

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Women as Victims /perpetuators of patriarchy:
A Case study of Women Vendors in Two Localities in Addis
Ababa

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JULY, 2007

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Addis Ababa**

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**BY
GENET ASHEBIR**

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List of Acronyms

EWLA	Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association
EWWA	Ethiopian Women Welfare Association
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
NAP-GE	National Plan of Action of Gender Equality
NPEW	National Policy on Ethiopian Women
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
WAO	Women's Affairs Office
WAO-FDRE	Women's Affairs Office of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
WMS	Welfare Monitoring Survey
WB	World Bank

Abstract

This study attempts to explain women as safe guardians of patriarchy, a system that maintains male supremacy over women. The aim is to explain the reasons as to why women are contributing to the perpetuation of a system that makes them remain in subordination to men. It tries to explain how the research participants do understand their role as perpetuators of patriarchy, by the lens of their own point of view. It also draws upon feminist thoughts and explanations on patriarchy and the gender division of labor.

The objective is to provide a critical view on contribution of women to the perpetuation of patriarchy. It is an attempt to add on to what have been identified through previous researches as factors that maintain the system of male domination over women. It tries to give an insight on a not well observed issue, which is the contribution of women in maintaining patriarchy.

This research is a small project that investigates the experience of thirty six women vendors who reside around what is locally known as ‘*Abinet*’ area and ‘*Gega Sefer*’ at the *Lideta* Sub City of the capital city, Addis Ababa.

The inquiry framework of this research is mainly qualitative methodology while quantitative methods are also used for data collection and analysis. Two kinds of data collection methods namely: in-depth interview and focus group discussion are used in this study. The findings are analyzed and interpreted through the perspectives of the research participants and feminist theories on patriarchy.

This study reveals that the research participants are aware that the gender based division of labor, which is interwoven with cultural norms and values is one reason for their low social status. Besides, they have the understanding that gender based division of labor is a socially constructed phenomena and that it is subject to change. However, they are less critical of their own contribution in the transferring of the existing traditional gender division of labor to generations and consequently to the perpetuation of a system that subordinates them.

1- Introduction

1-1 Background of the Study

Every society has sets of instructions that govern interaction among its members. These sets of instructions guide social interactions and state social status to individual members of society. Gender is one of the most important ascribed status that an individual member of the society assumes in relation to her or his biologically designated sex. The status that women and men assume defines their gender roles and gender relation. (Lindsey, 2005; Lott, 1987).

According to Paula Nicolson (1996) gender relations are power relations. She expounds that the gender roles and gender relations of women and men are defined by patriarchal values, which prescribe men and men values to be superior over that of women and women values.

In societies where cultural and social norms are defined by those values, women are relegated to second class status. Thus, unequal power relations between men and women prevail (Adeleye-Fayemi, 2004; Lindsey, 2005; Lott, 1987; Nicolson, 1996; Saadawi, 1997; Weedon, 1996)

In Ethiopia also the gender roles and gender relation of women and men is hierarchal, which is explained by patriarchal values through which women are defined as subordinate to men. This hierarchy in status and subordinate position of women are being maintained through socialization of gender roles more specifically through socialization of gender based division of labor (Original, 1998; Tesfu, 1996; Tadelech, 1994; Zenebeworke, 1976).

Although women play significant social, economic, and political roles, studies conducted on the situation of women in Ethiopia reveal that their

contributions are far from being recognized. Despite the existence of legal frameworks that are set to provide the foundation for the protection of their rights, women still remain underprivileged in terms of social, economical and political benefits and their human rights are violated. They are invisible in the political and decision making arena and thus their voices are unheard (Original, 1998; Tesfu, 1996).

Explanations as to how the traditional gender-based division of labor places women in charge of home and communal affairs with exclusive tasks are available. These explanations point to such tasks as shouldering arduous household chores and attending to the needs of the elderly. According to these explanations, women's productive role, i.e., their contribution in terms of producing items of economic value is unrecognized. Women's active involvement in domestic activities and in the community are not considered as work and deemed unimportant since these activities are categorized as 'unpaid labor.' In traditional marriage the assumption regarding the contribution of women and men is that men generate income to sustain the family while women stay at home depending on what men earn. (Habtamu, Hirut, Yusuf, and Konjit (2004); Original, 1998; Tesfu, 1996; Tadelech, 1994; Zenebeworke, 1976; Zenebeworke, Eshetu and Konjit, 2002)

Tuned by the gender-based division of labor, women spend much of their time in activities such as food preparation, cleaning and child rearing. Thus they are unable to have time to engage themselves in activities that would eventually make them acquire knowledge, skill and the know-how that would enable them to fit into the labor force. (Tadelech, 1994; Zenebeworke, 1976).

In addition, women's reproductive role that contributes to the continuity of the human species as well as in transmitting cultural norms and values is not rewarded. The task of child rearing is considered a women's exclusive duty and also regarded with less economic and social value. These attitudes are

created and maintained through a system that establishes men's domination in the form of patriarchy. The system that maintains hierarchy between men and women as dominant and subordinate groups respectively is injected through the socialization process that dictates the place and role of members of society. (Original, 1998; Tesfu, 1996; Tadelech, 1994; Zenebeworke, 1976)

In Ethiopia, the issue of gender equality has been tabled for discussion for the last three decades. The late 1960's and early 1970's marked the beginning of discourse on women's issue and gender equality as a subject in its own right. The establishment of the Ethiopian Women Welfare Association (EWWA) as one of state machineries marked the incorporation of women's issue into the state agenda. The main focus of EWWA was that of enhancing women's capacity in relation to their role in domestic work or as housewives. The approach was on addressing women's immediate needs such as providing milk and nutritious food for children, training on home management and child care as well as training on small scale income earning skills meant for family consumption. Therefore, the approach did not challenge the fundamental factors in the subordination of women, the system of patriarchy (Tadelech, 1994).

The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (1995) is another landmark in promoting gender equality. In addition to Article 35 that exclusively states the rights of women; the Constitution gives emphasis to the rights of women in other articles that provide for human rights' protection. According to the Journal of the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (2002) the Constitution clearly establishes the human and the legal rights of women.

Ethiopia is a signatory to International Laws that address issues of women's rights. And these laws are incorporated in the domestic laws and in the Constitution. Article 9(4) reads "All international agreements ratified by

Ethiopia are an integral part of the law of the land” (Constitution of the FDRE, 1995, p. 79).

The National Policy on Ethiopian Women (NPEW) formulated in 1993 and accompanied by the setting up of National machineries in the form of Women’s Affairs Offices (WAO), which later assumed ministerial position.

According to the quarterly magazine of Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association entitled *Dimistachen*, on the basis of the legal provisions of the Constitution on freedom of association today there are around forty women’s professional associations and organizations whose main focus is on empowerment of women and thus liberating them from the subordinate status they are relegated to. There are also quite a number of international NGOs working on the issue of gender equality. Raising the awareness of the public on women’s and gender issues is the major area of concern for these bodies.

However, the gap in social, economic and political participation of women and men still remains wide. According to the National Plan of Action of Gender Equality (NAP-GE) (2005) the existence of a number of initiatives aimed at improving women’s status failed to provide the intended results. The document states “...the majority of women’s rights are good on paper, but little in terms of application...” (NAP-GE, 2005, p.2).

One reason for this failure in achieving expected outputs in terms of improving women’s status is the deep rooted ideology of patriarchy. In Ethiopia patriarchy is a social system that governs the gender relation between women and men. Women and men assume different and hierarchal status. This hierarchal status is manifested through the subordination of women. (Eshetu Debabu, 1997; Tadelech 1994; Tesfu, 1996; Zenebeworke, 1976).

1-2 Statement of the problem_

Patriarchy and its manifestation is at the center of discussion in research outputs on the situation of women in Ethiopia. However, women's understanding of their role in perpetuating patriarchy and the underlying factor that forces them to contribute for its continuity are areas that have not yet been examined. Researches conducted on situation of women in Ethiopia failed to critically explore the role that women play in maintaining a system that keeps them in subordination to men. Such researches, in most cases, portrayed women as passive members of society. The explanation is that women are powerless, unable to make decisions and that they have no role in the making of social construction in terms of relationships among members of society (Tesfu, 1996,). But, women play active role in producing and reproducing the cultural and traditional norms and values that contribute to the continuation of inequality between women and men. (Zenebeworke, 1976).

As social agents in socialization process, women play a significant role in shaping behavior and attitudes of their offspring. In the process of nurturing them, women keep their daughters at home and make sure that they are well taught in undertaking household chores, how to look after their siblings and behave according to societal expectations. This includes the lesson to submit to the authority of male members of the family. Such instruction is in tune with the traditional thinking that the destiny of a female child is to find a "good" husband for whom she has to be obedient. On the other hand, however, women mostly send their sons to school and to public places where they believe they should belong to. (Tadelech 1994; Zenebeworke, 1976).

Therefore, this study attempts to explore on how women contribute in perpetuating the system of patriarchy by examining issues such as women's experience in nurturing their children, the way they understand their gender

power relation with men, their outlook on the influence of culture as well as their perceptions of their own role in producing and reproducing cultural norms and values.

1.3 Research Questions

The research will focus on seeking answers for the following questions.

- How do research participants understand and explain the reason for the difference in gender roles between women and men?
- How research participants understand and explain their status in society?
- How do they understand their role in the maintenance of gender roles?
- Do they think the existing gender role needs to be changed? If so, how? And in what ways can they contribute in the process of changing it?

1.4 Objectives of the study

1.4.1 General objectives

The general objective of this study is to provide a critical view on how the existing social structure creates and maintains unequal power relation between women and men in which women are subordinate to men. The study tries to uncover the reason behind the contribution of women to the maintenance of social relations which put them in a subordinate position to men.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

- To examine the link between gender role differences and secondary status of women in society.
- To assess how socialization of gender roles contribute to the continuance of patriarchy and women's subordination.
- To provide a critical view on the contribution of women towards the perpetuation of patriarchy.
- To critically examine how the social structure makes women not only victims of the system but also perpetrators.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study tries to provide an insight into the challenges in promoting gender equality in the country. It helps in bringing to light women's role in the maintenance of a system that creates gender inequality. Also, it hopes to show the importance of raising women's self consciousness towards their role in maintaining patriarchy so that they could become critical of their own contribution and ultimately be able to bring about change within.

As a feminist research, the study intends to show the importance of empowering women in order for them to develop critical thinking towards their situation at individual level and as a marginalized and subordinate group so that they could become agents of social change and bring about a world where women and men enjoy equal rights and privileges.

In addition, this study attempts to inspire further researches on the subject of women's role in the perpetuation of patriarchy.

1.6 Scope of the research

This study is a small venture that focuses on inquiring into the experience of thirty six women vendors regarding their perception towards the difference in gender roles between women and men and of their understanding on women's status in society. In line with the objective, the scope of this study is limited to the role that women play in the maintenance of gender based division of labor and transformation of cultural and traditional norms that are embedded with patriarchal values. This study, therefore, focuses on familial relations such as the gender division of labor between husband and wife and women's role in transforming gender roles and other patriarchal values to their children through nurturing.

The study also draws upon feminist thoughts and perspectives on patriarchy and the gender division of labor.

1.7 Limitations of the Research

This study has been conducted within the bounds of limited time and resource. Thus it reflects the experience of research participants from two localities in Addis Ababa, within a specific time period, and from same socio-economic conditions.

The inquiry framework employed in this study is mainly qualitative. Quantitative is also employed for the purpose of data collection and to substantiate the analysis. Two methods of data collection are employed: In-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions. Factors such as low level of education, time limit and inconveniences in relation to the type of the job the research participants are engaged made it impossible to collect data by way of questionnaires.

1.8 Operational Definitions

Sex: the biological characteristics distinguishing female and male.

Gender: refers to those social, cultural, and physiological traits linked to males and females through particular social contexts.

Status: One of the most important social structures that organizes social interaction. It is a category or position a person occupies that is significant determinant of how she or he will be defined and treated.

Role: the expected behavior associated with a status.

Social norms: are shared values that guide people's behavior in specific situations. They also determine the privileges and responsibilities a status possesses. (Lindsey, 2005, pp 55)

1.9 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis has four chapters. The first chapter introduces the background to the research topic, statement of the research problem, objectives, scope and limitations of the study.

Chapter two contains literature review. In relation to the research questions, topic and objectives of the study, books and articles were reviewed on issues of socialization, explanations on gender relations, the justifications behind the differences in gender role and social status between women and men. It also assesses the role that social agents play in gender role construction and discusses patriarchy used by feminists as a lens to analyze women's subordination.

Chapter three is the methodology part. It describes the research design, research area, sampling technique, data collection process, data management and analysis procedure.

In Chapter four the findings of the research are organized in accordance with the research questions and under different thematic areas. It presents

the voices of research participants as they reflect on their experiences in nurturing their children, on the way they define themselves, their understanding of their role and status in society, and views about their role in transmitting cultural norms. The last part deals with the summary and conclusion of the study findings and the analysis.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Gender Roles

Human studies that are concerned with the characteristics and formation of social structure and how social interactions are carried on put gender role construction at the center of their explanations. In her book “Gender Roles: A Sociological Perspective”, Lindsey (2005) defines gender roles as the ascribed roles that a society places upon women and men in association with their biological sex.

Terms such as ‘sex role’ and ‘gender role’ are usually used interchangeably to define the expected behaviors ascribed to either sex. Nicolson (1996) uses the term ‘sex roles’ to define the expected behavior placed upon women and men in association with their biological sex.

But Lindsey has different perspective than Nicolson regarding the use of the terms. According to Lindsey (2005) the concepts ‘role’ and ‘gender’ are sociological while the concept ‘sex’ is biological. She argues that adding the concept ‘role’ which is sociological with biological ‘sex’ creates confusion. She suggests that for the sake of clarity in conception, it is preferable to combine the two sociological concepts and use the term ‘gender roles’ instead of ‘sex roles’ when referring the socially ascribed roles of male and female.

In the context of this research the concept ‘gender roles’ will be used to explain the societal association of roles and behaviors of women and men in relation to their biological sex. Therefore, explanations on gender role construction/ maintenance and what causes the differences in role and status between the sexes will be the basic premise of the study.

