD participants homogeneous, except for sex. Accordingly, the criteria considered were their awareness with the focus of the research (knowledge) and their job (responsibility) in the community. So, from both communities, two males and three females were chosen for FGD. In

relation to what was discussed, the researcher prepared the FGD guide that consisted of questions derived from the main focus of the research.

In both cases, the moderator was myself. In the process of FGD, I tried to make the participants feel at ease by creating conducive environment and approaching them in a friendly and relaxed manner. That is, I was careful about my facial expression, listen to what they say and aware of their verbal and non-verbal behaviors. In general, the FGD involved the following stages:

Stage I Opening

Before the discussion was started, I briefly introduced myself, the research assistant and the purpose of discussion during which group rules were set. I assured the participants that the information they provide me with should be kept confidential; they can withdraw from discussion whenever they feel like it; to speak one at a time to avoid interruption and to forward any opinion in their mind, as there are no right or wrong answers.

Stage II The Warm Up

This stage was concerned with the participants' personal profiles; they introduced themselves.

Stage III Discussion of the Main Topic

Here, the main question in the FGD guide was discussed. During discussion, probing was highly used to make the participants clarify what was blurred.

Stage IV Closure of the Discussion

During this stage, I summarized and recapped the identified "themes" of the group to help the participants have the general idea of what was discussed so far and there by correct what was misunderstood.

I employed assistant researchers who could help me in facilitating the FGD. In order to select the assistants, I considered their academic level and their experience in the area. Since it was difficult to get a full-time assistant with expertise in Awra Amba as all were expected to work in the union, I used one of the receptionists, Tamir, as assistant after work. Although her level of education was not sufficient, she had the experience of doing such things with different researchers who resided in the community for this purpose. To get a full-time assistant was not a problem in Ater Midir. My key informant in the village, Emenashu, brought me Mestawot who was studying her Diploma in Social Science in Dessie private college and was, by the time

I was there, on vacation. Although Mestawot didn't have research experience, she was not new to the concept that it did not take her long to do what I told her as I gave both assistants orientation on what they do and some ethical issues to be considered while collecting data.

As the number of participants was manageable, the assistants were not made to collect data alone. They, in most cases, were engaged in recording the interview and discussion while I was taking notes on important points to be clarified by making eye contact with the participants.

3.5. The Researcher's Role

Since in qualitative research, the researcher serves as an instrument of primary data collection, and this in turn affects the validity of the research findings, it is important for me to identify my personal values, assumptions and biases at the beginning of the research.

Accordingly, my perception of cultural roles in affecting education was shaped by my personal experience as a female for I was born and brought up in a society where boys and girls are given different roles thereby subordinating females. When I was young, there were proverbs, sayings indicating what the girls are expected to do, their roles, the behaviors they are expected to show, what will happen if girls are educated and so on.

Later on, for my bachelor degree, I wrote a senior essay entitled "Some Oromifa Proverbs that have negative impact on women education" and found that proverbs play a great role in socializing women towards what they are expected to be thereby subordinating them and result in low participation and performance of women in education. I think, my sensitivity towards cultural roles in affecting women in education too is, originated from such experience of mine.

Hence, due to previous experience and work of paper on such issues, I may bring certain bias to this study. Although I would, to my level best, try to ensure objectivity, these biases may, I am afraid, shape the way I view and understand the data I collect and interpret. Thus, so as to minimize the effect of my bias on the result of the study, except for my interpretation, I have presented a lot of data in the form of quotation that will help readers to draw their own conclusion.

3.6. Procedures of Data Analysis

In qualitative research, Creswell (2007: 150) contend, “...*data collection, data analysis and report writing are not distinct steps; they are interrelated and often go simultaneously.*” Similarly, Sarantakos (2005) argues that the processes, data collection and analysis in qualitative research, usually go alongside. As to this writer, however, there are cases when the data analysis is wholly takes place after data collection. Accordingly, although I started to analyze data obtained from observation while collecting data, the major part of data analysis was held after data collection, as it was tape-recorded.

For Schatzman and Strauss (1973), data analysis process in qualitative research includes reviewing data collected, classifying it and ‘making sense out of it’ (cited in Creswell 2003: 203). As to these scholars, researchers using ethnographic approach are, particularly, expected to describe patterns and themes in detail from the point of views of participants and then to interpret and report in narration form. Thus, in analyzing the data obtained through interview, focused group discussion and observation, I followed the same procedure as Schatzman and Strauss and used three ‘aspects’ of data analysis namely description, analysis and interpretation as suggested by Wolcott (1994b) (in Creswell, 2007: 161).

Before going to description the first thing I did was reading and managing the data as these are a good stepping stones to commence description in ethnographic research (Creswell, 2007). Then, as a first step of data analysis, I described what I observed in the communities and the general social setting focusing on main events and reflecting different perspectives of the views of participants.

Then, the second step was analysis. As to Krueger (1994), the analysis process includes bringing order to data, organizing what is there into patterns, categories and basic descriptive units there by reducing it to be manageable. In this procedure what is described previously was highlighted and sorted. The most popular analysis procedure, mentioned by Wolcott (1994b), is the search for ‘patterned regularities’ in the data (Creswell, 2007:162). Accordingly, themes were identified and classified based on the basic questions and the larger database taken from different means.

Proceeding to the third step, interpretation, I gave meaning to the data collected depending on what I have observed and understood and based on what is there in the books. As Creswell put it, "...provide interpretation in light of their own views or views of perspectives in the literature" (2007: 192).

To make the data collected from different sources credible, I used triangulation. Triangulation, although important in both qualitative and quantitative studies, is more a method-appropriate strategy for credibility of qualitative analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). It even becomes an alternative to traditional criteria like reliability and validity (Denzin, 1978). According to him, there are four types of triangulation-Data Triangulation, Investigator Triangulation, Theory Triangulation and Methodological Triangulation. Among these, I used methodological triangulation that involves using more than one method to gather data as I used FGD, interview and Participant Observation to collect similar data from different sources.

Finally, what is acquired through all steps so far was presented in narrative form with extensive quotes of words from the respondents.

3.7 Strategies for Validation

In order to make the findings of the ethnographic research trustworthy and credible, the following strategies, recommended by Spindler and Spindler (1987) (cited in Creswell, 2007: 217) and Creswell (2003, 2007) were employed:

- A. Prolonged observation and contextualization-** in observing the research population, I made every effort to understand what is observed from the local point of view. Moreover, in order to make it reliable, the observation was repetitive and prolonged as I spent ample time with the people under investigation.
- B. Use of detailed description with quotes-** in interpretation of the data obtained, I narrated and described what I saw using direct quote from participants so that the readers, while reading, would have the picture in their minds and feel like being there.

- C. Consideration of ethical issues-** to make the research findings trustworthy, ethics were considered as crucial part of the research. Particularly, I respected the information right of the participants by making the research objectives clear to them before collecting data. Before I leave the sites, I wrote the data collected briefly and gave to the representatives of the community to check and confirm its accuracy. Moreover, I respected the culture of both communities, example by wearing clothes appropriate for the place.
- D. Focusing on the native view-** through in-depth interview, Focused Group discussion and Observation, the native view and reality of the participants were obtained. Besides, informants were used in systematic fashion to extract knowledge about local view of events and issues related to the study.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

As the perspective selected for this research is qualitative, the importance of ethical consideration is undeniable (Locke et al, 1982; Marshal and Rossman, 1989; Merriam, 1988 and Spradley, 1980 cited in Creswell, 2003:201). Consequently, for the purpose of this research, the following were employed:

1. The research questions were articulated verbally so that they are clearly understood by the participants.
2. The purpose of the research was described to the participants before taking any information from them. In such case, respondents were not deceived about the purpose of the research findings.
3. At the beginning of data collection, the participants were told that they could leave whenever they feel like it and if they were not willing to continue.
4. The participants' rights, interests and wishes were considered while collecting data.
 - ❖ The right to privacy regarding their private life, sensitive issues or answering questions they dislike.
 - ❖ The rights to anonymity- respondent's contribution remained anonymous. Besides, in the analysis and interpretation of the collected data, all the names

indicated are fictitious but the founder and the receptionists of the Awra Amba community.

- ❖ The right to confidentiality; the participant's involvement in the research were not made available to other people.

In addition, I prepared the highlight of the transcription of the data collected through different means and showed to the community representatives to basically confirm its accuracy (In fact, in Awra Amba, I was made to promise to do so, before entering the community for collecting data, as they refused to let me in otherwise).

CHAPTER FOUR

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

4.1 Arrival and Reception in the Research Sites

Awra Amba

On my way to Awra Amba, I was frustrated as I had never been to this place before. I took the bus from Wereta to Amed ber (now Alem Ber). Since I was informed that the way to Awra Amba is in the middle of Wereta and Amed Ber, I told the driver to drop me on the way. I got off from the bus in front of the advertisement which show the direction to Awra Amba and started to walk to that direction. I walked for 30 minutes when I came across a village with clusters of houses made of mud-blocks and covered with grass then I thought this must be Awra Amba village. Yes it was because I saw the welcoming note to the village in front of me. Then, I came across a boy not more than 15 years old and asked him whom to contact and how. He carried my bag and took me to a guesthouse, a grass roofed hut and called two women, Enaney Kibret and Tirusew Fente. As soon as they came, they greeted me warmly and told me that they are guest recipients. Then I introduced myself and briefed them the purpose of my visit. At first they were uncomfortable because many people go there and studied them and interpreted what they say in the wrong way thereby dispatching negative image of the community. Besides, they promise to bring the copy of the research they wrote, but no one brought one yet.

After silence for a while, I assured them that I would give them what I wrote before I leave the place and promised to provide them with a copy of the research after graduation. Agreed on this, they showed me my rest room in which I rested until my departure. From my first arrival till I leave the compound, I felt the people were hospitable and cooperative who were willing to give any kind of help I asked for.

Ater Midir

Ater Midir was the other research site which was the focus of this research. It was selected in such a way that it was the nearest community in which adult education is functioning. After I was told that there is no any kind of adult education in Wereta, I went to the education office of Bahir Dar to ask if there is one in the region. From the people in the office, I was informed that Amhara Development Association (ADA) being with other organizations was running adult education in seven Weredas of the Amahra region. So, I went to ADA to ensure that what I was told was true. The person responsible for this was Ato Girum.

After entering his office, I introduced myself and briefed him the purpose of seeing him. He greeted me warmly and told me every information about the program. He said that the programs are running in seven Weredas of the region. Out of which, he commented, the literacy centers in Lay Gayint Wereda as the nearest and most accessible of all.

The next day in the morning, I started my journey to Nifas Mewucha Town (the capital of Lay Gayint Wereda) to see Ato Kibiru Tamirat, the adult and women empowerment program coordinator of the Wereda. I reached the town at around 1PM and directly went to the coordinator's office found in the education office of the Wereda. I introduced myself and what I was there for. He welcomed me warmly and promised that he would do whatever I would like him to do. He gave me information on the number of centers in the Wereda, their distance and accessibility, the weather condition of the place, whom to contact, etc. Based on the information I got from him, the center found in Ater Midir gote (Village) -Titira center was the one I selected from the four centers (Titira, Abegstie, Barziba and Wuha Midir) found in the Wereda. So, the next morning I took a bus from Nifas Mewucha to go to Ater Midir, which is 45 km away from the former. I reached there late in the morning and since the village was not visible right from the main road, I went through a jungle of trees for twenty minutes when I see houses made of grass and wood gathered together, it was Ater Midir. Right in front of the village, there were Offices. So, I went there and asked the Kebele administrator for Ato Geremew who is the coordinator of the program in the center. As he was not around, the Kebele administrator asked me if I want to meet Emenashu, a "receptionist" of guests who go there for different purposes. I agreed and met Emenashu. As soon as she came she introduced

herself and I also did the same and told her the purpose of my being there. She, happily, agreed that she could help me in every aspect I needed till I leave the place and invited me in the house where she was living with her families. As she knows the village very well, she helped me by doing what she could for herself and by introducing me with responsible persons where she couldn't. As there was no any place to rest in and to eat food from, I was staying, as one of their children, with the family of Emenashu without any problem till I leave the village.