2.2 Factors Influencing Gender Roles

Explanations as to the difference between women and men tend to centralize on biological and socialization factors. There are explanations that put biological factors as determinant factor for women and men to have developed their own distinctive characteristics, personalities and also to perform different roles. Freud's notion of "anatomy is destiny" is one of the explanations in this regard. Some scientific findings in the field of biology also emphasize on the contribution of hormones and genes to gender role differences among women and men. (Frieze, 1978).

The other category of explanation defines the origin of gender role differences in terms of the process of socialization. In their publication of 1978, Frieze expounded that society create and place upon women and men different expectations based on their difference in reproductive function. They maintain that this difference in expected behaviors transforms from generation to generation through socialization.

Explanations on the different role and status assignment on women and men maintain that the social and cultural gender role construction has a link with the biological designation of female and male. Among those who reflect their perspective in this regard is Paula Nicolson. In her book "Gender, Power and Organization" (1996), she defines the roles assigned to women and men as a complex interconnection of sex, gender and everyday experience. From a psychological perspective, Nicolson posits that biological designation as a female or male is the base for socially ascribed roles of women and men. She argues that based on anatomy, society establishes meanings and representations regarding women's and men's role. Citing Sayers (1986) and Ussher (1989) she further argues;

Anatomy/ biology has a clearly social meaning encapsulated in the discourse on gendered behavior..., so that when we look at a woman, the female body symbolizes an entire 'social history' through which others can understand her and through which she makes sense of her own life.(Nicolson, 1996, pp.9-10)

The emphasis of Nicholson's argument is on the notion of destiny. According to her, in relation with their biological title women and men are socialized in different ways that ultimately determine their destiny. She argues that the socially and culturally constructed values and norms of society stipulate and set the limits of individual's experience in that women and men have different lives and outlook of the world. Nicholson argues that social expectation ascribed to women and men create a hierarchal gender relationship between them in which men are superior to women. She defines gender relations as power relations in which men and male values have superior status over women and female values. For Nicholson, gender relations are an integral part of patriarchal power structures, which is maintained through socialization into gender roles. She asserts that gender relations are about the attainment and preserving of power.

2.3 The Role of Culture in maintaining Gender Roles

Bernice Lott (1987) posits that based on their biological sex, female and male are made to pass through different socialization processes that they develop different cultures and experience of understanding their worlds differently. According to Lott, there is a difference between being female/male and "becoming a culturally defined" women/men. (Lott, 1987, p. vii). In her book "Women's Lives: Themes and Variations in Gender Learning," Lott defines gender as a social and cultural construction that begins from a birth of a child. She states, "Cultures begin at birth to shape highly flexible and teachable human infants not only into unique individuals but also into two categories of gender." (Lott, 1987, p. 29).

The same holds true in the case of Ethiopia. Zewde Abegaz (2002) explores how culture demonstrates the hierarchical status of the sexes from the very day of a birth of a child. In her paper "Gender and Development" (2002),

she refers to the difference in celebration of the birth of a male and a female child. She expounded that in most cases the birth of a boy child is celebrated while that of a girl child is perceived as a mere acceptance of the 'gift' of nature. The examples, she cites, relate to the difference in ululation that is seven times for a boy child and three times for a girl child. Another example in this regard is the firing of machine gun if it is a boy child as an expression of happiness and achievement while nothing of such kind for the birth of a girl child.

In support of this Zenebeworke Tadesse (1976) also reflects, "Male children especially the first born are honored while the birth of a girl is often a cause for lamentation." (Zenebeworke, 1976, p. 22). She observes that the society puts the blame on the woman if couples fail to have a son. According to Zenebeworke in most cases failing to have a son can be a cause for marriage dissolution or the woman would be forced to accept her husband's affairs with other women.

For Lindsey (2005) such kinds of actions are a reflection of stereotype attitudes. Stereotype, according to her, refers to those "...oversimplified conceptions that people who occupy the same status group share certain traits in common."(Lindsey, 2005, p. 3). Lindsey further explains that these conceptions are a result of rigidly defined roles. She says most of the time stereotypes incline to focus on negative traits than the positive one and therefore become causes of discrimination on the basis of those assumed negative traits.

2.4 The Role of Socialization in maintaining Gender Roles

Socialization, as defined by Gerard O' Donnell (2002), is "the process of learning by which people of all ages acquire the culture of their society and of the various groups within the society to which they belong." (O'Donnell, 2002, p.70).

Social institutions such as family, school, religious and political institutions, together with the law and the media play important roles in creating, teaching and reinforcing these differences of roles and status between the sexes. According to Chris Weedon (1987) these social institutions ‘pre-exist’ us. She states, “We learn their modes of operation and the values which they seek to maintain as true, natural or good. As children we learn what girls and boys should be and, later, what women and men should be.” (Weedon, 1987, p. 3).

Of these institutions the family is the most crucial one in shaping children’s character, identity and self-image. As Lindsey states, the family is an institution where children gain their first orientation towards societal norms, values and attitudes, including their gender identity.

In this regard parents remain to play the most pivotal role. In support of this, Lindsey (2005) states “gender-typing of infants by parents begins on the day of the child’s birth. ...Both parents are likely to describe infant sons as strong, tough, and alert and infant daughters as delicate, gentle, and awkward, regardless of the weight or length of their infants” (Lindsey, 2005, p. 62)

These stereotype descriptions are manifested through different roles of assignment and different ways of socialization in which female and male happen to be exposed to different situations in the course of their life. For instance during childhood “...girls are socialized into being people-oriented and dependent, while work, and particularly success at work, was perceived to be masculine and as such undesirable for women.” (Nicolson, 1996, p. xii).

To add on to this, Lindsey (2005) asserts, “Gender socialization in early childhood helps boys develop “wings”, which permits them to explore realms outside the home independent of adult supervision, whereas girls

develop “roots” which tend to anchor them and keep them closer to home.” (Lindsey, 2005, p. 62). As mothers, the expectations placed upon women are nurturing, loving and caring, passivity, home- making and availability to the needs of the family at all times; while for men, expectations for their behaviors as fathers are “...bread-winner, disciplinarian, home technology expert, and ultimate decision maker in the household.” (Lindsey, 2005, p. 2).

Weedon (1987) also maintains that the notion of the ideal woman/mother calls for specific qualities such as “patience, emotion, and self-sacrifice.” (Weedon, 1987, p.2). According to her, these expectations that are placed upon women determine women’s destiny in terms of accessing the labor market and other social services that are necessary for women to fit in to the public life.

The main thrust of social scientists, whose explanations are being used in this research, is that the socially and culturally constructed gender roles placed different expectations upon women and men and eventually brought about difference in status between the sexes. They argue that the difference in gender role is accountable for the hierarchical relationship between women and men in which women are subordinated to men. And this hierarchical gender relations is maintained through socialization of gender roles of which gender division of labor is the fundamental one (Frieze, 1978; Lindsey, 2005; Lott, 1987; Nicloson, 1996)

In her book “A Vindication of the Rights of Women”, Mary Wollstonecraft (1789) criticizes the socialization process that causes difference in status and privileges of women and men as a corrupt and unjust. She said that societal norms and values are responsible for the creation of unjust and corrupt socialization process which brought about unequal power relation between women and men. She argued that women also need to be allowed to pass through the socialization process that gives them the liberty to experience the world in a manner that men do.

2.5 The Gender Division of Labor

The gender-based division of labor that is associated with the private/domestic and public dichotomy is the result of the differences in socialization. It has implications for the unequal power relationship between women and men in which women assume secondary status (Delphy, 1984; Duncan, 1996; Glendinning, 1987; Lindsey, 2005; Lott, 1987; McDowell & Rosemary, 1992; Nicloson, 1996; Weedon, 1987).

McDowell and Pringle (1996) posit that the notion of the private/domestic and public sphere and the designation of women and men, emanates from the dominant discourse that is “men would govern the society and women the homes within it.” (McDowell & Pringle, 1996, p. 15). While introducing the book “Defining Women: Social Institutions and Gender Divisions”, McDowell and Pringle (1996) expound that fundamental assumption behind the separation is that women are ‘closer to nature’. This assumption has implication for women’s restriction to ‘domestic’ activities that eventually made them dependent on men, as it facilitates their exclusion from the labor market.

The separation is also accompanied by the attitude that the private/domestic is less valuable than the public sphere. Therefore, women’s contribution through domestic labor is less valued than that of men which dominate the public world. As noted by McDowell and Pringle (1996):

The statuses of men and women have been constructed around a whole series of dichotomous categories: the ‘one’ and the ‘other’, the public and private domains, work and home, rationality and emotionality, culture and nature, mind and body, autonomy and dependence.... The first of each of these pairs tends to be associated with men and positively valued, while the second of associated with women and negatively valued. (McDowell & Pringle, 1996, p. 3)

Different explanations have been given as to the origin of gender-based division of labor. Among the explanations are: men's revolt against matrimonial system in protest of their inferior position, the much physical strength demanding task of hunting, men's jealousy on women's fertility, for the sake of protecting women from danger to keep infant's safety.

According to Lott (1987), many contemporary anthropologists agreed on the explanation of a cultural influence that is associated with women's biological reproductive role in child bearing and rearing as a determining factor for the division of labor between women and men.

In support of this argument Nicolson (1996) maintains that "Women's biological capacities to bear and feed children are presented in patriarchal societies as the determining features of what is 'natural', and conversely what is 'unnatural'. Childlessness and traits contrary to the nurturing role, such as aspiring to and achieving social power, are presented as unfeminine and somehow 'damaging' to potential femininity." (Nicolson, 1996, p. 10)

Weedon (1987) also supplements that the patriarchal assumption puts the biological difference of women from men as a justification for women to be assigned with exclusive social tasks and to assume particular status and thus resist ideas towards changing it.

In addition, the main argument here is that the biological difference between women and men by itself can not account for the hierarchical relationship between women and men. But it is the social and cultural values and meanings attached to it that ascribe different social status for the sexes. (Lerner, 1986; Lott, 1987; Nicolson, 1996; Weedon, 1987)

2.5.1 The Gender Division of Labor and Women's Subordination

Feminist scholars argue that the gender-division of labor is the root of women's oppression. The rationale of this argument is twofold: on the one hand the division itself is based on the assumed traits of women such as emotionality, lack of the capacity to reasoning, and their 'natural' task of nurturing. On the other hand, the division brought about women's subordination. Thus the rule of men over women as a system prevails. (Donovan, 2000; McDowell & Pringle, 1996).

As Sheila Ruth (1995) put it, in the traditional marriage the division of labor between the husband and the wife took the form of bread winner and home maker respectively. In this situation the husband is skilled to be eligible to paid market while the wife specializes in unpaid labor. The implication of this arrangement is that the wife is economically dependant of her husband. It has also implications to the unequal power relationship between the husband and wife in which the husband assumes full authority over the wife.

McDowell and Pringle (1996) also note that women and men in the family are designated to different positions. This designation is accompanied with distinctive division of labor that can be explained through domestic and public sphere dichotomy. Traditionally women are designated to the home and communal affairs while the public sphere is reserved to men. The domestic sphere and the division of labor designated to women is associated with issues of personal or familial affairs and unpaid labor. The public sphere, to the contrary, is regarded as impersonal, a place that reflects a universal representation and source of waged labor. Thus the division of labor and designation of position removed women from the labor market and eventually made them dependent on men for their economic and social security.

In their article entitled “Invisible Women, Invisible Poverty” that appears in the book “Women and Poverty in Britain”, Jane Millar and Caroline Glendinning (1987) also maintain that the gender based division of labor accounts for women’s poverty. They argue that the gender division of labor that placed women in the domestic and communal affairs has prevented them from accessing the labor market. Therefore, they assert, being marginalized from the wage market, women assume subordinate position to men who are perceived as economic providers.

Though it manifests itself through different forms, the public private dichotomy that is embedded in the gender-division of labor has a universal face. In the African context, the notion that ‘a woman’s place is at home’ is taken for granted. Thus, restricted from public life, women are made to be confined to domestic and communal activities which are not considered significant. As noted by Nawal El Saadawi (1997):

The woman has been deprived of her capacity for mental, psychological and even physical creativity. Her capacity for child-bearing and her creative human motherhood have been transformed into bonds, burdens and agony, all of which exhaust and weaken her, rather than strengthen or develop her abilities. (Saadawi, 1997, p. 222).

In Ethiopia, the relegation of women into secondary-citizen status is rooted in the gender-division of labor. Gender based role associated with the private and public distinction seems to be a very rigid demarcation leaving no room for exchanging of roles. (Eshetu, 1977 E.C; Zenebeworke, 1976)

In his paper on the role of Ethiopian women in terms of economic, social and cultural life, Richard Pankrust (1990) states that the unpleasant and tiring everyday tasks that are performed in the kitchen and around the home are exclusively women’s duty. In association with the tasks such as food preparation, fetching water and firewood, washing clothes, taking care of children and the elderly in the family, the domestic sphere is considered

woman's domain. Involvement of men in such activities is perceived as unusual and even in some cultures considered a taboo.

Eshetu Debabu (1997 E.C) asserts that the demarcation of women's and men's job has a double standard implication. In his book on patriarchy in Ethiopia written in Amharic language entitled ብሔራዊ ጥያቄዎች (1997), he asserts that while women are involved in field activities, which are assumed as men's work, men are not expected to be involved in women's work or domestic sphere. Therefore, he argues, the division of labor is oppressive and discriminatory against women as it creates a situation whereby men can take advantage of women's time and energy. .

In her research "The Condition of Ethiopian Women", Zenebworke (1976) also argues that the gender-based division of labor is one of the areas that women's oppression is manifested. She notes that women spent much of their time in domestic labor that there is no room left for them to think critically about their subordinated position.

Zenebworke (1976) posit that the notion of keeping the world of women and men different is also accompanied by giving less value and status for women. According to her, women are treated as second-class citizens. This perception is discursive in social institutions that are very influential in prescribing social order of the society.

A study commissioned by the Women's Affairs Office of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (WAO-FDRE) and the World Bank (WB) (1998) maintains that the gender-based division of labor makes women incapable of accessing social benefits such as education and eventually they lack the necessary knowledge, skill and know-how that would otherwise would have enabled them to qualify for the paid labor force. According to the Welfare Monitoring Survey-WMS (2004) literacy rate of women is less by half compared to that of men, i.e., 26.6 women and 49.9 for men.