4.2 The Names and Foundations of the Communities

Awra Amba: Its Name and Foundation

The Awra Amba community which is found in south Gonder Zone, Fogera Wereda, Woji-Arba Amba Kebele, Turegn village is surrounded by different villages (*Gotoch*) like Tizab, Maksegnit (Woji), Jib Gudguad and Arba Chane in all of the four directions.

As to Zumra Nuru, the founder of the community, the name Awra Amba is derived from the Amahric phrase ' *Awraw Embi Ale* '. Zumra said that there was a wild sea animal which Zumra refers as ' *Awra* ' which came from the nearby river and settled at the place called Turegn (now Awra Amba). The villagers living at that time didn't like the animal and hence started to chase it but the animal refused to go back to its place. Then the people said *Awraw Embi Ale*; hence Awra Amba. On the other hand, Zumra confessed that although this name is the original name of the village, once up on a time people used to call it Arba Amba assuming it as the right name of the place until FINNIDA came to that place. FINNIDA is an international NGO which went there to develop the underground water. As, during that time, the name of the place was Arba Amba, the people working for this NGO asked the villagers what the name means. Old peoples and religious leaders told them that it was not the original name criticizing the young generation for the change of the name Awra Amba. From that day on, Zumra said, " *As we came to know that Awra Amba is the original historic name of this place, we are using it till this day, thanks to FINNIDA.* "

The other informant from the Awra Amba community, Enaney, said that while Awra Amba is still the name given to people living in the Turegn village, the name Arba Amba still exist as the name of the Kebele, as Awra Amba is found in Woji- Arba Amba Kebele.

As I heard from different people in the area and interview I had with him, I have understood that Zumra is the founder of this community. As to him, he started the journey to four different directions at the age of four. When he was a four year child, he observed his mother overburdened by in and out of the house works. His mother and his father work in the field the whole day, while his father's work ends in field, that of his mother continues till mid night. In his words:

As a kid I observed how my mother had a heavier workload than my father. Both spent the day equally working hard in the fields. My father's tasks ended up right in the fields while my mother continued working until late in the evening. Her job at home started with washing my father's feet soon after they reached home.

Little Zumra worried if this was the case only in their house, but it was not long when he understood that what was there in their house was also there all over the village where he was grown up, Estie. Although this, women equality, was the basic reason behind Zumra's founding the community, there are three other "objectives"; children rights, care for helpless people because of health or age and eradication of jealousy, theft, revenge and murder to live heavenly and peaceful life.

Since he was young when he understood this, he waited there till he was thirteen years old and went to Gojjam, Wollo, and all over Gonder for five years to find people who can be with him to achieve these four "objectives". The five years ended with no one sharing his idea. Then although he came back to his family, married and for some time lived being a farmer, on seasons when there is no farming, he went out to the nearby Weredas to find some followers to his four "objectives". After some years, he started to have people who can share his concern from neighboring villages. As to Zumra, there were sixty family heads who agreed to be with him at first, before the community was founded. But later on, as the idea of Zumra was abandoned by all society around him, many followers refrained from him, being afraid of rejection from other members of the societies. However, in 1972, 19 peoples formally

established Awra Amba community with common value, norms and principles and it was introduced to the world in 2001 through dispatch in the media. As to Zumra, after the community was founded, there was instability because the people who didn't like Zumra's idea were going in between the then government and themselves. Hence, from 1988-1993, they were living in southern part of Ethiopia as refugees. It is after 2001 that they started to live stable life in the Turegn (now Awra Amba) Village.

According to Zumra and Enaney, in Awra Amba community, there are 119 household heads and a total population of 403. In the community, there are two ways to become a member: *community membership* and *union membership*. If one wherever he/she lives accept and respect the norms, values and principles on which the community was founded, he/she can be member of the community. In the case of Union membership, which was established in 1986, one, as a member has to work (8am-1pm in the morning and 2pm-5pm in the afternoon) together with other members for common benefits to be shared once a year besides to his/her community membership. So in this case (the latter), members must live in the Awra Amba compound. As to the receptionist of the community, from the total population, the union members are 368 while the rest 35 are only community members.

Ater Midir: Its Name and Foundation

The Ater Midir community which is found in south Gonder Zone, Lay Gayint Wereda, Titira Kebele, Ater Midir village is surrounded by different villages (*Gotoch*) like Damot, Gina Mewocha, Medeb and Mikire in all the four directions. Its name as to the eldest person and one of my informants in the village, Ato Abebaw, came from *ye ater midir* (literally means *a land covered by peas*). Explaining the story, Ato Abebaw said, "*There was a man who used to live in the place, now Ater Midir. The person saw peas; since the place was mountainous, people around the village see the land covered by peas and called it 'Ater Midir'.*" As to this old man, although he does not remember the exact date of its foundation, he assumes that the village was founded during King Haile Sillassie regime.

4.3 Women Cultural Roles

Awra Amba

Zumra Nuru Mohammed founded a village based on ideals of equality. Among the four "objectives" Zumra went out with, the first and the most important was women equality. As to Zumra, his mother was not only overburdened by in and out of the house works but also undervalued. Even, he said:

My mother and father spend the whole day in the farm field, when they come back home my father's work ends in the field while that of my mother's continues in the house. Soon after she arrived home, she has to prepare food, make coffee, nurse the children, grind mills and wash my father's feet, etc.

When he was young, only four, he also noticed the status difference between men and women. In spite of her "inclusive" role both in and outside the house, a woman is looked down in the society where he grew up. He worried, "ሴት እንደ ሞግዚት፤ ወንድ እንደ አዛዥ የሚታይበት ምክንያቱ ምንድን ነው?" (*why are women perceived as care givers while men as masters?*). He said that among the four tenets he went out with, the most important starting point for the establishment of the community was women equality. He claimed, "Women are mothers and men are fathers, hence both deserve equal respect."

Moreover, he affirmed, there should not be distinct roles for men and women except what is given by nature-reproductive role. In explaining the reason behind his saying this, he said:

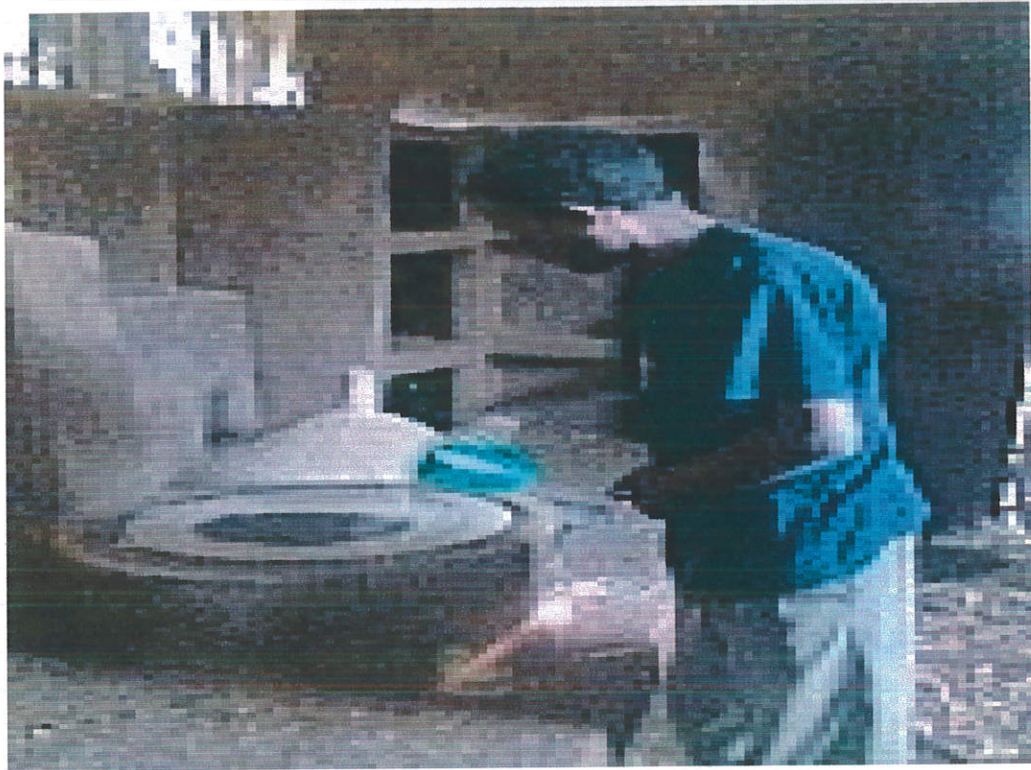
God didn't create distinct tasks for men and women. It is our fore fathers and we that created and lived with it. Of course, men and women have distinct roles given by God. For instance, reproductive roles like pregnancy, giving birth and breast-feeding belong to women. Apart from this, women can do works culturally ascribed to men and men can do works culturally ascribed to women. That is how we can develop our country and ourselves.

Regarding the gender role, Enaney in her words said, "በአወራራ አምባ ማህበረሰብ ውስጥ ስራ ችሎታን እንጂ ጾታን መሰረት ያደረገ አይደለም።" (*women and men in the community work based on their ability than their sex*). That means, one of the interviewee from the FAL center said that if the man is good at baking 'injera' and woman on weaving, they do this way. What

matters, according to the participants, is whether the person (woman or man) is fast at doing the work whatever it is. In explaining if their children face any problem in doing all kinds of works, one of the women during FGD claimed, "የአቅም ክፍ እና ዝቅ ከሌለ በስተቀር፣ ከልጅነታቸው ጀምሮ ሁሉንም ስራ ሲሰሩ ስላደጉ፣ ወንድም ሆነ ሴት ማንኛውንም ስራ ሲሰሩ ችግር አይገጥማቸውም።" (*Since all the community members, from their early years of age, teach them to do all kinds of work regardless of their sex, there is nothing that challenge boys and girls not to do so, but their ability*).

In Awra Amba community, it is common to see men and women working together in all activities. As one of the elder woman during FGD said, "except reproductive roles which is given to women by nature, here, there is no work division between men and women." In the community she continued, "ወንዶች ውሃ ይቀዳሉ፣ እንጀራ ይጋግራሉ፣ ይፈትላሉ፣ ሴቶችም ያርሳሉ፣ ሸማ ይሰራሉ።" (*the men fetch water by pot, bake "injera", thread cotton and women plough land and participate in manufacturing clothes*).