This has had a huge influence in terms of women's access to well paid jobs, thus for better living conditions.

Before the revision of the family law in 2000, women's oppression through the division of labor was institutionalized through the enforcement of the law. The following articles from the 1960 Civil Code can illustrate the case.

The husband is the head of the family, and the wife owes him obedience in all lawful things which he orders (Article, 635), the spouse co-operate under guidance of the husband in the management of the family... (Article, 637). The common residence is chosen by the husband, the husband owes protection to his wife, watches over her relations, and guides her in her conduct (Article, 641 & 644). Where the husband cannot afford servants, the wife is bound to take care of duties (Article, 646).

The central theme of feminist's argument is that the gender-division of labor that places women and men in different spheres accounts for the prevalence of unequal power relation between the sexes which resulted in women's oppression. They also argue that gender inequality and women's secondary status is not a mere individuals' 'bad' intention but it is created through and espoused by a system of patriarchy, which is a social and cultural construction (Donovan, 2000).

Weedon (1987) also maintains that the gender relationships between women and men, which are patriarchal, are structural. She states "... they exist in the institutions and social practices of our society and cannot be explained by the intentions, good or bad, of individual women or men." (Weedon, 1987, p. 3).

2.6 Patriarchy

2.6.1 Defining Patriarchy

Literally, patriarchy is the rule of the father. The social science definition of the word patriarchy is almost similar to the literal meaning. It refers to a society in which the decision making power on matters concerning the society is held by adult men. As viewed by feminists, patriarchy is a system of social relations that secures men supremacy over women. Patriarchy also refers to a culture whereby men, male value and masculine behavior is the norm. In a patriarchal culture women are always defined in a relation to men and male values. (Beechey, 1979; Eshetu, 1997- E.C; Lerner, 1986; McDowell and Pringle, 1996; Ruth, 1995; Walby, 1997). According to McDowell and Pringle;

...women are defined in familial terms as carers and nurturers. Women are thus defined not only in relation to men, but as dependent on men and subordinate to them. Men, on the other hand, are not defined in relation to women, or in purely familial terms, but in relation to a larger 'public' world in which they operate as workers, colleagues or citizens. (McDowell & Pringle, 1996, p. 3)

Bisis Adeleye-Fayemi (2004) puts this in an African context.

Within the context of African culture defined and interpreted by patriarchal values, a woman is a second-class citizen, her labor is unremunerated, and her body is available and disposable, her rights are subject to validation and violation, and her daughters will share her fate. She is socialized into sustaining the very structures that will oppress her throughout her life. There will be some rewards that come with compliance, and also punishment for rebellion. This in essence, is her identity. (Adeleye-Fayemi, 2004, p. 46).

According to Sheila Ruth (1995) patriarchy is functional under a culture that represents masculine ideals and practices. She expounds that in a patriarchal societies men are considered the only fully human creatures. Ruth maintains that societies set male values and masculinity as a norm and female values

and femininity as deviant. She notes femininity as compared to masculinity as follows.

Passivity versus aggressiveness, timidity versus courage, fragility and delicacy versus physical strength and health, expressiveness versus self-control and emotional reserve, frailty versus perseverance and endurance, emotionality versus competence and rationality, needfulness versus independence, dependence versus self-reliance and autonomy, humility versus individuality, chastity versus sexual potency (Ruth, 1995, p. 55-56)

Ruth also maintains that values attached to women have negative implications while those meant for men reflect positive meaning. She cites words like unmarried versus bachelor as an example. According to Ruth the word 'unmarried' that is used to describe the status of a woman reflects negativity or wrongness of the state. On the other hand the word 'bachelor', which refers to men, comes with no negative meaning.

Patriarchy creates and maintains unjust world. As John Stuart Mill put it the relationship between women and men is unjust that is governed by the "law of the strongest." (Online version, November 2006: 4).

2.6.2 The Origins of Patriarchy

Explanations on the origins of 'patriarchy' date back to the prehistoric age with the coming of first division of labor between women and men. Frederick Engels (1973) in his book "The origin of the Family, Private Property and the State" argued that the task of child bearing and rearing forces women to be confined at home while it puts men in charge of collecting food which is a task that allows men to wonder the outside world. He said the task of food gathering paved the way to wealth accumulation in the form of domestication of cattle. The explanation is that wealth accumulation creates on the men's side the desire of inheriting the wealth for one's own offspring. In order to make this reality, one basic social change had to take place and that was the transfer of matrilineal

descendency to patrimonial. Engels observed this change as “the world-historic defeat of the female sex.” (Engels, 1973, p. 233).

Another explanation on the origins of patriarchy is provided by Anna Aroba (1996). In her article “A Voice of Alarm: A Historian’s Point of View of the Family” that appears in a magazine entitled “Gender and Development”, Aroba asserts that male domination came to existence with the disclosure of the link between man and childbearing. She insists that the family is the place where patriarchy is rooted.

2.7 Women’s Contribution to the Perpetuation of Patriarchy

Gerda Lerner in her book “The Creation of Patriarchy” (1986) asserts that patriarchy is a system that develops through a process and both women and men are participating in the process of development. She expounds that women are always at the center of producing and reproducing culture but not with their own terms and definitions. Lerner explains that women are invisible when it comes to recording of their contribution and also are marginalized in the process of giving meaning and interpretation to cultural norms and values and thus keep on reproducing what has been defined and interpreted by others. She argues that women and their values are defined as inferior to men and male values while at the same time they are made to internalize it. Therefore, they are made to participate in their own subordination by transforming the patriarchal values that defines them as inferior group from generations to generations.

O’Connor and Drury in their book “The Female Face in Patriarchy” (1999) assert that women contribute to their own subordination. Based on the life experience of women in Brazil and the United States they explain that women’s contributions to the perpetuation of patriarchy mainly take three forms:

- Through acceptance of the patriarchal values that defines them as inferior,
- Through transforming the patriarchal values to their children and
- Through imposing the patriarchal values on their female colleagues.

O'Connor and Drury explain that the patriarchal influence on women is very powerful that they are made to internalize their inferiority thus considering themselves as unworthy. Therefore, they argue, women keep on transferring these values to their children without questioning and also try to exercise the patriarchal way of domination on other fellow women.

According to Aroba (1996) the reason for women's compliance with the rule of men domination is to survive and receive acceptance in the family and the society. However, she asserts, women's contribution in the reproduction of cultural norms and values is not been given recognition.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

This study subscribed the notion of radical feminists on patriarchy and used it as a lens to analyze how the existing social structure creates and maintains a patriarchal system in which women are made subordinated.

Radical feminists argue that patriarchy is the cause of women's oppression. For them, men's total control over the body and the mind including sexuality of women is the base for every domination. Thus, they argue, women should get "spiritual freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom from invasion of privacy and the insults of degrading stereotypes" (Donovan, 2000, p. 156)

According to Nicola Lacey (2004) radical feminists put sex difference as the center of their argument. They argue the subordination of women that is based on the biological sex difference between women and men is the base of all forms of oppression that extends to race and class.

For radical feminists marriage and sexuality are factors that facilitate and aggravate the oppression of women in which men control not only women's body but their mind too. They argue that the root cause for subjugation of women is male supremacy and it should be challenged. They also maintain that the biologically based subordination of women that is rooted in the family exist prior to all forms of oppressions and is fundamental. (Donovan, 2000; Weedon, 1987)

In relation to this, they focus their scrutiny on the family as the root for the creation and maintenance of patriarchy. Aroba (1996) asserts that the family is a place where one acquires knowledge and understanding about their gender identity in society. In a family where patriarchal values set the norm, girls grow learning of their subordinate status while boys learn that they are superior. The female sex, as a girl child, will be nurtured with the idea of her being a weak and dependent being. She grows on to learn that the purpose of her creation is to be a fulfillment for the male sex and the only way out for her is to be submissive. Contrary to this the nurturing of the male sex will make him develop an identity that he is an able, powerful, strong being with superior power over the female sex. Thus, patriarchy as a practice and ideology starts rooting itself in the family through socialization process of children.

Another perspective that this study subscribed is liberal feminists' explanation regarding the link between women's subordination and socialization process. According to liberal feminists socialization process that places women in the domestic/private sphere accounts for women's subordination. The argument is that women are made to be confined in a structure, which is not inspiring to develop their faculty of reason. They maintain that the nature of the domestic sphere limits the scope for women to develop critical thinking and self-realization therefore only allows them to concentrate on daily routine and repetitive accomplishments. In the final conclusion, they affirm "women remain enslaved because of a corrupt

process of socialization which stunts their intellect and teaches them that their proper purpose in life is to serve men.” (Donovan, 2000, p.24).

In her book “Feminist Practice & Poststructuralist Theory”, Weedon (1987, p. 16) recaps the claims of liberal feminists regarding sex based division of labor as follows:

They stress women’s rights as individuals to choice, and self-determination, irrespective of biological sex, and their key political objectives are to create the material conditions necessary to ensure woman’s self-determination, given her role as mother and primary childcarer. Yet while families may be seen as natural, the sexual division of labor is not. Liberal feminists argue that domestic labor and childcare offer little scope for self-development and self-realization. This is due to the nature of domestic labor, women’s economic dependency and their lack of choice in the sexual division of labor.

This study also share the notion developed by feminists who made their intellectual base on works of Marx and Engles and have developed different theories to explain the material base of women’s oppression. Sharon B. Stichter and Jane L. Parpart (1988) assert that early Marxist feminists’ explanations focus on the exclusion of women from the labor market, i.e., the separation of the private and public spheres, which are associated with paid and unpaid labor, respectively. According to these explanations the gender division of labor confines women to domestic sphere, which is considered non-productive therefore unpaid labor.

In relation to the above argument, Christine Delphy as cited by Stichter and Parpart (1988) emphasizes that the root of women’s oppression lies in the unpaid labor of domestic work which is controlled by men. Delphy argues that the material base of women’s oppression needs to be realized with reference to marriage as an institution. They quote her as saying “Marriage is a labor contract constituting a domestic mode of production and a patriarchal mode of exploitation.” (Stichter & Parpart, 1988, p. 3).

In addition, Marxist/ Socialist feminists claim that domestic labor should be considered as economic value. They demand on wage for the housework. The argument is that the domestic labor is the material base of women's subordination as it forces them to be economically dependent. Therefore, wage for the domestic labor shall liberate women.

The other framework of this study is the idea of class consciousness. Donovan (2000) compliments feminists' argument that women need to be conscious of their situation as an oppressed group. Derived from Marxist theory of the concept of praxis, consciousness-raising and ideology have been developed as method of operation in feminist movements. They argue, "...a class or group will more or less spontaneously through critical analysis come to consciousness that is come to a political awareness of their condition. Such awareness is necessarily revolutionary, because the group will see who and what is causing its distress."(Donovan, 2000, p. 98)

In addition, Naomi Wolf (1993) in her book "Fire with Fire" asserts that women need to raise new consciousness as a powerful group. According to her, focusing on women's history only as victims will not liberate women from their subordinated position. Rather, she argues, women need to embark on new strategy embracing the idea of 'Power Feminism'. As Wolf put it 'Power Feminism' conceives that the achievement of gender equality is in women's own hand. (Wolf, 1993, p. xviii).

2.9 Conceptual Considerations

In light of the above mentioned perceptions, reflections and explanations, and in association with the objective of the study and research questions, this study attempts at the following conceptual considerations.

- Socialization determines gender roles.
- Women's oppression is rooted in the family through gender based division of labor.

- Women are not only victims of patriarchy but are also perpetrators.
- Culture defined by patriarchal values forces women to contribute to the maintenance of patriarchy.
- Patriarchy as socially constructed phenomenon is subject to change.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

According to Ranjit Kuma (1996), the inquiry framework of a research is determined by the objective of the research and the research questions. The focus of this study is to understand how women vendors around 'Abinet' area and 'Geja Sefer' in Addis Ababa help patriarchy to perpetuate and examine the underlying factors that account for it. It also aims at exploring how women perceive their world in terms of gender relation, with specific reference to their power relation to men.

This study, therefore, employs mainly qualitative methodology. Matt Stroh (2000) emphasizes that qualitative research is advantageous as "it can offer an understanding of people's 'life-worlds', trying to understand situations from the perspective of those being researched" (Stroh, 2000, p.202). Uwe Flick (2002) also maintains that unlike quantitative research, qualitative study involves research participants in the knowledge production. In this study quantitative methods are also used to collect data and analyze the findings.

This study employs research participants' own point of view to understand the phenomenon under investigation by focusing on the experience of women. The purpose is to analyze women's role in contributing to the perpetuation of patriarchy so as to present the reality as they constructed it. It is also to give detailed analysis of the phenomenon based on various points of view of the research participants with no attempt in quantifying it. Thus, the findings of the research are only referring to the situation of those people who participated in the study. In other words, the study does not attempt to make generalizations on the situation of women in Ethiopia. (Blanche & et. al, 2006; Kuma, 1996).

The other tenet of this study is the notion that reality is relative. The social world constitutes a complex and multitude of factors. Thus, reality in the social world is relative and as multitude as it is constructed by individual members and groups of society. (Grix, 2004; Guba, 1990)

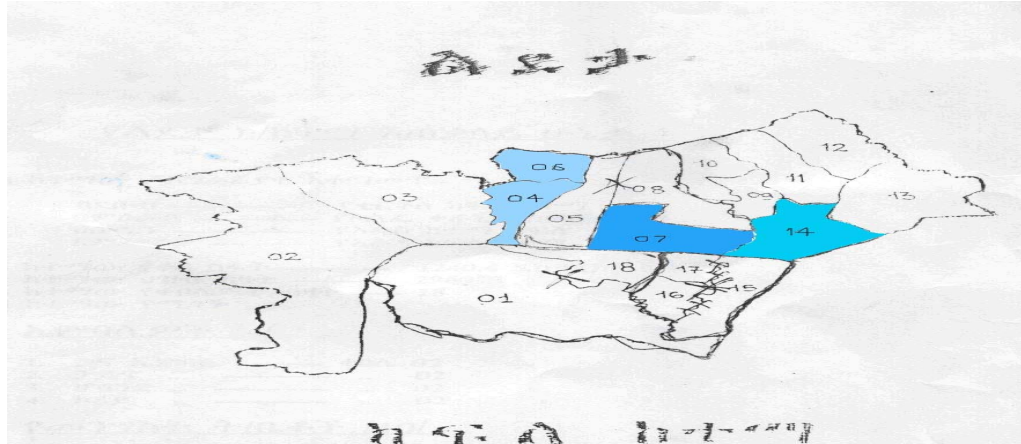
In relation to this, feminists challenge the possibility of producing a universal and all representing knowledge while the social world is different in space, time, history and culture. They argue that as reality is relative and the base for knowledge claim is experience unlike that of positivism that claims a universal reality. For them, an attempt to replicate the findings based on the experience of one social group to the other would be unrepresentative knowledge. (DeVault, 1996; Harding, 2004; Smith, 1987).

This study also subscribed feminists' claim that is visibility of women in scientific research as subjects as well as producers of knowledge. As noted by De Vault (1996) in a search for knowledge in terms of feminist research the "notion of women's experience" is found to be central (DeVault, 1996, p. 40). In support of this argument, sociologist Dorothy Smith (1987) asserts that the experience of women which is associated with the 'private' life where all the construction of social relations began is a superior entry point to feminist research.

This research also tends to subscribe to the notion of feminist standpoint. As Sandra Harding (2004) states, feminist standpoint is useful as it places women's experience at the center of knowledge production, 'study up' the root cause of the social problem under investigation through the lens of the research participants' view and as the ultimate goal of the research is to bring about social change.

3.2 Research Setting

Fig 1. Map of Lideta Sub-City



* Source: Lideta Sub-City office of Information and Public Relations.

The study areas are located in the *Lideta* Sub-City, which is one of the ten sub-cities in the capital, Addis Ababa. According to *Lideta* sub-city office of Information and Public Relations, the sub-city is divided into 18 *kebeles* with a total area of 12,404 square km. It has a population size of 296,073 people. The sub-city is adjacent to four others namely, *Kirkos*, *Kolfe-Keranio*, *Addis Ketema* and *Arada* sub-cities.

This study focuses on two *kebeles* of the *Lideta* sub-city: *Kebele 04/06* and *Kebele 07/14*. Locally named as ‘*Abinet*’ area and ‘*Geja sefer*’, these *kebeles* are home to 36, 634 and 41,249 people respectively.

3.3 Rationale for selecting research area and participants

This study targeted women as research participants with the purpose of asserting women’s visibility in scientific research. Thirty six women have participated in this study as first hand informants through In-depth Interview and Focus Group Discussion. The participants come from the same socio-economic background. They are women vendors engaged in petty trading.

The rationale behind choosing this particular group of women as research participants is to address the issue of the majority of women population in the city who are poor women. A poverty study conducted in Addis Ababa by the United Nations Center for Human Settlements (UN-HABITAT) in the year 2000 reveals that poverty is rampant and pervasive in the city. The study also discloses that 60% of the city's residents were living below the poverty line. The same document also states that women constitute the majority of the city's poor.

It is quite true that women in Addis Ababa especially those who are less educated have less access to formal sector employment. ... Those employed women largely work in the informal sector in petty commodity production, domestic services, prostitution and fuel wood collecting. ...The educational status of women in Addis Ababa revealed that women are more illiterate than men. (UN-HABITAT, 2000, p.36).

In addition to this, a need assessment conducted by a local NGO named *Projyinst*, in areas where this study is conducted, '*Abnet*' area and '*Geja Sefer*', indicates that the living conditions of the residents is characterized by severe destitution. The assessment used income at household level and social service indicators such as access to education, infant mortality rate, housing conditions and access to clean water and toilets to show the living condition of the residents. Based on the indicators, the need assessment came up with the conclusion that the residents were living in abject poverty. In addition, the assessment reveals that the burden of poverty is on women as they take the responsibility of fulfilling the basic needs of their families. It asserts that most of the women in these areas are petty traders who are the income source to the family. (*Projyinst*, 2001).

'*Abnet*' area and '*Geja Sefer*' were selected for this study in an effort to access women vendors with diverse background in terms of culture, age and education. According to the office of Information and Public Relations of *Ledeta* sub-city, the majority of the population in the sub-city is immigrants

from different parts of the rural area of the country who come over in search of livelihood and are engaged in small scale and petty trading.

3.4 Sampling

The technique used in this study to select participants is non-probability sampling technique, i.e., purposive sampling. According to Denscombe (2003), most of the time, qualitative research tends to use non-probability sampling techniques. The rationale behind this, he asserts is that "...the research process is one of '*discovery*' rather than the testing of hypotheses." (Denscombe, 2003, p.25).

While employing purposive sampling the researcher made sure that the participants have diversity within the range of the established parameters as suggested by Stroh (2000). The established parameters were women and vendors. The diversity within these parameters refers to factors such as the type of family, marital status, age, religion and educational background.

Denscombe (2003) notes that purposive sampling can be employed based on the researcher's previous knowledge about the people or the situation. He asserts that in such situation the selection is made based on the participants' qualities in terms of their knowledge/closeness to the topic under investigation.

In the search of research participants with qualities to produce knowledge that is relevant to the topic and objective of this research, the researcher's previous work experience with an NGO named *Projynist* plays important role. That experience with *Projynist* was insightful in terms of understanding the daily life experience of women vendors. Some years back, the researcher has had a conversation with some of the residents of '*Abinet*' area and '*Geja Sefer*'. *Projynist* was working on developmental projects in these two localities. Therefore, the insightful experience

concerning the lives of women vendors in these areas allowed the researcher to focus on women vendors in these areas as it is relevant and close to the topic as well as the objective of the study.

3.5 Entry and Ethical Considerations

The researcher uses the NGO as an entry point to have access to the women vendors in their places of work. Most of them were conducting petty trade either in their homes, or in locations not far from their home. This situation enables the researcher to have access with research participants in their natural settings.

Kent (2000) and Mike McNamee (2002) assert that when selection is conducted research participants should be asked their agreement to take part in the research. In line with this, the researcher made sure that research participants confirmed their consent to participate in this research as first hand informants. Each participant has been briefed about the purpose of the study, the purpose of their involvement in the study, their role as informants or research participants, how the researcher is going to use the information obtained from them, and that they have the right to withdraw from the process any time they want to do so. Written consent was prepared by the researcher for the participants to sign. The consent was, however, granted orally as the participants preferred it to be that way. Confidentiality was also another ethical consideration that was employed in this research. Participants were told that their names/identity will be kept anonymous if they do not want to be made public. Therefore, all the names of research participants in the findings are pseudonyms.

3.6 Methods of Data Collection

Regarding data collection methods, in-depth interview and Focus Group Discussion were used in the study with the purpose of reaping in-depth

information from research participants. In his article 'Theory and Method in Qualitative Research' Simon Holdaway (2000) noted that methods are more than mere tools to gather data. He asserts that the choice of methods in a study must be in harmony with the purpose of the study.

The researcher used unstructured In-depth Interview and Focus Group Discussion data collection techniques as this study attempts to answer why, what and how questions. According to Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) these questions would enable the researcher to obtain the opinion and understanding of research participants about the phenomenon under investigation.

The data collection process was conducted within a two months of field work that lasted from October to November 2006.

3.6.1 The In-depth Interview

This research employs in- depth interview as one of the two data collection techniques. Six women vendors have participated in the in-depth interview with the purpose of getting their perception regarding the phenomenon under study. The participants were selected purposefully with a view to obtain their perception towards their status in society, their contribution in maintaining gender roles and their experience in nurturing their children.

Frequent visits to their work or places of residence have been made in order to fix the convenient time for them to conduct the interview. The number of visits made for each of the participants ranges from one to five. Two participants made themselves available to start conducting the interview the very day the researcher contacted them for introduction purpose. With the rest of the four participants the researcher had to make from three to five visits until it became convenient to them.

3.6.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

The second method used for data collection was Focus Group Discussion (FGD). According to Caroline Oates (2000), FGD is useful in giving an opportunity for the researcher to analyze the participant's interaction among themselves. She asserts, "such interaction occurs as participants question each other, or challenge views which might differ from their own. ... As participants think and reason loud, their changing attitudes within the context of the group can be documented." (Oates, 2000, p. 187).

With regard to the number of discussant in each focus group, Oates (2000) suggests that the manageable size to conduct an FGD is six to ten. In this case, the number of participants in each group ranges from six to nine. Out of the five groups, three were constituted six discussants each. One group happens to have nine members. The remaining one had five participants. The reason for one group to have nine discussants was because three participants were misinformed about the exact day of their own group discussion. They showed up on the day the third focus group held its discussion and they insisted on joining the discussion as they would not devote another day for this purpose. Thus, the researcher made a decision to have additional number of discussants than losing the experience of three women. In the last group, one participant who volunteered during the selection process failed to show up on the day the discussion was conducted.

All the group discussions were conducted with one time contact with each group. This one time contact does not include the introduction and informed consent confirmation time. The researcher would liked to conduct the discussion at least in two times contact with each group but the participants were not willing to spare additional time.

Regarding limiting the number of the focus groups, the researcher followed the suggestion given by Oates (2000) that to continue with forming groups

until new information is ceased to be obtained. She advises that the discussion should continue until the researcher feels that no new information is coming or when everything gets repetitive.

3.7 The Role of the Researcher

In her article contribution to “Feminism and Methodology”, Dorothy Smith (1987) rejects the separation of the researcher from the researched. She argues that it is difficult for the researcher to be detached from his/her knowledge of the society and claim to be neutral. Smith asserts, “The only way of knowing a socially constructed world is knowing it from within. We can never stand outside it.”(Smith, 1987, p. 92).

In this study the researcher’s interaction with the research participants was not limited to mere asking of questions and collecting the answer. It was rather a discussion. Besides, while conducting the interview in a natural setting, the researcher was involved in social gatherings such as coffee ceremonies. As a research “instrument” the researcher participated in their discussions, reflected her own ideas during the data collection process. And while writing up the analysis the researcher interpreted and described what she has heard, seen and felt.

3.8 Data Management and Analysis

The data collected through in-depth interview and Focus Group Discussion has been transcribed the same day the interview was conducted. The transcription was made without any selection but while typing focus was made on relevant issues to the topic of the research and in accordance with the research question. As noted by Fetterman (1998) it is important to prepare units of analysis by way of selecting and coding the essential information in relation to the topic and the objective of the research. In addition, summary of filed notes or research diary was prepared. The field

note is valuable as it depicts relevant observations that can not be obtained through recording. (Stroh, 2000). Such things include non-verbal communications/ facial expressions during the interview, the researcher's observation of participant's interactions with their family members, neighbors and customers.

The analysis uses the steps in interpretative analysis. As noted by Blanche, et. al (2006), in qualitative research managing the collected data in a careful manner is the first step in the process of analysis. In line with this, while the data collection was in progress, the researcher was revising the data and reading it carefully with the purpose of establishing links among different themes. The experience of staying close to the data was helpful to get full understanding of the participants' view so as to interpret it in terms of their feelings and perceptions. The purpose was, as Blanche, et al (2006) put it, "to place real-life events and phenomena into some kind of perspective" (p. 321). Then the data was categorized under four general thematic areas and analyzed in accordance with the research question of this study.

4. Findings

The research findings are presented by putting together the life experience of research participants with relevant theories. It is presented under four major thematic areas which are related with the research questions.

In this chapter, the views and voices of women vendors as they speak about their expected roles and status in the society are analyzed through the lens of feminist theories on patriarchy with particular reference to the maintenance of gender roles.

4.1 Profile of Research Participants

As it was explained in the methodology part, thirty six women vendors participated in this research as first hand informants. Of the total participants, six participated in the in-depth interview while the remaining thirty were involved in the focus group discussion that was held in five groups.

The average age of participants is 42 with the youngest being 19 and the oldest 55 years old. 55 percent of the participants, constituting the majority, are married while 29 percent are widows. Those who are single make 11 percent and the divorced constitute 5 percent. The average family size is 5 with average children no of 3.

The majority of the participants, 33 of them came from different administrative regions in the country and they lived for a minimum of 10 years in Addis Ababa. They range from the illiterate to those who have attended high school. Those who attended basic literacy constitute the majority (39 percent) while those who joined elementary school make 24 percent. Eight of them, (21 percent) are illiterates. Only 7 of them (18 percent) have attended high school.

In terms of religion, the Christians are 63 percent while the Muslims represent 37 percent of the total number of participants. All the participants are responsible for generating income for the family as well as for undertaking household chores like cooking, cleaning and taking care of their children.

4.1.1 Individual participants

The research participants involved in the in-depth interview are all women engaged in petty trade activities. The age range of the participants' in this category ranges between 28-55. Their educational background varies between basic literacy classes to ninth grade. Two of the participants are Muslims while the rest are Christians; two of them are married while the rest four are widows.

4.1.2 Focus Group Discussants

The Focus Group Participants fall in the same category with that of the in-depth interviewees regarding gender and job. They are all women and engaged in petty trading activities. Thirty women vendors participated in the focus group discussion. The age distribution ranges from nineteen to fifty five. The minimum educational qualification is basic literacy while the maximum is grade twelve. The majority of them, 20, are Christians while the Muslims are 12 in number. The marital status shows diversity. 19 married women constitute the majority; 7 of them are widows, 4 are single and two divorced.

4.2 Socialization Determines Gender-Roles

The way female and male children are socialized determines their gender roles and behaviors in society. Research participants' explanation as to what

causes gender-role differences between women and men tends to center on socio-cultural norms and values of the society.

The finding in this section is in conformity with what Bernice Lott (1987) maintains about the difference between sex and gender. As noted by Lott being female and male is a biological designation while being women and men is a social and cultural construction. According to her, the difference in expected behaviors of women and men are the result of learning.

The research participants also confirm that it is through learning that one acquires the expected behaviors. Following are Focus Group Discussion participants' view on what causes the difference in expected behaviors and roles of women and men.