As to my observation, I saw man baking 'injera' as well as his wife (see picture 1). Furthermore, I witnessed women ploughing the land as perfectly as the men (see picture 2). Generally, women do what men do and vice versa and they do it appropriately. This has two advantages, as to all of participants, one is as they both work together, there will not be any work left aside for men or women. The other is, as they both do all kinds of works, in the absence of one (men or women) the other will not need the neighbors to do something the one could have done. According to one of the male community elders, "ወንዱ ቤት ከሌለ፣ ሴት እረሱልኝ ፣ ጥመዱልኝ ብላ ጎረቤት አታስቸግርም፣ ወንዱም ቢሆን ሴቷ የለችም ብሎ ልጆችን ለመመገብ ጎረቤት እንጀራ እንዲጋግርለት ወይም ወጥ እንዲሰራለት አይለምንም።" (*if the husband is away, leaving the wife alone with the children, she will not beg the neighbors to plough land. Similarly, the husband, in the absence of his wife, will not beseech the neighbors to bake "injera" and prepare "wot" so as to feed his children*).



Picture 1. The Awra Amba man baking "injera"



Picture 2. The Awra Amba woman ploughing land

During my stay at the village, I used to go to different people's houses. As indicated above, they share work among themselves. All works, in and out of the house, are concerns of both men and women. For instance, both men and women engage in different field works the whole day. After work, in the evening, when one (woman or man) bake "injera", the other (man or woman) do other work (example: weaving, etc) based on the ability of the person to do that work. If one goes to Awra Amba on Tuesdays, the first thing that he/she might come across is a big tree under which men and women engage in spinning activity (see picture 3). As to my informants, the income gained from this, is for the elderly community members who are in the elderly care center.



Picture 3. The Awra Amba males and Females in spinning activity

Beyond the absence of divisions of labor based on gender, in Awra Amba community, women have equal rights as men. I witnessed that women and men were equal in all respects; there is no men superiority and women inferiority. All women participants reported that they have equal rights as men. As one of the women said, "*Unlike in other communities, our men do not*

oppress us and we have established a tradition of correcting one another's mistakes through discussions." All of the participants said that both men and women are equal in all aspects that, in the community, both are breadwinners.

Furthermore, women have equal rights in using resources and making decisions both in the house and the community level. Zumra said, "*Since the society believes that women are wise by nature, women representative outnumber men participants whenever decisions are made which is not the case in other societies.*" Regarding resources, as to most of the participants, the Awra Amba community believes that women are wise in use of resources. For example, one of the FGD participants affirmed, women are known for saving money, "ማህበረሰቡ፣ ሴት ገንዘብ አያያዝ እና አጠቃቀም ላይ ጥሩ እንደሆነች ያምናል፤ እነሱ የያዙት ገንዘብም ሆነ ንብረት አይባክንም!" (*The community believes that women are good at keeping and using money properly; it will not be wasted, as they are excellent in saving*).

Ater Midir

In the Ater Midir community, women, as is the case in most part of Ethiopia, are expected to do what is there in the house. Although they take part in the out of the house works such as in the farm field with their husbands, most of the time, they do house chores like preparing food, cleaning the house, looking after their children, fetching water, gathering fire wood, and so on. As Emenashu (the "receptionist" in the Ater Midir) said women help their husbands, especially during sowing and harvest seasons, the burden of both men and women is greater in the farm field. But the burden is more on women than on men as the whole work in the house awaits them when they come back from the field.

I saw the same thing during my observation in the village (it was harvest time). For example, in the house I rested for the research, late in the afternoon, women come back from the field carrying farming materials with their husbands. As soon as they arrived home, the woman first boils water to wash her husband's feet then start doing other house works and go to bed late in the evening while the man stay around the fire place without any work and go to bed whenever he wants to.

All of the respondents agreed that the community expects girls to show some behaviors different from that of men. The girl should show the behaviors the society assumes as "right" in order to get husband. As one of the woman in the FAL center said, *"A girl should listen to what others say, should do what she is told to, should be shy, and should not be seen outside the house so that her families are respected."*

There are distinct roles expected from men and women in this community. That is, women do what customarily is women's and men do what is theirs. Most of the respondents reported that women and girls in the area, usually, do works in the house and men in the field. Although for some of them, doing one another's work, especially simple ones, is normal, others strictly believe that it is impossible and inappropriate to do so. Concerning the latter idea, Ato Ababaw said, *"...it is a shame for a man to enter into the kitchen and help his wife, even if he is willing to do it, the wife will not let him to do her work because it is not customarily and she is afraid of the neighbors that they would laugh at her."* This idea matches with what, Eccles (1986) said, *"...assimilation of culturally defined gender roles can have such a powerful effect on one's view of the world that activities classified as part of the opposite sex's role may be rejected."* Similarly, one of the women who are not yet enrolled in the FALP noted, *"ሴት በቤት ውስጥ ወንድ በዱር እንጂ እነሱ የሚሰሩት ለእኔ አይሆንልኝም፤ እኔ ባሌ ማድት ሲገባ በጣም አፍራሰሁ።"* *(It is appropriate for women to work in the house and men in the field. I cannot do what men do and am ashamed to let my husband in the kitchen).* The women said that in the area, since they are not used to it, they do not want their husbands do women's work. However, as to Rogers (1980), a woman refuses to allow her husband to the kitchen not because she afraid of the custom but to maintain control over what she has been encouraged to call her own as she was, since young, repeatedly told that it belongs to her. However, I do not agree with Rogers, as I strongly believe that they do so not with the intent of controlling over it as Rogers said, but because they are afraid to violate the norm and the tradition and hence despised by the people around them.

In this community, although women take part in some of the works of men, the later never take part in what women do. However, with growing awareness, the community members are

coming to consider doing women's work as normal. Ato Ababaw said, "*Although nobody tried it till now, there is a feeling that it is normal to do women's work for most of the men in this community.*" Women interviewees have shared this idea. According to these respondents, such improvement is the result of the awareness creation work of the government through the Kebeles and Edir gatherings. Nevertheless, as to me, seeing real change requires much more effort than what has been done so far.

Women and men do not have equal status in the house or at the community level. In both cases, women play secondary role next to men. As all of the participants reported, men are the breadwinners. As indicated by Bernard (1978), in most cases, the family are culturally differentiated that men take the pride in the family role of 'breadwinners' and 'good providers', women's contribution seen as supportive and "auxiliary" to the head and are left 'behind the scenes' (in Ferree, 1984:58). One of the women from the community elders during FGD said that except decisions related to women's work, all other important decisions in the house are made by their husbands. Issues like; whom to educate, when, how much agricultural product to sell, what to do with the money, to give a daughter for marriage and to whom and even education of the wives, etc. are decided by their husbands. In almost all high status areas, it is the man who is a master and superior than a woman. This goes with what Rogers (1980) said, "*In most cultures, it is shameful for a husband to earn less than his wife, to be less tall; for a wife to have a stronger personality or greater intelligence*"(p. 38). Regarding community level decisions and responsibilities, although there are few women, it still is a man who's is prioritized.

In the management and use of resources, most respondents noted that the ones who are legitimized and prioritized are men/their husbands. But, in cases where husband is not there or unable to manage, it is the woman who takes the responsibility.

As can be inferred from the above discussion, there is a clear difference between Awra Amba and Ater Midir communities in the roles they attach to women and men. Accordingly, in the former community, both men and women have the same role and equal status in the house and

at community level where as in the latter there is distinct roles based on which women are subordinated and given a secondary status in all aspects of the family and community matters.

4.4 Women's Socializations to the Culturally Ascribed Roles

a. Family

All of the participants in Awra Amba said that family has a great role to play in shaping the children in whatever way (good or bad). Since the community was established based particularly on women equality, female children are brought up in such a way that they are the same with the male ones. As one of the FAL facilitators said, "*...in our society, children are brought up having equal status- they are seen by their mothers and fathers just as children, not as males or females.*" Similarly, one of the community elders said, "*from the beginning, the idea of boys and girls is not there in our minds, rather we see them as our children and as equal.*" So, as to all of the respondents, children grow up getting the same treatment, doing the same job, having the same status and behaving in whatever way they like. In this case, the role of family is to socialize the children towards the same role where they work together than towards only one's gender role and behavior. As to my observation, in Awra Amba it is common to see that young boys and girls in the community playing together in the field and both of them play without being afraid of the family, until they are tired.

All of participants in Ater Midir also agreed on the idea that family plays a vital role in socializing children to different things including their gender roles. Quite opposite to the case of Awra Amba, they said that in the area girls are expected to carryout house chores with their mothers while boys go out with their fathers to work in the field. The mother is responsible for preparing their daughters to be "*proper woman*" as defined by the culture. Little girls are staying in the house learning their cultural roles from their mothers and boys, usually, spend the day playing in the neighborhood. As one of the women not yet enrolled said, "*we bring up children in such a way that the girl to be a 'typical woman' and the boy to be a 'typical man.'*" In the evening, as to my observation, is the case of young children, young girls help their mothers with house work while the boys stay around the fire with their fathers.

Most of the respondents reported that when compared to boys, girls are given subordinate position that, as to one of the facilitator, *"when girls are to do something which is inappropriate" as to the custom of the community, the family discourage them by saying 'እንኳን አንቺ ወንድም እንዲህ አለህ'*(even the boy is not asking this) which make the girl lockdown at herself and develop low self concept."

As I have observed in most of the houses I went to, girls do not come out in to the to the "saloon" when strangers come. They are shy and afraid to speak with strangers. Regarding this, most of the community elders confessed that this is how they socialize the young children. However, one of them argued, *"...recently we are rearing our children equally as we understood that keeping girls in the house and looking them down is wrong and hurts their feelings."* Contrary to the case in Awra Amba, as to my observation, the young boys and girls, although can play together, the girls do not play as much as they want because the custom doesn't allow.

In a nutshell, expectations and perceptions of the family based on sex affect the outlook women have about themselves thereby hindering them from actively participating in areas they were told belongs to men, including educational matters. Referring to African context, Kolawole(1998) said that the traditional conceptualization of women as reflected by significant others, particularly one's parents affects all areas of women's life including access to education as it result in women 's internalization of negative values and images.

b. Teachers and Schools

As to the facilitators (based on what they experienced in other schools), in most cases, teachers can influence students in such a way that they expect different behaviors from boys and girls, give different kinds of assignments to boys and girls which is in line with their cultural roles and give different treatment to boys and girls in the school thereby influencing them to develop different personal values and perceptions, hence their educational activities. But in the case of Awra Amba, as to most of the participants, since the children when they are young (up to grade four), learn in the school built by the community, they are not influenced by the teacher and the

school as they pass through the culture where there is no gender role socialization. And in the FALP of the community, since all the facilitators and the center belong to the community, there is no such problem. Here, as one of the facilitators said, "...*When we facilitate, the women and men participants do not show different behaviors, we also do not expect that; just because of their being women or men, there is no different treatment and expectation from our part.*" As all of them said, what is called men and women is forgotten.

In the case of Ater midir, except the facilitators, all the other respondents doubt if the school and teachers perpetuate gender roles. However, the facilitators believed, the teachers and schools as socializing agents that obviously transmit the basic knowledge, skills and values of culture including roles and behaviors expected from one's sex. Students, boys and girls learn many things indirectly from what the teacher says and how she/he acts and from what she/he expects. Moreover, teachers some times directly, reflect what is there in the society. Regarding gender roles, the facilitators said that teachers usually expect girls to answer questions related to house chores. As one of them claimed, this also happens in literacy centers, "*I always ask women what is women's and men what is theirs, culturally.*" In the school, Dolphyne(1991) emphasizing the teacher as an important socializing agent, said that by encouraging them to follow so far as role prescription, teachers affect efforts to be made by women towards their education. The influential socializing role of teachers towards gender roles and their impact on the views of women with regard to their educational matters is supported by Hatchell (1998), she reported that while expectation of teachers can serve as a form of encouragement, negative expectations can be a powerful source of discouragement.