The concept came from tradition. We saw our parents doing that. That was the way we grew up. They (men) trained that way (to be superior) and then adapted to it and we started to feel inferior. It was like a law that governs. They were told that they are superior and then we accepted it. Look, we all grew working for our parents. Has this helped us to earn enough at this stage of our lives? Never! We are failing to earn our bread. We are dependant on men. But still we train our daughters in the same way we have been socialized. (5th Focus Group Discussion)

Our tradition today is not the same as it used to be in earlier times. For example, in early days a man didn't even touch raw *Qocho* [traditional food of people in the south of the country] because he would be insulted for being feminine. The men used to step over the plate on which we bake *Qocho* with instead of touching it in order to place it out of their way. They also would rather see the *Qocho* being burnt or over cooked than giving a helping hand to the women but now they are too civilized to do that anymore. It is no more a taboo. But still men go to the field to cultivate while women do the household work. If a woman doesn't have a husband, she also shoulders the field work herself. (3rd Focus Group Discussion)

These cases illustrate the expected roles and behavior placed upon women and men are the results of socialization. Of the total thirty six participants, thirty four are of the opinion that gender roles are acquired through learning.

They assert that socialization is what determines the expected behavior for women and men. By the expected behaviors what they do understand is that in relation to their biological sex, women and men have different status and place in the family as well as in the society.

Research participants' explanation on the difference between women and men in terms of status and place parallels with that of Lott (1987) and Lindsey (2005). Lott noted that difference in behavior between boys and girls starts to be exhibited as their interaction with their parents as well as other people increases. Otherwise, she expounds, differences in behavior between girls and boys during their infancy is insignificant.

Lindsey (2005) also maintains that boys and girls are made to learn their gender identity through the process of socialization. She also argues that they are made to define themselves in different ways to each other in which boys develop the understanding that they are privileged than girls and eventually become superior over girls. She observes that socialization in early childhood gives boys the freedom to explore the world outside the home that would eventually help them develop an independent self-conscious, whereas girls are made to be confined at home and develop dependent self-conscious.

Likewise, participants whose explanation inclines towards socialization assert that it is the orientation of society in terms of what to do and how to behave that accounts for the difference in roles between women and men.

Two participants subscribe to the notion of biology. They responded that it is a God given role for them to behave and perform in the manner they do. They say, “*34\ v k* *ÉL*” “*<*” which has the equivalent meaning of “Anatomy is destiny” (Freud, quoted in Frieze, 1978: p.71). A participant said:

God created us as male and female but we were born after the same duration in our mothers' womb. So I think our difference

and the male superiority is the work of God. For example when we give birth to a boy everybody feels happy. That boy may end up being undisciplined or a robber. Whatever his future may be every body is happy when a boy is born. If we give birth to a girl, most of the time, the feeling may not be the same. I can not tell the reason behind this difference. But that is the fact. **(Second day Conversation with Ajeyet: an individual participant)**

Those who explain the difference in gender roles between women and men coming as a result of socialization also maintain that the orientation of gender roles starts from childhood in the family. They also assert that the learning of expected behaviors is associated with the rating of status and values. Therefore, as a girl child, they grow up learning that their place is at home, that boys are superior to them, that unlike the boys who are a source of pride to the family they are the causes of trouble, and their contribution is not considered to be that much significant as that of their brothers.

From the participants' experience as well as the theory of socialization explained in this section, it can be concluded that the way female and male children are being socialized is central to the unequal power relation between women and men. This inequality between the two sexes transforms from generation to generation through the socialization process. One explanation in this regard can be the difference in experience between women and men in terms of access to economic resources, social services, and exercising power. The second point undermining women and their role. This conception together with male preference attitude of parents has implication on female children that they develop the feeling of inferiority and unworthiness. A participant memory of childhood can be a case in point.

Rina's case:

“For most of us, the family was where we acquired our grief and sad memories...”

Anna Arroba

My mother used to love (adore) my brother very much, she favors him extremely. And she used to beat me for no reason. At a time when my brother cried after he himself beating me, she hit me. This was one of the things that made me wish that I were not female. There were times I said to myself that had I not been a female and the eldest child, I would not have faced all these. I grew up working very hard in the house for my mother and for the neighbors. Everything was on me, taking care of my younger siblings, while my brother was free to go out and play as he likes! I used to wish I were male.

Sometimes I feel hopeless. Even now, in my situation as a grown up married woman, I wish I were not a woman. There are things that made me feel that way. I feel that the way I was treated when I was child has something to do with the experiences I pass through when I was a young girl. Thinking of the unfortunate things that happened to me, I fell inferior because I am woman. That means I envy men, and look at them as superior. I always regret that I am a woman. So, now, I do not wish to have a baby girl. Looking back in to how I was raised, I didn't want my daughter to face the trouble I faced for being born female. Let alone my childhood, even after I went to an Arab country thinking that I would have a better life, I was raped by my employer and gave birth to my eldest son.

You see, I was a kid when my parents separated. And I had to pass through so many difficulties, and no happiness. How could I feel happy in such a situation? Soon after my mother left the house, my father brought in another woman and continued drinking. The woman was not concerned about us. Nobody cared whether we have our meals or not. My sisters, brother and I have starved. We went to the streets begging. It was the most difficult and unpleasant time of my childhood. I can not remember the time I was laughing wholeheartedly. This is how I feel when I think of my childhood.

Though married and with two children, bad memories of her childhood still hunt Rina. Currently she is pregnant for the third time and it is her wishes for not having a daughter. She is expecting a boy than a girl. She said "I am afraid of having a daughter".

The findings in this section are in conformity with what Anna Aroba (1996) explored on the family being the root for the maintenance of patriarchy. The experiences of the research participants also confirm that family plays a significant role in shaping children behavior in line with the social norm. The

participants' views such as in the case of Rina, show how female, as a girl child, gets the idea of her being weak and dependant from the way she was treated in the family. As the result, she develops a perception not only of her being inferior but also the idea that male are superior and the accepted behavior for her is to be submissive to those who are superior to her. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that male domination as an ideology started its root in the family through child socialization process.

The assumption behind forming a family is to build intimacy, affection and to succeed in getting emotional support through mutual understanding and love among the members. However, since the relationship between the family members is based on hierarchy, the achievement of building intimacy and mutual affection is far from reality and practical evidences provide that it is a place where most of these expectations are denied.

The base for this denial of expectation lies on the inequality of power and differences of privileges within the unit. The family is the place where male supremacy over female roots its base. As explained by Engles (1973) it is a place where one party (the woman/the wife) pays the utmost price for the sake of its maintenance while the other (the man/the husband) enjoys the privileges.

4.3 Victims or Perpetuators?

In this section, research participants' view in terms of their role in the maintenance of gender roles the way they understood it is elaborated. The role of family and more specifically the role of mothers as social agents will also be discussed.

The contribution of research participants' to the maintenance of the system that keeps them subordinated is analyzed with specific reference to two roles: the role they play in nurturing their children and the role they play as safeguardians of cultural norms and values in their interaction with other fellow women.

4.3.1 Nurturing Role

The findings in this section confirm the conclusions forwarded by Aroba (1996), Adeleye-Fayemi (2004), Weedon (1997), O'Connor and Drury (1999), and Lerner (1986). From historical and sociological perspectives these authors maintain that women play a significant role in fostering their own subordination. They argue that women, while nurturing their children, perpetuate the very social norm that ascribed them with low status and inferior position and they keep transforming gender roles and expected behaviors of female and male children from generation to generation.

The conversations with the research participants allude to the above argument. The participants confirmed that they are playing an important role in teaching their children the values and norms of the society more specifically in relation to gender division of labor. They also said that as mothers they have to teach their children about societal expectations in order to make their children fit as members of society. The participants reflect on this issue as follows:

When my daughters returned from school, I needed them to help me with the house work, but I was not giving much attention to the where about of my sons. I used to believe that, kitchen work should only be done by women and men should not be involved in the house work so it would be unfair and inappropriate to tell my sons to do housework. **(First day conversation with Gofta, 50, an in-depth interview participant)**

The girls do help me with the household work. The boys don't cooperate unless I insist time and again. They do not and they can't. In fact I myself do not want see them engaged in household works. I do have sympathy for them. Besides, the culture does not allow for men to enter in to the kitchen and men and women are not equal. A woman is capable of doing household work. For instance, the older girl does what I ask her to do. She goes shopping and helps with household chores. She and her younger sister do the work. The boys don't lend a hand. **(1st day conversation with Mushri, 45, an in-depth interview participant)**

These views tally with the explanation given by O'Connor and Drury (1999) regarding women's conditioning through a patriarchal system. The

participants' view illustrates that women internalized the societal norms that are defined by patriarchal values and unable to think otherwise. Thus, they keep on transferring these values down the generations.

The Focus Group Discussants' perception on the existing traditional gender division of labor and their role in transferring it to their children proved to be contradictory. Most of them accepted the gender division of labor as appropriate role distinction between women and men and justify their role in transferring it as a positive contribution towards keeping societal norms and values. They say the reason for socializing their boys and daughters differently is because they do not want to see their children being deviants. They maintain that their children need to develop identity that is in conformity with societal expectations. These participants also hold an opinion that challenging the already existed gender roles means disrupting the 'peaceful' and long dated 'co-existence' between women and men. Some of them even try to dominate the group by way of speaking loudly and relating the issue with religion. They said that gender role is a God given status and therefore, challenging it is tantamount to rebel against God.

Participants said:

We can not see the need for us to force our sons into household works while we have daughters meant for this purpose. We don't even dare to order our sons to do that. We rather tell them to study. The girls can find the time to study after doing the house work if they are really interested in it. It is a must for our daughters to help us in household chores. We honour men better. We respect them. And it is man's gift from Allah, to be superior. This was the custom prior to the coming of education. Earlier the man was the head, superior. A man is destined to be respected and honored. All humans are not equal. We were never equal. That is God's part. Once a man is born, he is given superiority from Allah. Therefore, we respect our sons so that we don't order them when there are girls in the house. And also we like the boys better. **(4th Focus Group Discussion)**

We don't ask our sons to prepare food for us like we ask our daughters. We let the boys do other things rather. We prefer ordering the girls than boys. We tell the boys not to mix with

naughty boys who do rubbish things like insulting and abusing people around, not to mingle in the neighborhood. Otherwise we don't ask the boys to clean the house and things like that. After all, man is to be respected. (1st Focus Group Discussion)

These views confirm with liberal feminists' argument on the impact of being confined in the domestic sphere on women. It is to say the domestic sphere consumes much of women's energy and time that their access to education is limited and thus become less critical regarding their situation. In line with this argument, all the research participants are responsible for household chores on top of their responsibility as bread winners of the family. Only one participant said that the husband also shares the responsibility in terms of household task. This keeps them from engaging themselves in activities such as education which would help them develop their critical thinking. Therefore, in the absence of critical thinking, women keep on reproducing societal norms that maintain unequal power relationship between women and men.

On the other hand, few participants of the Focus Group Discussions reflect different perception. They argue the existing traditional gender roles are discriminatory against women and causes subordination. They say the gender division of labor only makes them burdened with so many responsibilities that claim their time and energy. For them, it is like living for others at the cost of ones health, social and economic status. Thus, the idea of challenging the gender based division of labor is only facilitating better life for women through sharing the burden on them. These participants said there is nothing wrong with men working in the kitchen. Therefore, they allow their sons to go to the kitchen and do household chores as their daughter do. They confirmed that their sons help them at home by cleaning dishes, the house and does other chores while they are at work at the market.

According to these participants promoting the traditional gender roles means fostering ones' own subordination. They said because of cultural influences,

in most cases, husbands are not willing to help their wives. Thus, the wife would be over burdened with every responsibility of the house hold. She becomes confined into the domestic sphere which results in illiteracy and economic dependency, factors that facilitates women's subordination.

For these participants women can play a significant role in changing the existing gender role which is one of the root causes of women's subordination. One participant confirms that her mother let her brothers do household chores though she was a subject of criticism among the neighborhood of being against the culture. She added that since her mother has a full time job that makes her stay outside the home the whole day, her brothers were responsible for cooking for themselves as well as the family. According to this participant if it was not for her mother going against the culture and allow her brothers to be involved in household chores, it would have been difficult for her mother to manage the burden of both the wage labor and the domestic work.

The perception of participants in terms of gender division of labor is consistent with the observation of Eshetu Debabu (1997, E.C), Pankhurst (1990) and Zenebeworke Tadesse (1976). The authors have confirmed that in Ethiopia the domestic and public sphere is demarcated in a way that the domestic is the domain of women while the public is men's realm. They also maintain that the socialization into the gender division of labor maintains this demarcation.

Parallel to this confirmation, most of the participants assert that they do believe that women and men have distinct places in relation to division of labor. According to the participants, the domestic sphere is the domain of women while the public sphere is that of men. Thus, they also follow this pattern while nurturing their children. There are participants who believe household chores are meant to be shouldered only by women even in

situations where the men are willing to be involved in doing housework. A participant confirmed:

My neighbor has a maid who comes a few days a week and his wife works in various places. One day when there was no *Injera* at home, he started to make dough to bake. When he heard something, he went outside with dough on his hand. I asked him what he was doing. I was shocked when he told me he was about to make *Injera*. So I told him I will wash my hand and make the dough. **(1st day conversation with Jema, 45, an In-depth interview participant)**

The response of the research participants is as diverse according to their experiences and their own perception regarding what is considered as women's and men's job. Though small in number, there are participants who perceived the involvement of men in household chores very helpful and encouraging while most considered it as a practice that diminishes males' status in a society.

It is a matter of knowledge and civilization. There are men who do the household activities when their wives get sick. It is nice to see such people. But most of our men are not like that. There are few men who are willing to do what is assumed as women's work but the influence from the society discourages them to take part fully in it. There are men who do household activities. Their wives are lucky. Though they are willing to participate they prefer to do it secretly, without being observed by others. But it is pleasing to see a man helping his wife when she is sick, instead of just eating what she prepares. We didn't consider this as a taboo. But our culture is that man's 'superior' status does not allow him to engage in such 'feminine' work in the kitchen. **(5th Focus Group Discussion)**

Contrary to the above views, most participants reveal that they do not want to see men enter the kitchen and do 'women's' work. While they believe that shouldering the kitchen work alone by themselves is difficult and unrewarding, still they could not accept their idea of men working in the kitchen.

It is his luck not to be found in kitchen. It is their luck from God that men are not to be in the kitchen. And to tell the truth we would not be happy to see our husbands mingling in the kitchen. No, that will not make us happy. We wouldn't also allow them to enter and

mingle in our kitchen. We don't like that because it is cheap. (4th Focus Group discussion)

Some of the participants said that personally they do not perceive it as wrong if men enter the kitchen and do tasks traditionally considered women's territory. But they do not wish their boys to be involved in such experience because of the criticism from society. They confirmed that they do not want their boys to be called feminine and ridiculed by their friends. The custom is that if a boy prefers to stay at home and doesn't show aggressive behavior such as fighting with other boys and so on the other boys/his friends call him feminine. Therefore, they prefer to follow the custom and force their boys to stay outside home rather than allowing them to be involved in household chores like their daughters do. They said they do not want to see their boys to be ostracized. A participant reported:

If I make my son do the onion when I cook or help me with baking *Injera*, then it doesn't mean he has become a girl. So later on when he gets married, he wouldn't feel uncomfortable to help his wife as he is used to doing that with me. But his environment would condemn him and call him girlish. They call my son with a girl's name, Tsigerda, because he stays home and his friends are girls. It is difficult for me to influence the environment. I can't do that. I can't talk to and change other person's attitude. Even the boys would say "she transformed her son into a girl and now she is trying to influence my mother to change me into a girl". (Wube, 55, individual participant)

These cases confirmed the idea posed by Aroba (1996) that women transfer their lower status to their daughter and foster the masculine behavior into their boys in order to get acceptance in society.

From the findings, the researcher observed that age and education are factors for the difference in perception regarding gender based division of labor and the way participants nurture their children. Participants whose age is above forty five and with no formal educational background tend to stick with the traditional gender division of labor. They reflect that it is women's duty to perform household chores. They believe the whole idea of men in the kitchen is a practice that is against tradition. Therefore they would not

allow their boys to develop identity that does not go in conformity with the tradition of the society. Respondents whose age category is between nineteen and forty five and who are also literate in relative terms tend to embrace the idea of men sharing the responsibility of performing household chores.

The findings in this section also reveal the way research participants were and are being socialized has an impact on their role in nurturing their children. Some of them observed that this was the way they were brought up and they can not help transferring it to their children.

A person learns things from their family. For instance, in our childhood, we were not allowed to see our parents discussing things. Our mothers see their husbands as a king. We do the same. We have never seen our fathers be involved in any housework. We were told by our mothers that we are responsible for kitchen works. They did not allow us to play outside home as free as our brothers. Most of the time fathers are distant of their children. Discussing things with them is unusual thing. But there is no such distance and fear when it comes to our mothers as they were always in the home and available at any time of need. Thus, now we are treating our children same way we grew up and do not treat our sons and our daughters equally. When our sons go out to play football daughters wash dishes. Why? Patriarchy is what we learned from our parents. **(2nd Focus Group discussion)**

The findings in this section also reveal the participants are aware that this distinction in roles and behaviors has implications on the difference in status of their daughters and sons as they grow up.

We know that house work like cooking, cleaning, looking after the kids and the elderly is an unrewarding job. It is tiresome and time consuming. We know that we lived in a situation where we live for others and not for ourselves. That means our life is full of ups and downs striving to make sure that the family has the basics. We took it as our responsibility to full-fill the needs. Thus, we are burdened with many worries about the well being of the children and never have time for ourselves and take care of our health. Every single day ends with exhaustion. Well, that was the way we were brought up. Sons do only what men are supposed to do. And yet we teach our children the way we brought up. For instance we

gave the responsibility of caring the children and the house hold chores to our daughters because they are females. We never trained and do not expect our boys to do so. That is because we grew observing such traditions. **(4th Focus Group discussion)**

The other area that women foster their subordination is through disciplining their daughters and boys differently. Most of the research participants (30) believe that girls need to be kept at home and get proper supervision as they know little about themselves and about the outside world. But there are participants who stand against this idea. The contradictory position exhibited among the participants of the first Focus Group Discussion confirms this. The idea of disciplining of children was discussed in depth in this group. The discussion was like an argument between two sub groups three of the participants were in the lead while the rest participated by supplementing each of the groups. The discussion illustrates the double burden of women as victims as well as perpetrators. The views reflected by the participants in this discussion are presented through categorizing the group into sub-group A and sub-group B.

Most of our children are girls. So we tell them not to go out and stay late at night, but rather focus on their education so that they could have a good job in the future. Men and women are not equal. The women are subject to violence, the men harass them. The men will not bear the consequence whatsoever. That is why we consider the female inferior.

We have reasons for controlling our children, the girls. If they have female role models in the neighborhood who pursue their education, graduate with degrees and have well paid jobs, they would be encouraged to follow the footsteps of those girls and reach at somewhere. However in most cases it seems that the destiny of grown up girls is to get unwanted children.

Our argument is that girls need to be kept at home especially during the night because chances are high that they might be exposed to violence. For instance, if one of our daughters stays out until 9 pm, the family would punish her, she might even be beaten. But that is not the case with a boy. We are not trying to subjugate her. We do that only because we fear she would risk her life. **(Sub-group A of 1st focus group)**

The participants in this group are neighbors and know each other for a long period of time. It seems it is not their first time to discuss on the issue of imposing too much control on girls. There was a feeling of tension to raise the issue. The age and education difference is clearly seen. The elder ones are strongly for disciplining girls much more than boys. The opinion of the young participants is quite contrary to this. The difference in perception made the discussion interesting as it helped different opinions to surface. The view of the other group / sub-group B/ reflected as follows:

This attitude of subordinating girls has to be corrected. What is being done at home and in public places are directly related to each other. One can not exist without the other. We should tell our daughters about sex and menstruation. It has to be discussed. Our daughters need to be informed about the different aspects of staying out late. We should work for our children to develop self confidence. Otherwise, if we restrict our daughters to be at home, and unless they are given confidence and knowledge they might be exposed to unsafe sex that would affect their lives. Girls should know who they are, what they want and what they do not want. But this confidence is not being given by their parents. Sadly, most parents do not give freedom for daughters. **(Sub-group B of 1st focus group)**

However, the elder women insist on the need to discipline girls strongly. The reason, as the researcher later found out, is the experience of one of the participants. As the discussion went on, one of the participants explained about a very difficult time in her life related to her daughter's unwanted pregnancy and the participants in sub-group A presented it as follows:

Take the case of Gudy's daughter, she wanted her daughter to study and have a career. But the friends she spends her time with were not good. Her mother told her a lot about rootless girls and advised her. She gave birth out of wedlock while she was a 5th grader and quit school. Gudy asked the girl to find any job, even if it was manual labor but she refused. She left everything and started to spend the whole day with bad boys. Her mother seriously and repeatedly told the girl that she should study hard and that it was the only way out of poverty. Her mother tried all her best to convince the girl to be a good student. But she used to skip classes and go to video houses in the bad neighborhoods. The mother told her many times that she was not a rich girl who could

spend thousands a month. Finally, she went to Sudan with someone.

We would change our way of treating the girls if we knew they would not come to any harm. But what the reality tells us is that girls are always at risk. So we must control my daughters, protect them from any harm. We don't want females to stay late outside her home. She may be aware of the dangers and challenges she would face, but we are terrified at the possibility of her being beaten or kidnapped. There are no such problems with boys. They might come home drunk that is all. **(Sub-group A of 1st focus group)**

These cases perpetuate the system that assumes women as fragile and weak and therefore need to be kept under the protection of others. And that is rooted in the family and women play the most significant role in maintaining it. The participants' views assert the double burden of women's subordination. On the one hand it is women who are victims of violence at home or outside that environment. But, on the other hand such experiences made women submissive to the system of male domination and here that perpetuated it through their nurturing role.

4.3.2 Safeguarding the Culture

The other area in which women play a role in maintaining the patriarchal system is through imposing cultural norms on one another. In all the Focus Group Discussions there were times when participants contradicted each other on issues such as men doing what traditionally is considered as women's task and on issues of sexuality. There were also times when participants attempted to impose on others what they think is right regarding cultural and traditional norms and values in relation to the status of women and men in society. These contradictions of ideas and the attempts to impose one's view on others show women's role in safeguarding cultural norms.

The discussions of the third focus group on sexuality can be illustrating. The discussion was hot and the participants were a bit emotional while

talking to each other. This time, the argument was between one participant who stood against the rest. The issue of sexual freedom was the point of argument. While all the participants said that they were not able to say no to sexual demand from their husbands, one participant expressed her view when she said she has the ability to say no. The reactions of the rest of the participants were diverse. Some of them tried to challenge her; others tried to reject her idea. But on the whole, it was a sign of inacceptance of her views. Most of them tried to ridicule her insisting that she was only exposing her secrets. One elder participant went on to say that it was not acceptable for a woman to tell her private life in public. However, the participant in addition to remaining consistent with her views was trying to convince the rest of the group that they better take a lesson from her rather than rejecting her ideas. *The researcher* believes that presenting this debate as *lively* as it was among the participants would explain the role of women in perpetuating their own subordination. The debate was as follows:

The participants asked: Do you really have the power to do that; to say no when your husband wants to have more children with you?

She replied: Of course, he doesn't provide money to buy provisions and cover other costs. Then why should I sleep with him... **(All the rest of the participants started murmuring in objection to what she is saying)** **The participants:** How can you say no to his demand while living with him, in his home? This is unlikely. **(She continued to argue)** **She replied:** I tell you, I do decide on this. I swear I am telling you the truth. No one can force me. **(But it was obvious that the women did not believe what she was saying)**

One of the participants asked: If this is the case then why don't you separate and divide the house into two?

Another participant continued with ridiculing tone: And are you telling us that you shun away from his sexual advances? **(They all laugh)** **She replied:** I am not joking I am telling you the truth.

Another participant responded: I think this is against our culture and our religion doesn't allow this. We cannot say no to our husbands' demands while living in the same house with them.

Another participant seconded: It is against religion. How on earth can you say no to his sexual demands while you are still living in his house? Is there any religion supporting this?

The woman with different opinion argued: OK tell us if there is a religion that says a woman should keep on giving birth only because she lives under the same roof with a man? Is she obliged to have children more than she could bear?

One participant replied: Having sexual intercourse and giving birth to many children are different things. We did not talk about child birth. You can control it using contraceptives. But it is a taboo to say no to sexual relation while you are sharing same bed and same house with your husband. This is unbearable to men. Either you have to obey or leave the house. This can even make him think that you are having sexual affairs with somebody else.

Another participant: I, for example, don't commit such a crime. By the way, I know her husband. He is a nice guy. He supports her. **(Looking at the 'you are wrong' expression of the woman, the speaker corrects herself and went on)** OK, he supports her children if not her. Take my husband, he is sick. Can I tell him to leave the house because he can not work and earn an income? I cannot do that; this is against the culture. Her husband supports her at least once in a while. The Muslim religion forbids what she does.

Another participant: I have one question for you. Would you tell me how your husband tolerates you or accepts your rejection and continues living with you? How can't he suspect you of having affairs with somebody else?

Another one follows: Me, I can not understand how a husband and wife can live together in the same house without having sexual relation.

The woman replied: Look, I had a check up for HIV/AIDS the time I joined my previous job at the Coca-Cola Company and I tested negative. Hence, I told my husband to undergo the same test. But he rejected the idea of going through the testing. As I have to live and bring up my children, I said no to sex.

A participant says: You didn't answer our question. This is something unusual. Are you telling us that he just tolerates that and you two are living peacefully?

Answer: Yes, I said I do not want. In the same way, he said he doesn't want too. Hence, he comes home, play with his children and then go to bed. No disturbance. **(At this point the participants again start murmuring. They make eye contacts in agreement.)**

One participant commented: That means he has no desire for you. **Another one said:** that must be the case. They do not have feelings for one another, **said another one.** No it is because he has no sexual desire at all, **said the last speaker.**

The participants' argument shows how the culture defined by patriarchy conditioned women as safeguardians to the system of their own subordination through domination of one another. These views are in conformity with the explanation given by Lerner (1986) in terms of how strong and subtle the system of male domination is as institutionalized through the family, the economy, politics and law.

As in other patriarchal societies, in Ethiopia, women play a significant role in transforming masculine and feminine behavior. It is done through socialization into gender division of labor (Tesfu, 1996; Tadelech, 1994; Zenebeworke, 1976).

The voices and views of the research participants also prove that the patriarchal system conditioned women in a way that they become unable to develop alternative norms and values other than the ones that make them remain subordinate. One reason for them to follow the already established norm and keep transferring it to their children is fear. In the same pattern as with the situation of women in Brazil and the United States explored by O'Connor and Drury (1999), the participants reveal that they fear of losing their acceptance in the society. They also maintain that they are not sure how individual men as well as the society react if they try to change the existing norms. One discussant said:

From the beginning, this thinking of gender equality is not in the culture. The education came later. So how can you ask him to take you as an equal? And ask him to help you in household works? This could create a fight. So it is better to keep it as it is. If, for instances, we happen to be sick on bed and ask our husbands to fetch some water because we have none at home, they really could get angry with us for not fetching water in some way. They would get furious for being ordered as an inferior person. It is forbidden to order a husband. If he is around his family, they would say this is not how it should be. Let alone giving him order, if we don't listen to them when they talk to us, then the mother-in laws order their sons to discipline us by beating. In the old days, mother-in-laws could tell your husband to hit you in front of relatives and his sister could make him tell you to behave. You also would be

considered a deviant and marginalized from social functions (4th Focus Group)

4.4 The Kitchen: “Pride of Women”

This section presents findings on the understanding of participants on how society defines women, how they understand and explain their status in society, and how they define their status in relation to men.

The findings in this section run parallel to that of Lott (1987), Lindsey (2005), McDowell and Pringel (1996), Nicolson (1996), Ruth (1980), Weddon (1987), Zenebework Tadesse (1976), and Zewde Abegaz (2002) regarding how society defines women and on their status in society.

The main argument of these authors is that women are all the time defined in relation to men. They also state that values attached to women have negative implications while that of men reflect positive meaning. Men, male values and masculine behaviors are the norms which women are referred in relation to. Thus, women are considered as inferior given less value and relegated to second class citizens. As pointed out in the literature review, these authors also argue that the private/domestic and public sphere dichotomy which is rooted in the gender division of labor is the cause of women subordination.

The responses of the research participants in this regard point to that the above mentioned assertion which also proved to be the same in the case of Ethiopian women. It shows that men and masculine behavior is the norm against which women and feminine behavior is measured and evaluated.