Generally, the schools as miniature society with its workers, as one of the socializers, reflects cultural situation which in turn influence the woman perceptions and beliefs about education.

c. Media

In Awra Amba, most participants said, they have no idea if media socializes children towards their cultural roles. What they tell as a reason is its absence in the area. Although numbers of the community members have radio, the participants could not tell if it has any effect on

acquainting children with gender roles. Exceptionally, however, woman facilitator believed that what is dispatched through media has higher probability of getting acceptance and being followed. Hence, she said, media has positive and negative outcomes. As to her, though media have different advantages, especially, television teaches children bad behaviors and actions. She said, *"...just to transmit some thing important, it exposes individuals to different undesirable behaviors on the way like cruelty, killing each other, jealousy which completely are forbidden by the society."* So, as to her, through media there is a possibility for children to learn different things including gender roles and behaviors.

All participants in Ater Midir said that they do not know if media socialize women towards gender roles. As one of the women in the FAL center noted, there is radio in almost everybody's house and people in the area listen to it because whatever dispatched via radio is reliable, *"...but we do not know if it has any effect on gender."*

Even though, most of the participants of Awra Amba and all of the participants of Ater Midir believed that media has no influence on gender socialization, I think that media as means of transmitting the views of the larger society resulting from the reproduction of dominant culture, can not only socialize women towards their gender roles but also result in women inequalities converted into differential academic opportunities.

d. Religion

More than half of the participants noted that religion as the strongest agent of socialization. Because they said that whatever transmitted through it, can at best be accepted by the people following it. It plays an important role in teaching its followers different issues. Although there is nothing that can be considered as religion, they said, they were told by their fathers and mothers that in all religions women are looked down. One of the participants from the center during interview said *"...especially Islam religion looks down at women that they are not considered as human beings but as objects."* Moreover, as to the rest of the respondents, although there is none around the community, the founder of the community told them that all religions do not see women and men equally and make the children grow accordingly.

All the respondents in Ater Midir also strongly argued that religion couldn't be an agent of gender role socialization. To the contrary, as to most of the respondents, religion is a means of helping the children grow up with good behavior, in this case, to bring about gender fair society.

Although the extent varies, I believe that all religions directly or indirectly socialize women towards their gender roles thereby subordinating them. In most religions, I can say, there are tasks/ roles that women can do and cannot do which can convey the low status women have in the eyes of religion. Taking as an example the two dominantly followed religions in Ethiopia, Christianity and Islam, can be sufficient in this case. From my experience, being Christian, I know that the custom of baptizing the baby boy at 40th, and baby girls at 80th day emanate from the idea that it takes longer for girls than boys to purify. Andromeda (1968) also shares my view on the date difference in baptizing of boys and girls and the reason behind. Besides, whatever knowledge and training the woman may have, she is not allowed to preach on the stage. The same is observed in the case of Islam that women are expected to cover their hair, even face in the presence of men and are not allowed to higher religious positions and excluded from preaching in public. Hence, these assumptions of the religious institutions in one way or another, I think, affect women perceptions of themselves and their roles in the society that in turn affect their initiation and efforts towards educational matters.

e. Peers

All of the facilitators believed that peers could be considered as socialization agent that if one violates what is respected and valued in area, his/her friends would criticize him. As to one of the facilitator, *"in the neighboring societies, if a man does women's work, he will be despised and if the woman does the work which is considered as man's, she will be laughed at."* The other facilitator argued that peers transmit what is being said in the family. She referred the case in Awra Amba as an example. In the community, she said, since boys and girls are considered to be equal and there is no division of role between them, if one of the community member violates this, he/she will be laughed at or at least frowned up on. So, peers can act as socializing agents in such a ways that they appreciate the one who respect the norm and values

of the area and ridicule the one who goes against it. Similarly, Eccles (1986) said, "*peers can influence others by providing or withholding support to what others do.*"

All of the participants in the Ater Midir, too, said that peers influence what a person does and how he /she behave. As one of the participant from women not yet enrolled noted, when she was young, if the girls laugh aloud or stretch their legs to hit their friends, the other friends, boys or girls, will tell them that they should not do these as it is not appropriate for girls. This also is reflected in the case of older men and women. In the area, women do house works while men field works, and if a woman tries to do some work that customarily is men's, people in the neighborhood would laugh at her. As to Kolawole(1998) women, in some parts of Ethiopia, are strictly forbidden from ploughing land and threshing crops and are frowned upon by their peers because of myths that women involvement will reduce production. Hand in hand with this, one of the women in the literacy center in explaining what she came across in the community, said:

Once up on a time, a woman, a wife of a farmer in the community was forced to plough land as her husband died and there was no one to take it over. People who saw her ploughing land not only laughed at her but also cursed her because they assumed it as the sign of bad thing that is going to happen in the village.

It was not long, she continued, when that woman farmer stopped to do so. The same is true if the man attempt to do what women usually do. As one of the facilitators said, man fetching water in the area is now normal, but if one is seen while cooking 'wot' or making 'injera', the people in the surrounding area would call him "*ሴታሴት*" (*literally means womanish*) which can make the person not to try that again.

In both cases, peers influence each other, of course positively or negatively. So, I also believe that peers at any age, would influence what one does and how which can also be true in relation to gender socialization and hence to women participation in educational matters.

4.5 Women Feelings of their Roles

Awra Amba

There is no culture that looks down at women in Awra amba; women and men are 'two sides of the same coin'. In this community, all of the participants said, there is nothing that hurt the feelings of women. Females from their childhood are brought up having common roles with the boys. They do all jobs (in and out of the house) full heartedly and with confidence. As to all of the participants, they do the works outside the house as perfectly as they do what is there in the house. All of the participants noted that their culture gave them motivation to participate in all kinds of jobs confidently. In explaining what they feel about their roles, all of the women said that they are excited and are leading a happy life as the physical hardships and the socio-cultural attitudes that most Ethiopian women experience throughout their lives is non-existent in their case. One of the women from the FAL center even said, "we are happy that we are equal to our men and as we do take part in all activities that men do, we feel that if we try to do something we do it as perfectly as themselves." More often than not, most of the women participants stressed that it is the women themselves who are responsible for their subordinate position because if they believed that they have every capabilities and tell themselves that they can do something, there is nothing which hinder them from doing that. As one of the community elders also noted, "ሴት ልጅ ከወንድ እኩል ሆና ስለምታድግ፣ የምትሰራውም በሴት ስለማይወሰን ዝቅ የሚያደርጋትን ነገር የሚነግራት ስለሌለ፣ የበታችነት አይሰማትም፣ እንዲያውም ከወንድ ጋር እኩል በመወጣቷ እና በመግባቷ ደስ ይላታል።" (as girls are brought up having the same status and roles with boys and as there is no one who tell her something which make her develop negative self, she doesn't feel she is subordinate to men rather she is happy that she have all the rights as men). In comparing what is there with other areas, one of the women in the center said that in other areas since women do only the house chores and feel others belong to men, they are not confident to participate in issues that concern them outside. In her words:

...in different gatherings of the Wereda or Kebele, there are few women represented, even from these none would speak during the discussion, they rather expect their men to speak. Even if they speak, they shiver like any thing that they hardly express their ideas.

Ater Midir

Contrary to the case in Awra Amba, girls and boys in the Ater Midir are brought up having different roles and showing different behaviors, all of the participants said. Girls in the community are grown up in such a way that they are expected to do house chores, have subordinate position to boys and are to show a 'girlish' behavior, that is, she should be obedient and shy as the culture in the area allows. Girls, who, since young, grow like this, are not confident enough in doing things outside the house. Regarding this, Eccles (1986) found out that gender role socialization could lead women to have low confidence in their "general intellectual abilities" there by affecting their roles in "public lives" since they are typically stereotyped as less competent than males in all cases except the house chores. As to one of the women in the literacy center, *"we do not have the ability and the moral to do what men do, what we can do is what is there in the house-raising children, and cooking ("enjera" and "wot"), etc."* Similarly, one of the facilitator said that women think that what is theirs is only the housework that internalization of this assumption force them to be less confident to participate in others which are considered to be men's. Moreover, he said, since they are looked down by the society and are grown up with subordinate position and distinct behavior expectations, they feel that they are not capable of doing things that are considered by the community as men's. In relation to the negative consequences of gender roles embedded in negative perceptions of women, Kolawole (1998) said that these women cultural roles and pessimistic socio-cultural attitudes towards women contribute significantly to their *"self-valuation and retard their progressive participation in the socio-cultural and economic events around them."*

4.6 Education

4.6.1 What is education for Awra Amba community?

In Awra Amba community, education has a great value that all have a strong desire to learn. As one of the informants, Enaney, told me, it is Zumra who had created such positive desire for education in the minds of the community members. She explained Zumra's effort for educating them, **”ቶክና ብላክቦርድ ባልነበረ ጊዜ እሱ በብረት ምጣድ ላይ እየገፈ ልጆችን ያስተምር**

ነበር።”(even when there were no educational materials like chalk and blackboard, he used to teach the children using locally available ones).

Regarding what education means to her, Enaney claimed education as basis for changing one's way of thinking and thereby contributing not only to the development of democratic thinking but also the overall development of one's country. As to her, "education helps one to come up with new knowledge and skill which enable him/her to have a problem solving mind." Enaney's view of education seems to be inline with the educational philosophy of progressivists. As to Ornstein and Hunkins (2004), progressivism, as one of educational philosophies, view education as a tool for producing a democratic society. Ornstein and Hunkins (2004), also stated that according to progressivists thought, the skills and the tools of learning should be those which can enable participants play active role in changing their life and the community at large. Thus, Enaney's view of education can, more or less, be taken as a progressivism philosophy of education. Zumra, the founder of the community, in his part, sees education as one and the main source of income that is related with an instrumentalist view of education. Moreover, he said that without education one could never have the full vision of him/herself or his/her country. This view of education, on the other hand, seems, to some extent, related to the reconstructionists philosophy of education. The reconstructionists view education as a means of social change and key for solving economic problems of a country. Besides, these philosophers tend to be very sensitive to global issues and analyze them as part of the larger social order. The reconstructionists maintain that students need to acquire an awareness of global events so as to help them have good understanding of the worldwide system (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2004). Thus, Zumra's suggestion on the meaning of education for his society is not far from this philosophy.

4.6.2 What is Education for Ater Midir Community?

Education in this community is viewed as a means of earning money and knowledge. Those who are educated are seen as "modern" and rich as on one hand they are assumed to have widened their knowledge and they are going to be employed and get salary on the other. Hence, in Ater Midir village, Emenashu said that community members respect those who are

learning in college that when they walk in the village, the villagers utter blessings. Moreover, Ato Abebaw said, "*Education is a means of attaining many things.*" As to him, through education, one can at least skip the shame of signing using thumb and able to write his/her name instead. Hence in Ater Midir education is seen as a source of prestige, good life, earning money and grace. This view of education of the Ater Midir community is more of instrumentalist, hence directly related to pragmatism philosophy of education. And also, if not directly, it seems to be related with the educational philosophy of essentialists. The general theme of essentialists' philosophy of education, as to Ornstein and Hunkins (2004) is securing excellence, not adequacy.