In our country there is a conception that undermines women. We always have been evaluated in comparison to men. The measurement is physical strength and economic well being. The understanding is that women are not strong, unable to think and can not do something important. Thus, a woman is supposed to show respect to men starting from the way she speaks. Always comparison is made between male and female and male are given

the privilege. Words and expressions like “he is a man, he deserves respect, comfort, he is not supposed to do this, are you not female? get up and do this; how come the man does this while you are sitting; he is male; he will get tired; let him take rest” show the difference. Regarding the status of knowledge, there is a supposition that male and female are not equally knowledgeable. For example, even in a situation where the woman is the bread winner, the men could not accept this truth and still undermine her role. They say ‘how come I live being dependent on a woman’s income?’ They say ‘how come I become under a woman’s leadership?’ This thinking comes from undermining women; it is an outlook that has lived for long that a woman is incapable of doing things properly. **(2nd Focus Group Discussion)**

The findings also asserted that there is a difference of perception regarding defining oneself among participants. Some define themselves in relation to men while others reject the idea of comparing themselves with men and their behaviors with that of masculinity. Those who see the masculine behavior as a norm define themselves as inferior and not equal with men.

Would you argue that women can carry heavy stuff and do hard work with the same strength as that of men? No, they can not do that. What about going to the war front, remote areas and do hazardous jobs and bring income to the family? For me, it is hard to believe that women are equally strong, courageous, and able to secure protection to the family. **(2nd day discussion with Ajyet, 52, an In-depth interview participant)**

Men have everything. They are the best of human beings. They are stronger than us. They are not emotional and talkative like us. They can think properly and clearly while we can not. They are dependable as they are able to protect their families from any harm. So they are superior and they deserve it. We can not claim equality with them while we lack all the qualities that men have. **(3rd Focus Group discussion)**

Contrary to these views are of those who argue that women need to be defined in their own terms, not in relation to men, male values and masculine behavior.

As a woman, I have my own roles be it natural or something that I get through orientation. For instance my sex role of giving birth is unique to me. Men can not do that. So, if I follow the above argument, I would say men are inferior to women because they are

not able to give birth. I believe that comparing values and behavior is not of use except widening the gap and inequality between us. Instead, we can count on each other's value. It is difficult to make a standard to measure different qualities. **(Rina, 28, an in-depth interview participant)**

I am a woman and as you all know, I am a widow. But it is me who provide my families with the basics: food, shelter, and clothing. Further- more, I am making sure that all my children are attending school. I am able to protect my families. I am more than equal to men. **(Gofta, 50, an in-depth interview participant)**

I may not be fit physically or strong enough to dig the land, carry heavy materials, be a guard/ especially at night/ and do the like. But I have my own contributions that are very much needed for the survival of the family. Doing my petty trading I am both the bread winner and homemaker. In addition, child rearing is exclusively my duty. Do you think their father can take care of the children as I do? I do not think so. I want to be defined in terms of my own feminine values and behaviors. **(Wube, 55, an in-depth interview participant)**

This makes two categories of respondents. Of the total research participants, the minority, 16 of them, define themselves in terms of what they are practically performing and contributing. Also they define themselves in terms of what they are capable of doing given equal opportunity with that of men. Twenty of them define themselves in relation to men, male values and masculine behavior.

This finding also reveals that those who claim that male values and masculine behavior to be the norm fall under the age category of forty and above. Regarding their educational background they tend to be confined to basic literacy. On the other hand, those who argue to be defined on their own terms are relatively at younger age and in terms of their educational background they have attended elementary and high schools.

The findings on participants' perception on women's status in society proved the universality of the thinking in terms of women's view on their status in society as well as their perception of themselves. The response of

the participants shows that they are aware about their low status in society. They perceive themselves as underprivileged and marginalized group of the society.

The findings indicate that research participants' views on their status in society are also in conformity with what has been maintained by liberal and Marxists feminists regarding the oppressive nature of gender division of labor. The research participants realized that the cause for their marginalization and underprivileged status is due to the gender division of labor that confines them to home and familial affairs. Focus Group Discussants reflected upon it as follow:

It feels bad. You sometimes hate yourself to the extent that you wish you were a man. A woman feels responsible and takes the burden. Even if the money her husband gives her is not enough, she thinks of a way to cover it. And when she does, she could say "I wish I was a man like you. You throw your weight on me and rest". (5th Focus Group Discussant)

The participants indicated that their contribution at home and even as bread winners is not recognized and considered insignificant, an experience that add onto their feeling of inferiority. They also informed that their disadvantageous position becomes more vivid when it comes to inheritance of family property.

After I came to town I supported my father till he died. I have done what-ever was expected from me in terms of money and everything. But, when he died, every property he owned went to the boys, my brothers. For your surprise, they were kids when he died. Every single item waited for them until they grew up and it was all handed over to them when they reached the age to marry. It was me who shouldered the responsibility of supporting them. During my childhood, in the countryside at my father's home, I supported them with my labor. I used to work like hell. You have no idea how a girl is working in the countryside. Then, upon my coming to the town, I took it as my duty to support my father in providing money. I supported him even when he remarried another woman and continued having children. But what has happened today is that I am excluded from inheriting any of his properties

because I am a woman. It hurts me a lot. I can not tell. **(3rd day discussion with Mushri, 45, In-depth interview participant)**

If we take the *Gurage* tradition, a woman doesn't even own plot of land. Only when a person has a son can he claim to have a heir. But if he has daughters and not a son, then it is considered as if he doesn't have children at all; he doesn't have a heir. The rationale behind this attitude is that if it is a son, he gets married and has children on the same land and his lines of descendants grow like crop on farm. But if a girl brings a husband from another area, which is not the case in our culture, he is not considered part of that community. She is relative and so are her children but not her husband. **(2nd Focus Group Discussants)**

The findings of the participants' view on women's status in society and their understanding and explanation of it proved to be contradictory. The views of the majority of the research participants' confirm that women's low status and subordinated position is deep rooted in the gender division of labor which in turn is associated with their biological reproductive role. However, contrary to this, there are participants who perceive the traditional role and place given to women as a sign of respect.

The tradition is that the kitchen is the women's pride. The elderly tell us that it is shame for the men to enter the kitchen. Even when husband and wife quarrel, the husband would not chase his wife to the kitchen and beat her there. He is afraid of the taboo. It is the women's zone. The husband understands this. **(1st Focus Group Discussants)**

Few participants are in favor of the idea that being placed in the domestic sphere was a privilege. Meanwhile, the majority of the participants said since the domestic sphere is regarded as less valuable and unrewarding, they do not consider their place in the kitchen as a source of pride.

The majority of the participants who asserted that gender division of labor is one of the causes for their low status in society also explained their understanding of how the gender division of labor causes their subordination. These explanations are parallel to explanations given by liberal radical and Marxist feminists regarding the relationship between

women's subordination and gender division of labor. Research participants' views on this matter can be categorized into three major points as follows

4.4.1 The Role of Education

The participants view on the way they understand and explain the link between the gender division of labor and their subordination is in conformity with liberal feminists' argument.

The participants maintain that the disadvantage of being confined to the domestic sphere and lack of access to education is two fold. One is the link between lack of formal education and inability to access the labor market. The other factor is that lack of access to education and lack of self-realization. The participants also assert that the nature of the work at/around the home does not provide them with the tools to develop their capacity to think out of the box. They assert that the work at home consume most of their time and energy. On the one hand, it gives little time and space for women's education, that it is repetitive, arduous and done almost mechanically, therefore not encouraging to develop critical thinking such as realizing ones subordinate position as a woman and act upon it. Participants informed:

Previously it was perceived that our place is at home. Had our parents sent us to school, we would have known many things. We had been forced to stay at home. Now, if we send our children to school, they will realize many things. An illiterate does nothing.
(1st Focus Group Discussion)

Education is very important. We did not have the chance of education. Our parents were unfair to us for not sending us to school. Taking a lesson from my life, I tried my best to send my children to school. Unfortunately, they did not succeed. Illiteracy is always disadvantageous. Education is fundamental to live a better life.
(2nd day discussion with Ajeyet, 52, an individual participant)

4.4.2 Domestic Violence

One of the manifestations of the unequal relationship between women and men is wife beating. In relationships where the man/the husband assume absolute control and rule over the woman/the wife, beating the wife is not considered as violation of her human rights. But the paradox is that this assumption is not that of men only. Women also believe that it is a 'given right' of the husband to beat his wife.

Of the thirty six women vendors that participated in the research, twenty eight of them believe that wife beating is part of culture and they take it as something normal. They perceive the occurrence as part of the relationship between husband and wife. The violence could be physical, psychological, sexual or economical.

My late husband used to beat me almost everyday, sometimes even without any sign of disagreement between us. I remember one day I was in the kitchen and about to finish baking *Injera*, he came from nowhere and started beating me. Sometimes when it gets worse and beyond my tolerance, I used to go to my parents' home. But he sends "*Shimagiles*" [elders who serve as mediators] to get me back. The last moment he beat me I lost my teeth, and that was the end of our marriage. My father rejected his move to mend the relation and we separated and then he passed away. **(Alemua, 40, 5th Focus Group Discussion)**

My husband suspects me of infidelity. It started when my first child was born. He used to beat me while I was pregnant. In previous times he even beat me in front of people. Previously the beating was so fierce. But now, all he does is break household utensils and throw insults. **(First day conversation with Mushri, 45, an individual participant)**

The participants indicated male domination manifests through different forms. Sometimes husbands use actions that cause the feeling of unworthiness on the part of the woman. According to a participant this is one of the impacts of women's subordinated position.

There are cases where our husbands do not even spend holidays with us. They will go to their parents in the countryside with the

money they saved the whole year. They buy oxen and other relevant things and spend their holiday there. We and our children stay here alone. **(5th Focus Group Discussion)**

The participants confirmed that even in situations whereby women were the bread winners, men assume superiority and try to impose their terms regarding spending. In addition to this, male domination is also expressed in terms of women's reproductive role. Participants told their experience as follows:

Our husbands, most of the time, do not work. When they do work and earn income, they give you little money, which is not enough to cover the needs of the family. And they demand much more than what they offer. Sometimes, while they know it is not enough, they want you to stay at home instead of going out and make earn additional income to the family. That is one way of controlling our movement as well as freedom of thinking. **(3rd Focus Group Discussants)**

I was 14 years when my first child was born. My understanding at that time was that it was an obligation to give birth once I married. However, in hindsight, I regret it. I would have managed it differently especially when I come to know the methods of contraception. But in those days, we were asked to have the partners' consent to take contraceptive pills. On one occasion, I was denied the right of using contraceptive pills because my husband was not willing to give his consent. In fact since I realized that giving birth now and then was making life difficult for me and my family, I tried hard to get the contraceptive pills but all in vain because my husband was against it.

Though I worked hard and support my family at the end of the day it was my husband who made decisions on the allocation of the money that I brought home. Even sometimes he can take the money from me and just spend it on drinks. Our culture gave men superiority. The assumption is that mostly men are the bread winners, and women do whatever their men say. A woman usually sees her husband as God. Men are superior to women in all aspects including physical strength. So I lived all my life in fear and anguish. I am sorry to say it but now, after his death, I feel as if I have woken up from a nightmare. Now I could decide by myself and allow my daughters to do so. **(First day conversation with Gofta, 50, an individual participant)**

The experiences of these participants are consistent with radical feminists' argument that the material base of women subordination lies in men's control over their body, mind and sexuality. It shows that women's subordination is a system. The patriarchal system gave individual men the ability to exercise power over individual women. As noted by Weedon (1987) the superiority of individual men emanates from the patriarchal power that prescribes social meanings based on biological sex. Therefore in association with their biological sex women are subject to subordination even in situations where they are economically dependant and the men are not performing their traditional role as bread winners. It confirms how the unequal power relation between women and men creates a situation in which women are considered as possession of men.

4.4.3 Women's Poverty and Gender Division of Labor

The finding in this section shows the participants' awareness in terms of the link between their poor living condition and the gender division of labor. According to the participants had their labor and hard work been recognized in terms of salary poverty would not have been their destiny.

The burden of taking care of the family is on us. We spend all the day worrying about the meals, the school fee and similar stuff. Sometimes, we even forget taking care of ourselves. We give priority to the well being of our children and others in the family. But nobody recognizes this. The responsibility that we placed upon ourselves does not seem to be given due importance. It makes us exhausted and tired. It causes rage inside. We can not help feeling inferior and thus unworthy. Most of the time it is this feeling that damages our health. It makes us tired, weak, and aged early. We are not rewarded for our contribution; it is a thing that is taken for granted. And it hurts, it really hurts. A woman who continuously feels rage could get sick and even die. **(3rd Focus Group Discussants)**

When I look back in to my life I feel pity for my self. Starting from my early childhood I work hard. I worked hard day and night with the hope of achieving a better life for my family and myself. However, despite my ups and downs I think I was not successful.

The energy and time I was spending to make the everyday life keep going does not pay me enough. It has never been rewarding. It does not even help me in my wish to fulfill at least the basic necessities to my children. I remain poor despite my sweating day and night. **(First day conversation with Gofta, 50, an individual participant)**

This case shows that the understanding of the research participants regarding the link between the gender division of labor and their disadvantageous situation. It is again, concurs with the argument of Marxist feminists on the impact of the confinement of women in to the domestic sphere. The participants understand their disadvantageous situation in relation to their placement in domestic sphere in to ways. One is as it is time consuming, it deny them access to the wage labor and the opportunity to earn their own income. On the other hand the fact that the domestic work is unpaid labor it makes them economically dependant of men. This situation indicates that the gender division of labor that put women in the domestic sphere is one manifestation of the patriarchal system.

Donovan (2000) summarizes the arguments of feminists regarding the link between women's subordination and gender division of labor. She states the gender division of labor is the material base of women's subordination as women's poverty is deep rooted in it.

4. 5 Changing the Status Quo

This section focuses on the participants' view on the way forward to change their subordinated position. The participants are well aware of the fact that the gender division of labor is one of the causes for their subordinated status in the society. And all the participants agreed that the existing traditional gender role is subject to change as it is a social and cultural construction.

Participants' argument in terms of the way forward towards changing their subordinate position goes in conformity with thoughts and reflections of

liberal feminists. According to the participants education is the gateway for women's liberation. They informed that the benefit of accessing formal education is twofold, as they explain it. One benefit is education guarantees a well paid job. They say education helps women to access the labor market so that women will not be dependant of men for their economic needs. The other benefit is to the development of the mind. The participants reported that education is crucial for women to build their self-esteem. It is also the base for sustainable economic empowerment, which in turn brings about a change in social status of women.

Education is fundamental. If women get the chance to educate they would get job and also would be able to go to the highest ladder in life. If they are not educated they would end up being under someone's control (administration). Weather they live alone or with their male counterparts they have to get a chance for education. This will allow them to assume equal status with male. **(First day conversation with Jema, 45, in-depth interview participant)**

Education is light. It sets a person free from darkness our children should lean and live in freedom. No body can doubt this that we wouldn't have been in the same situation if we had some education. **(3rd Focus Group Discussion)**

No doubt that education will bring change. Once a girl is educated, she will have a chance to work out in the offices and get salary on permanent bases. She will have equal status with the men. **(2nd Focus Group Discussion)**

However, some participants are less convinced when it comes to their contribution to the process of change in relation to their role as social agents. The participants believe that the unequal power relation between women and men need to be changed. But speaking of their role towards changing the situation the majority of them agree that it is not something that they can do it in their capacity.

We are used to that lifestyle. We have to respect our husbands. We have to be fearful of him. It is there from old days and that is what we see since childhood. I can't see my husband as we are equal. Some call their husbands *Gashe* like they call an elder, let alone give him an order to do something in the house. **(5th Focus Group Discussant)**

It was customary that a man is superior and a woman inferior. But now, if I tell him we are equal and we have to live equally as the situation is changed, he wouldn't agree. He would ask why I wanted to change from the normal. **(Mushri, 45, In-depth Interview participant)**

There are participants who are of the opinion that education is important for them to be critical of their role as social agents. According to these participants the more women get educated the less their contribution in reproducing cultural norms and values, which make them subordinate to men. In relation to this, the imposition they make on their girl children would be smaller since they will learn how to protect their girl children from dangers by way of empowering them instead of just keeping them at home. These participants made their statement based on the observed changes in terms of attitude of the society and girls education.

Thank God we are living in town and there are plenty of schools. We should send our daughters to school and that would not be enough, we should also give them time to study. Time is changed now; we should also make sure that there is no reason for her to feel that she is inferior than her brothers. **(2nd Focus Group Discussant)**

I tell my daughter to be serious with her education. I tell her that I am living in such kind of life because I had no education. Sometimes she asks me why I am poor and work in dirty places. And I always tell her it was because my parents did not send me to school when I was a kid. I tell her that she should learn now so that she will have better job and marriage life in the future. **(Mushri, 45, in-depth interview participant)**

In my part, I advise the men not to harass women. We have to invest on our male children. We have to teach them to have respect and mutual understanding. We have to have equal respect for male and female children and educate the boys not to consider the girls inferior. If I say it is acceptable when a boy beats a girl I am discriminating. But if I give equal love and respect for both, they will respect to each other. **(Wube, 55, in-depth interview participant)**

All participants agreed upon the idea of the need for liberation from their subordinate status. But they lack common understanding in terms of the way forward. There are individuals who seem to have better realization of their own situation, therefore, have confidence on their ability to liberate themselves at least from individual men domination. A participant said:

I believe the purpose of establishing marriage is for mutual benefit and co-existence. I will stay in it if I am convinced that I am receiving the required respect as a wife and support from my partner. Otherwise, I wouldn't tolerate male domination just for the sake of having a name that I am a married woman among the neighborhood. I know lots of women living in a hell because they are scared of criticism from the community. Society always blames us/women/ for any failure in marriage, I know this. But still I wouldn't sacrifice my health and my peace of mind for the sake of getting acceptance in society. That is why I was married four times and divorced too. My experience is that I walk out of abusive relationship at any time and at any cost. **(Wube, 55, in-depth interview participant)**

However, the majority of the participants are far from a kind of determination that the above mentioned participant has expressed. They have common understanding in terms of their status in society. They know that society considered them as inferior, second class citizens. They also know that they are underprivileged group of society. But the majority of the participants believe that the only option they have is to accept their situation and live with it.

The difference in views and perspectives of the participants show that in addition to the social and cultural construction, gender also has individual or personal construction. And the personal construction has its own contribution when it comes liberating oneself from subordination at individual level. However, as patriarchy is a system that is safeguarded through institutions such as family, school and the media, liberation of women takes more than empowerment of individual woman.

In relation to this, the suggestions forwarded by some of the participants go in conformity with the idea of Marxist feminists that advocates the need for women to raise their consciousness as marginalized group. These participants said when women come together and develop critical thinking on their situation and the causes of their subordination then the way forward would be clear.

5. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Summary

This study focused on identifying how the existing social structure creates and maintains women's subordination. It also tried to look at the contribution of women towards the maintenance of the social structure that put them in subordination. To this effect, this research focused on women's perception towards the differences in gender roles between women and men and their understanding of their own contribution to the continuation of gender based division of labor that is embedded with patriarchal values.

The findings of this research have indicated that the gender role difference between women and men is the product of socialization. Female and male children through the process of socialization are made to develop identities that are different of each other. They were trained in different ways through roles assignment with the purpose of making them conform to the existing social and cultural norms of society. The existing social norms and values prescribe different status for individual members of society. As the status of women and men is hierarchal in which men dominated women, socialization is bound to play a fundamental role in creating gender inequality between the two.

Women also play a significant role in reproducing the hierarchal status between men and women to their offsprings. As social agents, they play a role in transferring societal norms and values that prescribes and defines interaction of individual members of society. In patriarchal society, the domestic sphere is considered as women's place. In the same vein, the role of rearing and taking care of children is exclusively women's duty. Therefore, mothers have much influence on children's upbringing in relation to the development of expected behaviors. In relation to this, women contribute to the perpetuation of their own subordination through socializing their daughters and sons with patriarchal values that are embedded with

male domination. As they themselves are socialized through patriarchy, they are made to internalize that men, masculinity and male behaviors are the only norm. Thus, they keep on transforming what they are socialized with to their children and foster the system that subordinates them.

It was found that participants' perception in terms of their understanding of their role in the maintenance of patriarchy through the transferring of traditional gender roles to be controversial and complex. They all agreed that they are aware of their gendered identity that is associated with their low status in the society. They said one of the causes of their underprivileged situation is based on gender roles. They reported that gender division of labor assigns the domestic sphere with the unpaid labor as women's domain is one of the reasons for their lack of access to social services such as education. They also informed that they know that lack of access to education has diversified impact on their lives in terms of social, economical and health aspects. Lack of education and inability to make decision makes women unable to manage their life the way they wanted to be. They said it also has an impact for the deprivation of their human rights as they are subject to domestic violence due to their subordinated position.

However, they are not critical of their own role in fostering the system that makes them subordinate. Majority of the participants accepted the existing traditional gender roles and gender relation as the only norm and keep on transferring it to their children. There are even self contradictory perceptions reflected by participants. When they discuss their own status in society and their gender relation with their husbands, they tried to look at the gender division of labor as the cause of their underprivileged status. But when it comes to their role in reproducing the gender division of labor that is manifested through the domestic and private dichotomy, some of them argue that they need to play their role in transferring these roles as part of societal norms and values.

This study has also focused on research participants' perception on the idea of challenging a system that relegates women in to subordinated position. The participants agreed that the gender relation between women and men that is reflected by unequal power relation need to be changed. They also agreed that accessing formal education is fundamental to the way forward. However, the finding on participants' perception regarding their contribution in the process of changing the situation is found to be diverse and contradictory. Some argue that changing the status quo is far from their contribution. While others claim that they can contribute through their nurturing role as mothers as well as social agents in society.

5.2 Conclusion

“Women are responsible for their own Liberation”

Naomi Wolf

Women's contribution to the perpetuation of their own subordination is interrelated with the social and cultural norms of the society that they are living in. A culture that is defined by patriarchal values prescribes gender roles that are discriminatory against biological designation of the female sex. Gender roles are product of social and cultural norms. In patriarchal society where masculine behaviors are the standards women are considered deviant and their contribution of a less value.

In a system where male domination prevails the relationship between women and men becomes all about attainment and maintenance of power. This system is safeguarded by institutions such as family, school, religion, as well as the law and media. The system of male domination influences women's thinking and thus they internalize that the only norm to gender relation is patriarchy. The family is one of the strongholds of patriarchy and, conditioned by it, women play an important role in socializing its ideology.

The family as one of the institutions that serve as safe haven of patriarchal values is a place where unequal power relationship between women and men perpetuates most. A socialization process that brings about unequal relationship between two sexes and that causes gender inequality is therefore dishonest and immoral.

As conditioned by patriarchal values women are contributing to the continuation of their own domination. While women not comfortable with their unprivileged status and they aspire to see it changed, their patriarchal orientation make it difficult and complex for them to think that they are able to liberate themselves from subordination.

The finding of this research shows that participants' views on their contribution to the perpetuation of patriarchy and the way forward to change the status quo is contradictory and complex. Based on the views of the participants it can be concluded that they are not critical on their situation and more specifically their contribution in fostering their own subordination. And the reason for this is the discursive and subtle nature of patriarchy. Women are victims of patriarchy in two ways. On the one hand they are made to assume subordinate position and to be submissive to men. They are made confined to domestic sphere and restricted their participation in education and labor market. They are dependant economically and therefore assume low social status. On the other hand they are made perpetuate their own subordination as they are conditioned with patriarchal values.

The legacy of male domination is safeguarded through social institutions such as family, school, law and media. Women are integral part of these situation especially of the family. Women have great power in terms of shaping the attitude of children. In this regard women need to be critical to realize the power at their hands. To conclude, women can use their nurturing role to change the existing traditional gender division of labor which is the root of patriarchy. However, as patriarchy is a system it takes more than

individual effort for it to be challenged. Therefore, women need to come together and raise their consciousness in order to challenge the patriarchal system strategically.

5.3 Recommendation

The findings of this research reveal that women are victimized by the double burden of patriarchy, first as a victim of the system and secondly by perpetuating it. Patriarchy needs to be challenged for women to be liberated from their double burden subordination. There are a number of governmental and non-governmental women's organizations and associations working towards the promotion of gender equality. Therefore, this research recommends that these bodies need to give due attention towards addressing the issue of women's contribution in fostering their own subordination. In their endeavors to promote the issue of gender equality, they need to see the importance of working towards women's empowerment in terms of critical thinking regarding their own role in maintaining the system of male domination and also to raise their consciousness as a marginalized and subordinated group.

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Appendix A

Checklist and Interview Guide

A- Personal and familial data

- How old are you?
- Are you married or single?
- How many children do you have?
- How many of them are girls?
- How many of them are boys?
- How many people live in the household?
- How many of them are employed?
- Place of Origin?
- When did you come to Addis?
- What is your religion?

B- Ways of nurturing, socializing, application of the domestic/public dichotomy and decision making

- How many of the girls and the boys are in school?
- Who decides on issue of children's schooling?
- Who is responsible for income generating?
- Who is responsible for house work?
- Who does help you in the household chores, the girls or the boys?
- Ways of maintaining Discipline of children?
- Do you prefer one children to the other, if so why? On what bases?

C- Level of Understanding of ones gendered identity, gender awareness

- How do you define yourself as a woman in the society?
- What is your view on the status of women in the society?
- How do you define your relation with your husband/ or male member of your family?

D- On Challenging Patriarchy

- Do you think that the existing gender roles need to be changed?
- If so, Why and how?
- What would be your role in the changing process?

Appendix-B

Profile of Research Participants

Table 1. Individual participants' profile

S.n	Name	Age	Educational Background	Religion	No. Children	Family Size	Marital Status
1	Mushri	45	Grade. 2	Muslim	7	9	Married
2	Gofta	50	Grade 4	Christ	7	8	Widow
3	Rina	28	Grade 9	Christ	2	5	Married
4	Jema	45	Basic. Lit	Muslim	0	3	Widow
5	Wube	55	Basic. Lit	Christ	4	4	Widow
6	Ajjet	52	Basic. Lit	Christ	6	5	Widow

Table 2. Focus Group Discussants' profile

		Name	Age	Educational Background	Religion	No. Children	Family Size	Marital Status
G.1	1	Alem	45	Grade 4	Christ	3	5	Married
	2	Nunish	19	Grade 10	Christ	0	1	Single
	3	Richo	27	Grade 8	Christ	2	4	Married
	4	Aregu	50	Basic. Lit	Christ	2	3	Widow
	5	Gudaye	45	Basic. Lit	Christ	0	5	Married
	6	Dingete	43	Grade 12	Muslim	4	6	Married
G.2	1	Ajiet	52	Basic. Lit	Christ	6	5	Widow
	2	Wobe	55	Basic. Lit	Christ	4	4	Widow
	3	Aselef	45	Grade 2	Christ	6	8	Married
	4	Azi	31	Grade 12	Christ	1	6	Divorced
	5	Zeko	50	Basic. Lit	Muslim	2	4	Widow
	6	Britu	32	Grade 7	Christ	2	5	Married
G.3	1	Hayezo	30	Grade 7	Christ	1	7	Divorced
	2	Gesgi	35	Grade 2	Muslim	2	6	Married
	3	Denfaw	38	Basic. Lit	Muslim	5	7	Married
	4	Neke	40	Grade 4	Christ	3	5	Married
	5	Sado	35	Basic. Lit	Muslim	3	7	Married
	6	Shina	40	Basic. Lit	Muslim	2	4	Married
	7	Ado	50	Basic. Lit	Muslim	2	4	Married
	8	Mere	45	Basic. Lit	Christ	0	1	Single
	9	Mergia	42	Basic. Lit	Christ	4	7	Married
G.4	1	Bre	40	Basic. Lit	Christ	4	6	Married
	2	Bele	50	Basic. Lit	Christ	4	5	Widow
	3	Adra	40	Grade 6	Muslim	2	5	Married
	4	Sosu	38	Basic. Lit	Christ	0	2	Single
	5	Dege	40	Basic. Lit	Christ	4	8	Married
	6	Adi	50	Basic. Lit	Muslim	5	7	Widow
G.5	1	Nitsuhe	35	Basic. Lit	Muslim	3	4	Separated
	2	Alemua	40	Grade 8	Christ	6	7	Widow
	3	Tenfe	45	Basic. Lit	Christ	1	3	Married
	4	Muna	42	Grade 3	Muslim	2	5	Married
	5	Maraki	50	Basic. Lit	Muslim	5	7	Married