The foregoing discussion indicates that Awra Amba society has, more or less, progressivists, and reconstructionists philosophy of education while the philosophy of education of Ater midir seems to be related with realists, pragmatists and essentialists philosophy of education.

4.7 Education for Whom? (Education and Women)

4.7.1 Women and Education in Awra Amba community

In Awra Amba community since education, basically, is assumed as a means for economic well being, the community members ensure that every member, young or old, male or female, learn to read and write. All male and female children get access to pre-primary education in a school run by members of the community itself.

As opposed to the case in most societies of our country, Ethiopia where educating men is valued more than that of women, in Awra Amba, there is no discrimination in accessing education as educating women and men, old and young is considered by the community equally important. In relation to this, I asked Zumra whose education is more valued in the community, he said, "*we have equal value to educating men and women, and if you ask me which worth more, I would say that educating women is more beneficial than that of men.*" In explaining how this is so, he acknowledged, women as mothers, can contribute to the education, nutrition, health and overall well being of their children. He said that women are naturally gifted in protecting the environment and using money wisely. Besides, he emphasized

that they are "systematic" referring to one saying, "የሴት መላ ይንላ።" Since women are endowed with all these skills by nature, one can assume what they will become if education is added on this, said Zumra. So, women, with all these gifts, could contribute more than what men could for their country if educated. Son (1994), in supporting the above idea and stressing the advantage of prioritizing women education over men to ensure personal and national development, said, "...the gains from education for women and girls extend beyond the family to the entire community" as educated women can educate their children at family level and can better perform the activities of the society as a whole.

As to two of the three women of Awra Amba not yet enrolled in the FAL center, the most important factor, which held them back from learning, was instability of the community. According to them, by the time they were old enough to be educated, there was conflict between their community and others in the surrounding that when the community started normal life they were challenged by health problems (problems of hearing and sight) to pursue education in the center. One of these women in telling me the reason behind her illiteracy, she said that she joined the community recently that she is planning to enroll in the center.

4.7.2 Women and Education in Ater Midir Community

As my informants told me, although education, in the past years, was considered to be appropriate for only boys/men, nowadays things are being changed. Because the government through Kebele meetings and church gatherings is creating awareness on the importance of education for women and the whole society in general regardless of age, sex, and socio-economic status. However, one of the informants confessed that regarding education, the society is giving priority to males than females and concerning age it is giving priority to children than older people and this is more prevalent in women than men. When there is problem of any kind in the family, the family chooses to withdraw female students before male ones. And the same is true in the case of FAL participants. More often than not, when a child is sick or there is another problem in the house, it is the women who are absent from class than men. Most of the respondents said that although in the area, both are learning that of males is more encouraged. As one of the community elder, priest (*kesis*) Tesfaye during FGD noted,

"Society is prioritizing male education than females, as the society likes females in the house because they are helpful in many aspects than males." In addition to this, he affirmed, "The society is afraid that in the school since students meet different people, they may loose their good women habits (የሴት ወግ) that their name together with the family will be spoiled which result in the absence of husband for that girl."

For the question whether he has daughters in his house and if he prioritize one, he reported that he has two daughters and a son and he considers education of both as equal and even, in some cases he thinks, that of female's is more rewarding than that of boy's.

Different from the above respondent, of course contrary to it, one of the women not yet enrolled in the FALP, while I was interviewing her, claimed, "ወንድን ማስተማር ጥቅም እንኳን ባይኖረው አይጎዳም፤ ሴትን ማስተማር ግን ብዙ ጣጣ አለው፤፤ ከጥቅሙ ጉዳቱ ያመዘናል፤ መማገጥ እና ማርገዝ አለ ይህ ደግሞ ግም ነው፤፤ ሴት ከወንዱ ጋር ሙግት አትችል እንደወ. ስራም ለማግኘት ይከብዳታል።" (educating men even if it doesn't have any benefits, it doesn't have any problem while that of women has different problems like getting pregnant on the way. Besides, women cannot compete with men to enjoy the world of work). So according to her, education is more appropriate for boys than girls. In line with this, Dolphyne (1991) said that as beyond their lack of competence when compared with boys, there is always the risk of getting pregnant and hence dropping out of the school, investing money on girl's education is considered as unnecessary. The other respondent from women not yet enrolled said that there is no need of sending girls to school because she can not concentrate on one thing at a time, "ሴት ልጅ ብትማርም በመሀል ልቧ ወደ ሌላ ይሄዳል፤ መማር ትጀምርና ጎጆ መቀለስ ያምራትና ትተወዋለች፤ ከተማሪ ቤት ብትገባም አትዘልቅም።" (even if the woman is enrolled to the school, she cannot complete her education as in the middle of it, she wants to get married). Similarly, one of the women in the community elders noted that as women roles are limited in the house and they do not need education to do that and after marriage, since the one responsible for providing family consumption is the husband, women education is not as such crucial. Dolphyne (1991), referring to most cases in Africa, said, "the woman is expected to be provided by her husband...it is considered more important for boys to have access to education as they are to be breadwinners in the family."

On the other hand, one of the women in the FAL center believes educating both has benefit. She also regrets that she had no access to education as her family forced her to marry a man she doesn't know when she was only 12. But now she is happy because she is learning in FAL center. In explaining the benefit education has for women, smiling, she said, "*we, women, most of the time spend our time in the kitchen preparing food and other things for our family members and we did not care for our sanitation.*" "*But now,*" she continued, "*we are going to school, so we keep ourselves tidy and clean as we are going to meet some friends in the center.*" She also noted the indirect contribution of the center as a means of learning different things from each other.

As to women not yet enrolled in FAL center of Ater Midir, the society in the area believe that women can not be competent in education like men and contribute to the overall advancement of the country rather are appropriate for things like getting married, serving her husband and bringing up children. In line with this idea, Son (1994) reported, "*Many people believe that girls should grow up, marry and have babies, while boys need education so that they can get good job.*" Hence, in the area, although things are now changing, most of them said that girls were not sent to school but as soon as they enter their teens they were given to a man they do not even know of which they, too, were victims.

In explaining the reason why they are not yet enrolled in the FAL center, most of them indicated reasons related to cultural issues including overburden in the house works and the perception that education of women has no value. The rest considered education at this age, coupled with their being women, as wastage of effort and resources for it has no value as they think they are too old to learn. In one-way or another, all of the women attributed their illiteracy to culture and low perception of women, and hence to their education by the society. In relation to this, Kolawole(1998) indicating culture as a strong source of self-expression, said that in many African countries, gender inequality in accessing education and services is the impact of manipulation of culture.

4.8 Functional Adult Literacy program

4.8.1 FAL in Awra Amba

The adult literacy program in Awra Amba was first started in 2003 by the initiation of the community members to provide adults with numeracy and literacy skills. It was later on that they started to inculcate issues related to their daily lives into the literacy programs ("FAL"). Before 2001, the community members were "refugees" who lived in the southern part of Ethiopia. After their return in this year, they started to strive for their lives and could not even think about being educated, as the surrounding societies who did not want to hear about women's equality to men and children's rights and upset about their working everyday regardless of holidays and Sundays developed hatred towards them. Because of this problem and absence of school in the community, they couldn't learn for a number of years. Although those whose age are younger started to learn in *Woji* from 2002 on wards, it was only in 2003, after they built the center, that adults got the opportunity to learn.

The adults learn three days a week in early morning (6Am-8Am) as they are expected to go to their daily works afterwards. As to one of the informants, Enaney, the participants in the literacy center, including herself, learn in a way that doesn't take their time for work, (ገበሬዎች ስለሆን፣ የምንማረወ. ስራን በማይጎዳ መልኩ ነዉ.) because works out there awaits them otherwise they are unable to feed and educate young children in the community.

They had their own purpose in commencing literacy for adults. As one of my informant, Enaney told me, it was started with the aim of providing literacy and numeracy skills to those members of the community whose ages are older for primary education.

Curriculum

The community members themselves run the FAL program in the Awra Amba community. Accordingly, they do not have the curriculum particularly meant to this program. Enaney told me that they do not have textbooks for this program rather they use the ones prepared for primary schools. There are three groups of students with a total number of 46 (27 women and 19 men) participating in the literacy center. All of the three groups are at different class levels. By the time I was there, there were adults who are at grade four, five and six. These three

groups, each, learn two days a week separately and on Thursday, they all learn English together.

Basically, they learn subjects; environmental science, mathematics and English. Moreover, the program attempts to make literacy functional and meaningful to every day life of participants that during class, participants are facilitated into discussions on subject such as communication in the family, child discipline, health, sanitation and family planning, moral and ethical bases of the community, etc. Besides I was told that men and women in the literacy center learn moral and discipline based on which the society was established. During my observation in the literacy center, I witnessed, the participants, at the end of the each class, by raising their hands, repeat the following motto (hang up on the wall of the center) after the facilitator:

እኛ የአውራ አምባ ሰዎች (We, the Awra Amban people)

የሰው ገንዘብ አንነካም፤ (Do not touch others money)

ወድቆ ብናገኝ ለባለቤቱ እንመልሳለን (If we find one, we will return to the owner)

በመተባበር በመተዛዘን እንሰራለን እናመርታለን፤ (We work and produce together)

የሰላም ኑሮአችን ይለመልማል!!! (Our peaceful life will flourish)

Moreover, as to both of my informants, there are cases when those who can read and write are called to learn how to make different cultural clothes of the community from thread. In telling the reason behind why all other subjects are not well covered, they complained about lack of facilitators and shortage of time on the part of participants as they all are responsible for the communal work out there.

Facilitators

As I heard from Zumra, one of my key informants, the Awra Amba community has one belief in relation to teaching and learning which is equivalent with "...Let the literate teach the illiterate." There are three facilitators, 2 men and a woman, who currently are working in the center. The facilitators were born and brought up in the community. All of them were not professionals who are trained for this purpose. While the two male "facilitators" have

completed their high school and couldn't join the preparatory, the woman has graduated as health officer from Haromaya University in 2008. But before the coming of these "facilitators" in 2007/2008, Zumra said, "...እዚሁ በእዉቀት ከፍ ያለዉ፣ ከታች ያሉትን ያስተምራል።"(those who are literate, teach those who are under them).

These “facilitators” were working in the literacy centers for free. They did not get any kind of money or benefit for the service they were giving to the community members. Especially, Melkam, who was serving the community as “facilitator” and Health Officer works both in the center and in the clinic. While I was talking with her, I asked her if she got some money for the service in the community. She said that she is not paid for what she was doing both in the clinic and the center. From the informal chat I had with the “facilitators” at different times, I recognized that although they had the opportunity to be employed with salary, they all are pleased to serve their community with unique and beautiful ideals with all efforts they have. One of the male facilitator even noted, “*The best salary is when I can do what I can and see the community reach where the world is today, and this is what we, people of Awra Amba are doing.*”

Classroom (FAL Center)

During my stay in the community, among the different things I saw, the one, which really surprised me, was the grass-roofed house that is used as a “classroom” by the community members. It was built by the community from local resources like mud, grass and wood. Although this “classroom” is used as kindergarten for children, it also serves as literacy center for adults early in the morning (6Am-8Am).

As one enters the “classroom”, first he/ she may see the *medeboch* on which students seat representing chairs in modern schools. In the “classroom”, there are about twenty *medeboch*. On each *medeb*, three students can be seated. Hence, the “class” can serve sixty students at a time. And up in front, there are motto, which reflects the basic ideals of the community and the black board. The community also built its own library out of mud, wood and grass. The library, which is full of books of different kinds (fictions, text books, and other supplementary materials), gives service to both children and adults for the whole day.

4.8.2 FAL in Ater Midir

The functional adult literacy program in the Ater Midir community was started in the school built for the purpose of teaching children Alternative Basic Education (ABE) to attain Millennium Development Goals (MDG). This school although built in 2005/6 and started to give service to children, the adults were admitted after a year, 2006/7 as there was a need of teaching them skills and knowledge related to their daily lives.

Curriculum

As indicated above, the program although started by ADA, other organizations are taking part in fund and material support. By the time I went there, there were 76 participants (44 men and 32 women). All of the participants used to learn twice a week for two hours each, but recently, Emenashu told me, they learn only for two hours once a week as to the preference of the participants.

The subjects, basically learnt in the literacy center are Mathematics, Amharic and English, my informant said. However, the program for adults when it first started, was intended to provide people in the area with literacy and numeracy, but later on, based on the need of the participants, different issues which help the people with their daily lives were commenced which can enable the literacy program to be considered as FAL. Accordingly, the program, as to her, have different purposes like; providing skills for keeping themselves and their environment clean, giving equal opportunity of education for girls (gender issues), sanitation, soil protection, income generating skills, saving and use of credit, importance of family planning (contraceptive methods), HIV/AIDS prevention skills, food preparation and other health issues, community participation in development and so on. All of the subjects, as to Emenashu, have their own books donated from organizations such as USAID, Pact Ethiopia, SIDA, Embassy of the kingdom of Netherlands, ANFEAE.

Facilitators

There were three facilitators in the FALP center of the Ater Midir, two men and a woman. Except for the woman who teaches only the adults, the two teachers teach both the children

(ABE) and adults. The facilitators' education status is 10+1, with teaching certificate. They are paid for their service; two of them by ADA and the other from the Wereda Education Office.

Classroom (FAL Center)

The classrooms which were used as a literacy center for the adults was built by ADA, Pact Ethiopia, USAID and the community for the purpose of providing children in the area with Alternative Basic Education (ABE). While the children learn for half a day all the weekdays, the adults learn only on Saturdays from 2Pm-4 PM in the afternoon.

The classrooms, which were three in number, are found in the center of the village some 200-meters away from the main road. In each of the three classrooms, there were two blackboards, 8 long thick trunks that can seat 6 students at a time and different weekly programs and different sayings related to the importance of learning and being punctual. Compared to the classes in Awra Amba, the classes in Ater Midir looks "modern", but that of Awra Amba, as to my observation, was cleaner and more attractive.

In the center, there was an office where the facilitators rest and teaching materials were stored. As I was told, although there were a number of books given from different organizations, there was no library where these books can be stored.

4.9 Women and Functional Adult Literacy

4.9.1 Enrollment, Absenteeism and Dropout

Awra Amba

In Awra Amba, boys and girls are equally enrolled at school as soon as they are old enough for the school. One of the women community elders said that the community doesn't make any discrimination between educating boys and girls, "ልጆቻችን እግራ-ተክል ከሆኑ ጀምሮ ከብቶቻችንን እራሳችን እያሰማራን፤ ሁለቱንም እናስተምራለን።" (*as soon as they are old enough for school, we, keeping the cattle ourselves, send our boy and girl children to the school*). Most the women in the literacy center said that they had no chance of enrolling in the formal education, as they were not living a stable life because of the neighboring societies. The other

few noted that they were in society where educating women is not valued and by the time they join Awra Ambans, their age was too old for formal education.

As to all of the participants, most of the members of Awra Amba community have learned and the rest are currently learning in the center. Those who have not yet enrolled in the center are those who cannot learn because of different problems related to age and health or those who joined the community recently. Whatsoever it is, in Awra Amba community, as to most of the participants, it is hard to find a person who is illiterate as all can at least write their names. So, in the center, as one of the facilitator said, sometimes the number of women enrollees is greater than men and other times that of men than women.

In the case of absenteeism and dropout, all of the women in the center said that except in case of sickness or other urgent problems, they always go to the center. One of the participants even noted, *"When I am in the house and healthy, let alone dropout, I do not even miss a class prioritizing the works in the house or in the field."* Similarly, the facilitators witnessed that since both men and women are motivated to learn and are eager to know, they do not want to sacrifice their class for other works. All of them noted that there is no difference between men and women in absenteeism and dropout as they; both are absent when there is a problem. The woman facilitator even told me, *"ሁለቱም ከአቅም በላይ የሆነ ችግር ሲደርስባቸው ሊቀሩ ወይም ሊያቋርጡ ይችላሉ...ይህ የሴቶች ችግር ብቻ ሆኖ አይስተዋልም::"* (both men and women are absent and dropout (rare) when they face some difficult problems).

Ater Midir

In Ater Midir, boys are given the opportunity and priority for learning than girls. All women participants, except the facilitators said that they were not enrolled to formal schools when they were young. Most of them reported that their families were not willing to send them to school but boys. In explaining why they do so, one of the woman in the literacy center said, *"Our parents refuse to send us to school because in the schools, they are afraid that we will learn bad behaviors."* One of the facilitator, taking the case of ABE as example, stated that although things are being changed recently, still the number of boy enrollees is greater than that of girls.

The same is true for older women in the adult literacy center. Learning, most of the time is considered to be appropriate for men than women. Even the women themselves, internalizing what they were told, give priority to boys/men education. As to one of the women not yet enrolled, *"men are above us, they are pillars to our house. If they do not learn, we can not survive."* One of the facilitator, on the other hand, noted, *"Since girls are grown up being told different sayings which indicate the inferiority of woman, they, through time, internalize and take them as if they are true which can in turn hinder them from learning."* As Kolawole (1991) said, *"socio-cultural attitudes about women have been known to shape the women's attitudes and to hinder self-realization."* Similarly, Eccles (1986) reported that gender socialization and expectation of different agents affect women enrollment in schools and general future options they should enjoy. The male facilitator stated that even when women are independent from family, they are not motivated to enroll in literacy centers because they believe that education is not worthy for them as they spend most of their time in the house and do not make use of it. Women in the community, choose to look after their family and house than going to school. One of the women not yet enrolled noted, *"We are old and have family to look after, how can we go to school leaving all these behind?"*

The facilitator and coordinator of the literacy center reported that when compared to men, women absenteeism and dropout in the Ater Midir FAL center is higher. According to him, *"ሴቶች ለማሩ ቢገቡም አብዛኛዎቹ በመሃል ያቋርጣሉ፤ በመቅረትም ቢሆን የሚወዳደራቸው የለም።"* (women, even if they are enrolled, most of them dropout after sometimes and they are known for their absenteeism). Although there are reasons like reproductive role, sickness and other social issues, most of the women in literacy center said that they usually are absent because of overburden in the house chores. One of the woman even said, *"works in the house can not be completed simply, when you do some thing, still others remain all are waiting for you, so I sacrifice my education."* Similarly, the coordinator and facilitator of the center said, *"women work never end, they spend the whole day working, ያም አላደርስ ብሏቸው፤ ከትምህርታቸው ይቀራሉ፤ ያቋርጥሉ።"* As to this respondent, the house work also indirectly hinder women from coming to the center as they do not have time to do the assignments, they choose to miss the class which result in dropout.

Some of the women in the literacy center said that they are ashamed when their husbands come to a closed door. Yet the female facilitator indicated the lack of encouragement from husbands resulted in high absenteeism and dropout on the part of women. In explaining the reason for higher absenteeism and dropout rate of women in the area, one of the male facilitator, on the other hand, said, "ሴቶች ሐሳባቸው ተግ ያለ ነው-የባሰ ነገር ካዩ ይራራሉ፣ ትምህርታቸውን ትተው ይቀራሉ።" (since women, by nature, are kind, they chose to sacrifice their class if there is a problem in the house). This respondent also indicated the carelessness of their husbands as the other reason for the absenteeism and dropout of many of the women.

4.9.2 Classroom Participation

Awra Amba

In Awra Amba women active participation is not a problem, all the facilitators said. They reported that women and men participants in the center equally take part in what they are learning. According to the female facilitator, most of the time participation of women participants is even greater. During my observation in the center, I also saw more hands of women than men (though the number of women outnumbered that of men) and was surprised by their confidence while responding to the questions. On the other hand, the other male facilitator said, "...in the classroom I don't see problem of difference of self-confidence or motivation in participation between men and women, of course, in both there are extreme cases that there are top participants as there are low participants of both men and women." During interview, the women in the center also said that they participate equally in the classroom activities and they do not refrain to ask anything that confused them and answer what is asked. I asked them if they are afraid to participate in front of men, they all were surprised by my question and one of them even asked, "Why should we be afraid? They are our brothers and husbands."

Ater Midir

With regard to classroom participation, most of the women in the literacy center said that they are afraid to speak in front of the facilitator and other participants. As to one of the facilitators, they are shy and afraid to stand in front of people because they were told by significant others that this is the appropriate behavior expected from them, "ከታች ጀምሮ ሴቶች አፋር ሆነው

ስለሚያድጉ፣ እያወቁ መናገር ያቅታቸዋል፤ ክፍል ውስጥ ሲቸገሩ ይታያሉ።"*(right from young, girls are not brought up in a way which can help them dare to do something that in the classroom, even if they know, they have the problem of speaking it out)*. Similarly, most of the women in the literacy center told me that they are not even confident to read what is written. This is so, as to these women, because they are brought up in such a way that they show girlish behaviors and do house chores without a chance of trying others. The other facilitator also said, "*Since they spend most of their time in the house and the community, in different ways, show that they are subordinate, they feel that they are so.*" He said, "**እራሳቸውን ዝቅ አድርገው ይመለከታሉ፣ በክፍል ውስጥም በጣም ያፍራሉ ይንቀጠቀጣሉ።**"*(women look down at themselves and in the classroom; they are shy that it is common to them shaking)*. It has been found out that women have lower self-confidence and personal values when compared to men, which resulted from their socialization process (Eccles, 1986; Kolawole, 1991).

Some of the women learning in the center, in explaining why they are afraid to participate in the class, said that they do not have the knowledge as men. One of them even said, "*...because I think that men are more intelligent than we women are, I am afraid that if I made a mistake they will laugh at me. So I always choose not to speak a word.*"

As to the coordinator and the facilitator of the center, although there are improvements, of course the number of men participants is usually greater than that of women but still women classroom participation is very low compared to that of men. However, recently, he observed that there are improvements in their participation as some of them are taking part in the responsibility areas of the community level and are participating in different meetings.

Thus, according to the above discussion, when women in Awra Amba are involved in the classroom participation with confidence, that of Ater Midir are afraid, reluctant to speak in the classroom which resulted from gender role socialization and behavior expectations.

4.9.3 Achievement

Awra Amba

Regarding achievement, there is no as such exaggerated difference observed between men and women of Awra Amba as all of the facilitators explained. As one of the male facilitator said, there are low achievers and high achievers in both cases. As opposed to the ones in the other societies, the woman facilitator said that women in the community do not underestimate their abilities. They assume that they are equal to men and they are! Besides, all of the facilitators believed that if it is not what one thinks about what he/she has, equal knowledge (mind) is given to all, both women and men. What matters is the perception one has towards what he/she has.

Moreover, as all of the women in the center said, in the case of their absence or when they do not understand something, they do ask a person who sit beside them without worrying about his/her sex. One of them even noted, *"If I miss a class or do not understand something, I often ask the person who is beside me, a man or a woman as we do not think that man is above woman in knowledge."* During examinations, all of the facilitators said, the participants never try to look at the exams of others because it violates one of the principle of the community-"do not cheat". Women in the center also said that they do not cheat during exams as working from others paper is considered as insane by the community. Besides, one of the women in the center, in explaining why she does not cheat during exams, stated, *"Zumra always tells us 'if you do from other's paper, you can not follow the person all your life, so it is better if you do one from yourself than ten from others!'"*

Ater Midir

When compared to that of men, women achievement is lower in Ater Midir FAL center. As to one of the facilitator, women do not consider their education as one important part of their life, and hence make hardly any effort to their education. He said, as they assume *"ከእንግዲህ ተምረን የት እንደርሳለን"*(*we do not need education at this age!*); they do not work hard to be high achievers. However, the facilitator noted that there are few women who are high achievers and there are also men who are low achievers. Eccles (1986) put it clearly that there is a gap

between the achievement of men and women because of psychological constructs of differential expectations for success and differential values which, according to her, result from gender role socialization. Gender roles, which make the women stay at home, have greater negative impact on their feelings. Even, the above researcher found out, there is difference in feelings among women who work outside and those "full time home makers" as women who work outside the home feel better about themselves and their life than "full time home makers." According to the above author, the internalization of perception the woman receive when she grew up and the sense that she spends the whole day in the house made her to be less confident, hence less expectant of success.

Most of the women in the literacy center stated that whenever they are absent from class or confused about something, they prefer to ask men because they think that women are less competent and are busy to study. All the three facilitators said that during exams, too, women participants prefer to copy answer from men. They said that whatever knowledge she may have, they do not copy from a woman. One of the woman in the literacy center said that she choose to copy from men because, "ከሴቷ እማ እንዴት እወስዳለሁ? እሷም እንደኔው ቀና ደፋ ስትል ነው የምትውለው በዛ ላይ ሴት ነች- ምንም ቢሆን ወንዶች ከኛ ይሻላሉ።"(as the women are not as intelligent as men and are, like myself, overburdened by house chores and hence have no time to study, how can I copy from the women? Whatever it is, men are better than we are!).

As can be inferred from the above explanation, while women in Awra Amba are found to be confident and hence achieve as men, women in Ater Midir are found to be less confident in their abilities and hence are, in most cases, low achievers than men are. In general, based on the above discussion, one can say that gender role perceptions influence one's view about him/herself, which in turn affects one's achievement.

4.9.4 Subject Choice

Awra Amba

All of the facilitators said that there is no difference among men and women on choice of subjects. According to them, some like mathematics others environmental science, the same is true for men. As the woman facilitator said, *"it is difficult to say that women like this subject and men that because in all the subjects there are men and women who like and do not like the subject."* She, however, stated that in other areas (based on her experience when learning in university) women choose to learn social science subjects not natural science subjects like physics because they are afraid that it is difficult and only men are capable of learning them. All of the women in the center said that they like to learn all the subjects which are given in the center but most of them reported that they like to learn mathematics more than other subjects. Similarly, the community elders during the FGD said that they do not expect the women to learn some subjects and not to learn others, as they are free to choose what is good for them. Even one of the woman community elders said, *"even when they are young, they are not influenced by the family to do or not to something as they are free to do what they like."*

Ater Midir

Concerning subject choice, most women in the FAL center said that they like to learn those subjects which can help them with their responsibilities in their daily lives. Most of them pointed out that they like subjects related to food preparation, sanitation-environmental and house, child rearing skills. These subject choices, according to some researchers, go hand in hand with what is expected from one's gender role (Rogers, 1980; Eccles, 1986). As to Eccles, gender roles mandate which educational and vocational activities one should be interested in. She also said, the subjects most often chosen by women are those which can provide them with the skill of nurturing their family. Also the facilitators affirming that women are attentive and high participant when learning such subjects, pointed out to the influence of the culture for such choices. As to these facilitators, Amharic and Mathematics are the other subjects most liked by the women in the center. Contrary to the findings of researchers (Eccles, 1986) that women are low achievers in mathematics, most of the women in the FAL center of Ater Midir,

reported that they are good at mathematics too. One of the women learning in literacy center in explaining the reason why she liked mathematics more than other subjects, she said:

Before I learn how to add and subtract, my husband was cheating me. He gives me hundred birr but when he give me he always tell me that it is one birr. Besides I didn't know for how much my husband exchange what we produce. But now I will not be fooled as I can calculate the expense and income of the house and go to market by myself to sell or buy something for our consumption.

In a nutshell, although it is difficult to compare subjects most liked by the women of Awra Amba and Ater Midir, as the subjects provided are different, it is possible to say that women subject choice in Ater midir seems to be more inline with the cultural role expectations of women.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Summary

This study was intended to examine women cultural role expectations and their implications for their participation in functional adult literacy programs by looking at the cases of Awra Amba and Ater Midir communities.

In order to meet this purpose, the study employed ethnographic design of qualitative research. Data was collected on cultural roles of women in the two communities, socialization agents, women perception of these roles and whether these cultural roles affected their educational activities. To this end, participant observation, in-depth interview and focus group discussion were employed to generate data from different research participants (community elders, facilitators, key informants, women in the FAL center and women not yet enrolled in the center). From the thematic analysis of the data obtained the following were found.

In Awra Amba, the women cultural roles are the same as that of men that they do all kinds of works they can regardless of sex. They are not victims of negative societal behavior expectations. Women and men in the community participate in tasks such as preparation of food in the house, looking after children, weaving, ploughing land. This has freed the woman from overburden and helped the men and women to become self-reliant in the absence of one or the other. Women, moreover, have equal status with men to participate in all decisions at home and in the community with equal right in the use and management of resources. On the other hand, in Ater Midir, since work is divided between men and women based on sex, women have distinct roles that are limited to the indoor while men outdoor. Though they, sometimes, give hand in the field, women in Ater Midir community most of the time do house chores like preparation of food, fetching water, nursing children, and the like. Based on the custom of the society, women are expected to show behaviors expected from them as women. Besides, women in the area have low status that except minor ones, they hardly are involved in decision-making at family and community level and have secondary right in use and management of resources.

While in Awra Amba, the family plays a vital role in socializing children, both boys and girls, towards the same roles and equal status, the family in the Ater Midir brings up children assigning different roles and appraising distinct behaviors for boys and girls. Since, teachers and schools in the Awra Amba belong to the community and as the community believe in women equality with men and hence, similar roles, they are not the means by which females and males are socialized to the traditional gender roles. In the case of Ater Midir, schools and teachers are found to be the gender socializing agents. In Awra Amba community, peers are believed to socialize each other towards similar roles and equal statuses between females and males while in Ater Midir socialization by peers is towards distinct gender roles and behaviors reflected in the community. As there is none which can be considered as religion in Awra Amba, they do not practically know if religion socializes women towards their gender roles while as there is only one religion in Ater Midir, the Orthodox Christianity, its gender socialization is not distinctly recognized. In both Awra Amba and Ater Midir, the gender socialization effect of media can hardly be known.

The Awra Amban women, since they have equal status and similar roles with men, are confident and self-reliant. They are happy that the society sees them not different from men in all aspects and there is no negative perceptions towards them which could have made them look down at themselves. Whereas the women in Ater Midir, based on their gender roles and related behavior expectations, are found to feel that they are good only at works in the house and less confident at those which are considered by the community as men's. Besides, women in the area, internalizing the low perception the significant others reflect about women, undervalue themselves to the extent of accepting their inferiority and developing low self-esteem, which in turn affect their educational activities.

Awra Ambans see education as a source of income, there by contributing to economic progress and also consider it as a tool through which all sorts of development can be attained. They have greater value for education and being educated regardless of age, sex and socio-economic status that they built their own school with library, which are run by their own volunteer teachers/ facilitators. Education, basically, is viewed as a means of pride and grace in the case

of Ater Midir community. In the area, educating girls apart from its unworthiness as girls' role are limited to the house and they do not make use of it, it is assumed that it brings about different consequences, which are dangerous for the name of the family. In the community, there is a school without library, which was built with the contribution from different governmental and non-governmental organizations and the community and has paid teachers/facilitators who serve both children and adults.

Women enrollment is no different from that of men in the case of Awra Amba as women education is equally valued as that of men. Except for reproductive roles, there is no other factor different from that of men, which force women be absent or dropout from literacy class. To the contrary, in Ater Midir community, women enrollment is very low with higher rate of absenteeism and dropout when compared to that of men basically because of factors pertinent to women: low value for women education emanated from negative perception of the society, overburden in the house because of their gender roles and pessimistic attitude of women towards themselves.

In relation to classroom participation, women in Awra Amba, beyond their confidence in asking questions and answering the ones asked by the facilitators, are found to be highly involved and even sometimes exceeding that of men in their class. The same is true in the case of achievement. In Ater Midir, however, the number of women classroom participants is very low besides to their lack of confidence manifested from their shivering while speaking which resulted from their assumption that men are more capable than themselves. Women achievement in general is lower than that of men in Ater Midir mainly because of lack of effort on the part of women resulted from the assumption that education has no worth for them as their roles are already decided and are different.

Women in Awra Amba do not make choice between men and women in seeking some help when they are absent or unable to understand something, but women in Ater Midir are found to make such choices and whatever they are, they prefer to ask help from men than their fellow sisters which shows women lack of confidence in themselves and females in general. During examinations, while women in Awra Amba, based on their norms, consider copying from

others as insane, women in Ater Midir, beyond considering working from others as normal, are found preferring to do it from men who are thought to be more intelligent than women are.

In Awra Amba, although mathematics is most liked, all other subjects are found to be equally interesting for the women learning in the center. In the case of women in Ater Midir, the most favorite subjects include mathematic, Amharic, and subjects related to food preparation, sanitation-environmental and house, child-rearing skills which are in line with their cultural roles.

5.2 Conclusions

Based on the findings on the study of women cultural role expectations and their participation in the Functional Adult Literacy Program (FALP), one can conclude that women who grew up having the same cultural role expectations and behaviors as men are confident and develop positive self-concept about themselves (Awra Amba) than those who grew up having roles and behaviors different from that of men (Ater Midir). This conclusion is in line with the finding of Evans (1995) who argued that the perceived differences in male and female roles and capabilities inculcated through socialization resulted in women lack of self-confidence and self-esteem. Moreover, the cultural roles of women have implication for their participation in functional adult literacy programs that while it has no effect different from that of men in the case of Awra Amba, in Ater Midir it resulted in women low enrollment, classroom participation and achievement there by leading to different subject choices when compared with men in the area. This conclusion, on the other had, is similar with what Eccles (1986) found out. She wrote that the gender role of women and how they were socialized towards these make them think that they are appropriate only at home and hence reluctant to be enrolled in the school, less expectant of success and choose those subjects which either provide them the opportunity to fulfill or are consistent with their self image.

5.3 Recommendations

Depending on the outcome of this research finding, the researcher would like to recommend the following:

- ❖ Governmental and non-governmental national and international groups should rethink on these socio-cultural factors which result in limited role of women and how to eliminate negative perception to enhance all efforts towards democratized gender justice. In this case, these organizations should work on how to create other different Awra Ambans all over the country, especially related to women equality; with no gender stereotypes and work divisions and where women take part in decision making at all levels. This can, for instance, be done by preparing experience sharing programs where women in other areas visit the Awra Ambans.
- ❖ Women cultural roles together with their negative perceptions are strong factors that retard women all rounded participation in the well being of the country. So, it is necessary to enhance women involvement in all social, economic and political areas by empowering them through education. In doing this, adult literacy programs play a vital role in educating men and women thereby contribute to the education of the coming generation, especially girls. Hence, organizations working on educational matters, like ANFEAE should work harder to provide education to those people, particularly women who are in remote areas and are more influenced by gender related negative perceptions and stereotypes.
- ❖ Significant others like parents, schools and teachers, community elders and church/mosque leaders can be approached by concerned bodies (particularly, those working on women affairs) to help the society change the existing negative perceptions and myths of women to create gender fair society. Moreover, concerned bodies can use media, as an important means of changing the negative stereotyped expectations of the society about women.
- ❖ Although there are different explanations regarding the source of women subordination, this study dealt with the ones suggested by sociologists and among the ones responsible for the socialization of women towards gender roles, it focused only on the dominantly accepted agents of (gender) socialization listed by the above theorists. Hence, in depth further study needs to be conducted in these areas and in related others as well.

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Appendix A

Interview Guide for Women Learning in the FAL Center

Instruction

The purpose of this in-depth interview was to get some information on whether the cultural roles expectation with in the society affected their education or not and if they compete with men in the classroom and the reason behind.

I. General Background information

1. Sex
2. Age
3. Religion
4. Educational background of your husband/wife?
5. Who is the breadwinner in the family?
 - A. Husband
 - B. wife
 - C, both
 - D. children

II. On women cultural roles

1. What are the women cultural roles in your community?
2. Who works in the house and who works in the field most of the time?
3. Do you do what men do in the field?
4. What are your responsibilities in the house chores?
5. What do you feel if your husband makes 'injera' and you plough land?

III. On the agents of socialization of gender roles.

1. Do you expect distinct tasks/behaviors from men and women?
2. Do familial /parental factors anything to do with women roles? If yes, how?
3. Do schools and teachers perpetuate gender roles? If yes, how?
4. Does peer pressure influence men and women to behave in accordance with their gender roles?

If yes, how?

5. Are religions and religious institutions responsible for the socialization of women toward gender roles?

If yes, how?

6. Do you know other agents that socialize women toward certain cultural roles?

IV. On what the women feel about the roles they are given culturally.

1. Are you convinced about the roles one is given as a man or a woman?

If yes, why?

2. Do these gender roles affect your self-confidence and self-concept?

If yes, how?

3. Do you participate, confidently, in the tasks outside the house like men?

If no, why?

4. Do you participate in the **key areas** (eg, chair person of 'Edir') of community activities like your husband?

If no, why?

V. On whether gender roles affect women participation in adult education programs.

1. Did you learn in formal schools, in your early age?

If no, why?

2. Do you think learning/participating in literacy programs for an adult is important? Why?

3. How do you compare the value of educating women with that of men? Which one is more worthy?

4. Does your husband/anyone in your family uncomfortable with your learning in adult literacy center? Why?

5. How often are you absent from class? Why?

6. Did you dropout from literacy centers before?

If yes, why?

7. During class, do you raise your hands to participate in the classroom like men?

If no, why?

8. During examinations or when assignments are given, do you try them yourself or seek help from men?

If you look for help from men, why do you do that?

9. Do you think men are more intelligent and competent than women?

If yes, how?

10. What subjects do you like most? Why?

Thank you!

Appendix B

Interview Guide for Facilitators

Instruction

The purpose of this in-depth interview was to gather information from facilitators working in the literacy centers, as they know the society and critically observe the condition of both women and men in the FAL centers.

I. General Background information

1. Sex
2. Age
3. Religion
4. Educational background of your husband/wife?
5. Who is the breadwinner in the family?
 - A. Husband
 - B. wife
 - C, both
 - D. children

II. On women cultural roles

1. For what kinds of activities are women responsible in your area?
2. Do you do what your wife/husband does at home/ in the field?
3. What behaviors /tasks do you expect from men and women participants in the FAL center?
4. How do you treat men and women in the classroom?
5. What are the women roles, which are considered to be appropriate for them in you area?

III. On the agents of socialization of gender roles.

1. If you expect distinct tasks/behaviors from men and women in your class, where did you learn this from?
2. Do families /parents significant in teaching gender roles to their children?

If yes, how?

3. Do schools and teachers responsible for this?

If yes, how?

4. Do peers socialize boys and girls towards their gender roles?

If yes, how?

5. Are religions and religious institutions responsible for the socialization of women toward gender roles?

If yes, how?

6. Do you know other agents that socialize women towards certain cultural roles?.

IV. On what the women feel about the roles they are given culturally.

1. Do you think the roles the women are given by the society bring about different feeling impacts on her?

If yes, how?

2. Do what is given to women as gender roles affect their self-confidence, self-esteem and motivation to do something that is considered as men's?

If yes, how?

3. How do you compare the participation of women and men in the classroom? Which one participates more? Why?

4. What behaviors do you observe from the women participants? What are the reasons behind their behaviors (if any)?

V. On whether gender roles affect women participation in adult education programs.

1. Do you think learning/participating in literacy programs for an adult is important? Why?

2. How do you compare the value of educating women with that of men? Which one is more worthy?

3. Is it men or women who repeats and dropouts and is absent more?

If women, why?

4. Do gender role perceptions and expectations affect women enrollment, achievement and subject choice?

If yes, how?

5. What subjects are women often interested to learn? Why?
6. Are women participants in your class confident to raise their hands to ask/answer questions like men participants?
7. During examinations or when assignments are given, what is the reaction of women? Do they try on their own or cheat to copy from men? If they try to copy from men, why do they do that?

If you look for help from men, why do you do that?

8. Do you think men are more intelligent and competent than women?

If yes, how?

Thank you!

Appendix C

Interview Guide for women not yet enrolled in FAL centers

Instruction

The purpose of this in-depth interview was to get insight to basic reasons behind the women not enrolled in the FAL center.

I. General Background information

1. Sex
2. Age
3. Religion
4. Educational background of your husband?
5. Who is the breadwinner in the family?
 - A. Husband
 - B. wife
 - C, both
 - D. children

II. On women cultural roles

1. What are the women cultural roles in your community?
2. Who works in the house and who works in the field most of the time?
3. Do you do what men do in the field?
4. What are your responsibilities in the house chores?
5. What do you feel if your husband makes 'injera' and you plough land?

III. On the agents of socialization of gender roles.

1. Do you expect distinct tasks/behaviors from men and women?
If yes, how do they come about?
2. Do familial /parental factors anything to do with women roles?
If yes, how?
3. Do schools and teachers perpetuate gender roles?
If yes, how?

4. Does peer pressure socialize men and women towards their gender roles?
If yes, how?
5. Are religions and religious institutions responsible for the socialization of women toward gender roles?
If yes, how?
6. Do you know other agents that socialize women toward certain cultural roles?
7. Can you tell any sayings or proverbs in your area that reflected women cultural roles?

IV. On what the women feel about the roles they are given culturally.

1. Are you convinced about the roles one is given as a man or a woman?
If no, why?
2. Do these gender roles affect your self-confidence and self-concept?
If yes, how?
3. Do you participate, confidently, in the tasks outside the house like men?
If no, why?
4. Do you participate in the **key areas** (eg, chair person of 'Edir') of community activities like your husband?
If no, why?
5. What kinds of challenges did you face in attempting to participate outside the house?
6. Did anyone in the community ridicule you when you try to participate in tasks that are considered to be men's?
If yes, is it men or women who do this most of the time?

V. On whether gender roles affect women participation in adult education programs.

1. Why didn't you learn in formal schools, in your early age?
2. Why don't you participate in the education program for adults now?

3. Did your gender role hinder you from learning?
If yes, how?
4. Do you think learning/participating in literacy programs for an adult is important? Why?
5. How do you compare the value of educating women with that of men?
Which one is more worthy?
6. Do you accept the sayings like: 'women's place is in the kitchen and that of men is in the court of law'?
If yes, Why?
7. Do you think the sayings like the above one affect women motivation to participate in education?
If yes, how?
8. Do you believe that women are as competent and intelligent as men?
If no, why?

Thank you!

Appendix D

Focused Groups Guide for Community Elders

Instruction

The purpose of this focused group discussion was to know the sources (roots) of such roles, how the community members bring up children and what the perceptions the community has towards women and their education.

I. Question on women cultural roles

1. How do you see men and women culturally/traditionally?
2. Can women plough land and men make 'injera'?
3. Are there works reserved for only men and women?
If so, what are the roles appropriate for women?
4. Are women equal to men (decision making, education, resources, etc)?

II. Questions on socialization of women roles.

1. What are the causes for men and women distinct cultural roles? How do they come about?
2. Where do women learn the appropriate role that belongs to her?
3. How do you as a family and community members treat male and female children in your surrounding?
4. What is the locality system of child rearing?
5. Are families, schools, peers, and religion responsible for socializing men and women towards distinct gender roles?

III. Questions on the feelings of women

1. From your experience, how do you evaluate the feelings of women towards their gender roles?
2. Do roles expected from women make them 'look down' at themselves?
3. Do women participate in community activities outside the house like men?
If no, why?

4. Do gender roles affect women self-confidence and self-esteem?

IV. Question on whether the gender roles of women affect their participation in adult education.

1. How worth is women education when compared with men?
2. Are women encouraged to learn?
3. Do you give equal chance of learning to your daughters and sons?
4. What are the factors that hinder women from learning in the literacy centers?
5. Do gender roles obstruct women from smoothly participating in adult education programs?
6. What (subject) do you prefer for women to learn in the literacy centers?
7. Do you think women have the ability to learn and understand just like men?

Thank you!

Appendix E

Interview Guide for the Key Informants

Instruction

The purpose of this interview is to obtain general background of both communities that include their philosophies of life, education and women, etc.

1. Sex _____
2. Age _____
3. Marital status _____
4. Educational background _____
5. Religion _____
6. What is your role in the community?
7. Why, how, when and by whom the community is founded?
8. What is the history of the name of the village?
9. What are the norms and values of the community?
10. What is education for this community?
11. Education for whom?
12. What works do women in this community do?
13. Do women participate in the responsibility areas of the community?
14. Do women have equal rights to different services (like education) and resources (e.g., ownership and use of land) in the community?
15. When and how was FAL started?
16. Does the program have its own curriculum and facilitators?

Thank you!

Appendix F


A Guide for Observation

1. What jobs do women in the community do?
 - In the house?
 - Out side the houses?
2. What are their statuses at family and community level?
3. How is women confidence and assertiveness?
4. How children are socialized?
5. How are women activities in the center?
 - In which subjects are they involved most?
6. The interaction/communication between husband and wife?

Declaration

This Thesis is my original work and that all sources consulted for this work have been properly acknowledged.

Name: Genet Gelana

Signature: 

Date: 09/07/09

This thesis has been submitted by my approval as a university advisor.

Name: Dr.: Ambissa Kenea

Signature: 

Date of Approval: 09/07/09